



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SPEECH DELIVERED BY HONOURABLE DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, MS REJOICE MABUDAFHASI AT THE LAUNCH OF WATERAID SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL OFFICE

25th July 2012, Pretoria, South Africa

Programme Director

Excellencies, High Commissioners

Chief Executives and Directors, WaterAid

Chief Executive Officers and Staff, WRC

Distinguished guests from Development Partners

Officials from government department Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

It gives me great joy to join you today, at this official launch of WaterAid's Southern Africa Regional Office here in Pretoria. In a special way, I would like to welcome to South Africa, the Chief Executives and Directors from WaterAid who have travelled long distances from various places including UK and Australia.

I am also excited to see High Commissioners and various Cooperating Partners in our midst who have come to witness this very important occasion. It also gives me pleasure, today, to hear that this office Launch has attracted WaterAid Staff from other countries within the Southern Africa region.

I feel really pleased to welcome you all to South Africa.

I am delighted that the Water Research Commission (WRC), which is an institution under the Ministry of Water and Environmental Affairs, has accommodated WaterAid Southern Africa Regional Office. Thank you Mr Naidoo (CEO of WRC) for your kindness.

WaterAid in the Region

Let me start by thanking Board of Directors and the Chief Executives of WaterAid for making this ground breaking decision of setting up a Regional Office in South Africa.

It is obvious to me that WaterAid and South African Government through Ministry of Water and Environmental Affairs will forge stronger partnership that will benefit the entire South African Water Sector which includes non-governmental organizations. WaterAid is one of the organizations worldwide which has made a mark in capacity building of NGO's and CBO's and that will realize our vision of community based water resource management which is an enabler to sustainable water resource management.

Your presence here has been long overdue. This partnership should be strengthened to include the entire Continent to enable us to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and ability to sustain our water and sanitation infrastructure.

There are still over 100 million without access to clean water in the region, and over 160 million without access to proper sanitation and the majority is from Sub Saharan Africa. This situation is heartbreaking and unacceptable.

I believe this is the time for African governments and partners like WaterAid and others to adopt a Business Unusual approach to address the water and sanitation challenges as we are left with few years to demonstrate our ability as Africa to achieve MDG targets and also in line with Africa Water Vision 2025.

This means that all institutions whose core business is provision water and sanitation must unite and share resources. We shouldn't spend more time and money on planning, lets implement the existing plans. We cannot sleep at night whilst there are still people without water and sanitation.

I am convinced that Together we can eradicate the backlogs and provide water and sanitation to our communities.

WaterAid's Value Adding in the Region

The partnership with WaterAid is already bearing fruits which benefit the entire Continent, programme director allow me to mention the following highlights:

- The production of a video clip ahead of the 4th Africa Water Week held in Cairo, Egypt in 2012 when AMCOW was commemorating 10 years of its existence. The video clip, which was one of the main highlights of this year Africa Water Week, gave us chance to take stock of the AMCOW journey in the past years and more importantly, reflect on our future.
- Implementation of various programmes aimed at ensuring that water and sanitation are at the centre of African development agenda in 19 out of the 25 African countries and Pan-African Parliament
- Sponsoring travel costs for AMCOW Secretariat and NOTAWASAGA and other partner organizations from Africa to attend the Youth Summit which was hosted by South Africa. They also funded the facilitators and secretariat for the Africa session of the Youth Summit. The Youth Summit came out with a tangible output which is a draft Africa Youth Water and Sanitation Strategy. This strategy and implementation plan will be presented to all African Ministers in Stockholm in August. I am appealing to WaterAid to lead this process and ensure that the strategy is finalized and implemented.

I congratulate WaterAid for the good work, however there is more work ahead of you. However you need to work more harder than before. We still grappling with so many challenges in the Continent, solutions have already been found. We lacking

organizations to facilitate sessions to share such lessons and best practices, we expect WaterAid to coordinate conferences and Indaba's for this purpose.

WaterAid and Water Research Commission must forge a very strong partnership, mobilize other organizations and come up with a comprehensive, focused and practical programme focusing on development of women and youth as they are the most vulnerable groups in the Continent. Gender strategy was approved, all countries should implement such programmes. Finalisation and implementation of Africa Youth Strategy is also critical. We are dependant on your support.

We also request WaterAid to support UNHABITAT in the development of proposal for Africa Youth Water Prize aimed at honouring outstanding youth achievements and inspire action for sustainable water supply and sanitation services across Africa. I will be very pleased if Africa Junior Water Prize can be launched during next Africa Water Week. This will realize our vision of Africa participation in the Stockholm Junior Water Prize, not South Africa only.

I will personally support you in all your endeavours as you striving to make Africa the best continent to live at.

Launch of Office

On this note and on behalf of the South African Government, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to WaterAid for the choice of South Africa, as the institutional base within the Southern Africa Region. I have no doubt that our Ministry will work hand in hand with WaterAid, in our quest to improve the living standards of people in the region. The Governments in Southern Africa are looking forward to Water and Cooperating partners for financial support and technical contribution in various processes at the Regional and Pan-Africa level.

Our Ministry also values and appreciates the support and collaboration with our co-operating partners. I believe we need more partners to support and scale up our work and approaches at regional and continental level.

With these few remarks, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen, let me wish WaterAid in Southern Africa all success.

It is now my singular pleasure and honour to declare the WaterAid Southern Africa Regional Office officially opened.

I Thank You All