



water affairs

Department:  
Water Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Speech by Minister of Water and Environmental  
Affairs, Mrs Edna Molewa, MP

Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality, Limpopo  
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Programme Director  
Premier  
MEC's  
Executive Mayor Sekhukhune District Municipality  
Local Mayors  
Councillors  
Dikgoshi present here  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very pleased to be here in Sekhukhune District and excited to be celebrating important milestones towards the completion of the De Hoop Dam which will be the anchor element of the Olifants River Water Resources Development Project.

There is much for us to be excited about today as this Project will help to transform the lives of the people in this region. With the construction of the dam nearing completion, we are closer to our goal of being able to provide water to communities that have struggled for a long while to have access to a safe and reliable source of water.

This event today takes place as part of the nationwide campaign; the National Water Week which is celebrated under the theme- **water is life, conserve it, protect it, enjoy it**. I want to add to that theme the line that says- **share it**. As government it is our primary objective to ensure that this scarce resource is shared equitably amongst all end users. Those that have access need to ensure that they share with those that do not. Access to water is basic human need and right. But like every right it comes with responsibilities in this case they are to protect and conserve.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as you well know water is a matter of huge concern in the Limpopo Province. Over the past decade, the then Department of Water Affairs and Forestry investigated various options within the Middle Olifants River Catchment to meet the projected water demands in the area and our engineers found a suitable site on the Steelpoort River on the farm De Hoop for the construction of a dam.

The Olifants River Water Resources Development Project (ORWRDP) was then commissioned to achieve an increased assurance of water supply, and is part of Government's aim to secure bulk water for domestic supply purposes; to stimulate economic activity, and to promote the socio-economic development of the people of this part of Limpopo Province in concert with the Growth and Development Strategy and the Spatial Development Framework of the Limpopo Province.

The construction of the De Hoop Dam is the second phase of the Olifants River Water Resources Development Project and was first announced by former President Thabo Mbeki in 2003 as one of the flagship programmes of Government's Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGI-SA). The importance of this Dam is twofold; the first is to supply water to the towns, industries and poorly serviced rural communities in the Sekhukhune District of the Limpopo Province. Secondly, the Dam is to supply water to the mines that will help to unlock vast mineral deposits, mainly in the form of platinum group metals found in the region. These mineral deposits represent the largest known unexploited mineral wealth in our country.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2007, during the sod turning event held at Maseven, my predecessor Minister Hendricks, the former Premier of Limpopo Mr. Moloto and the former Executive Mayor of the Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality and now MEC in Limpopo for Education in Limpopo (Mr. Masemola) signed what has commonly become known as the De Hoop Charter. The aim of the Charter is to address job creation, skills development and the advancement of Broad-Based BEE. This Charter stipulates that contractors must provide employment in line with Government's objectives, with a special emphasis on job opportunities for local people, for women, the youth and the disabled. The project's aim is, however, not only local job creation but skills transfer that will result in long-term benefits. Training will also focus on capacity building that is hands on and on-the-job-training to give those without special skills an opportunity to develop.

Thus far, the number of direct project construction jobs created is 1 150 for the construction of the dam, 528 for the re-alignment of the road and 250 for the construction of housing. Eighty percent of the workforce was sourced locally. Although these jobs are directly linked to the project, the jobs that will be created due to new industrialisation is expected to be close to 5 000.

Sadly as the construction of the dam nears completion, the work will decrease and therefore the workforce will need to decrease as well. However with the eminent commencement of construction of the Bulk Distribution System, the department is committed to ensure that the majority of the labour force will be locally sourced.

After completion this will be a very beautiful dam, which will in itself open up the doors for increased tourism and economic activities that will contribute to job creation, the main objective however is to provide water. There is still much to be done with the rest of the phases of the Project, including the Bulk Distribution System. Water delivery to the water treatment works at the Steel Bridge is planned for January 2013. The rest of the bulk distribution system will be constructed in a phased manner, with the construction of the pipeline from the De Hoop Dam starting shortly to ensure that the pipeline reaches Steelpoort by March 2013.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am proud to announce that in November last, a new South African record was set for the placement of rollcrete, also known as RCC. A total of 129 000 m<sup>3</sup> was placed in a matter of only 30 days in a single continuous operation. Concrete placement of this magnitude was never attempted in the past and it is believed that this record will stand for the foreseen future. International experts in the field of concrete has congratulated the De Hoop Dam construction team on the achievement and indicating that only a few projects, globally have entered the realm where these high placing rates were achieved.

Structures the size of De Hoop Dam come at a significant price to the fiscus. The total completion cost will be amounting to R3 050 million and the bulk distribution system will be even more costly. Water from the project is expensive and users need to use the water efficiently. Water conservation and demand management practices will be high on our agenda.

With the construction of the dam moving at this rate, it is expected that impoundment will commence during the third quarter of this year and the completion of the dam by December this year.

Earlier this week, I was at the Vaal Dam with my enforcement and compliance team, also known as the blue scorpions, to put illegal water abstraction under the spotlight and to highlight the effects that pollution has on the quality of the water. The Olifants River catchment is no exception and similar measures will be introduced. These measures are crucial as we ever come closer to limits of our resources. The co-operation of every user is required.

Earlier this morning, I visited a place called Carolina, in Mpumalanga, to see firsthand the effects of Acid Mine Drainage in the area and engage the experts in my department of effective ways to deal with the problem.

Many other activities relating to National Water Week are taking place throughout the country and within this province. They will continue to take place for the rest of the month.

In conclusion I want to call on every one of you present here today and everyone countrywide to celebrate Water Week not only this week or this month but throughout the year. This is a yearlong campaign in which we can all contribute through conserving and protecting this precious life source that is very scarce.

I urge you, as the custodians of the dam and recipients of the water, to please conserve it, respect it and enjoy it – don't forget to share it.

I thank you.