



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, MME REJOICE MABUDAFHASI, MP, DURING THE HAND OVER OF MUKULA WATER SUPPLY PROJECT AT MUKULA SPORTS GROUND IN MUKULA VILLAGE, VHEMBE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, LIMPOPO

01 MARCH 2013

Programme Director

Mayor of Thulamela Local Municipality: Cllr Mahosi

Khosi Vho Mphathele Takalani

Mahosi vhane ravha navho fhana

Councillors

Distinguished guests

Members of the community

Members of the media

Ladies and gentlemen

We are gathered here on this day that marks the beginning of Water Month. It is also in this month that South Africans from all walks of life, young and old, men and women, united in our diversity will commemorate the Human Rights Day. Water is a Human Right. It is enshrined in our Constitution that everyone has the right to have access to clean water.

I am very much delighted to come back to the community of Mukula again. Two years ago Chief Takalani approached me reporting that the village had no access to water as the existing boreholes had dried up and he was calling for the intervention from the Ministry of Water and Environmental Affairs.

The government has a great track record in delivering clean water to the majority of the people. For many South Africans, under apartheid, the lack of access to water had an outrageous assault on their health, their development and their dignity.

On receipt of the query from the Chief, I approached the Mayors of both District and Local Municipalities on the basis that provision of water is the responsibility of Local Government. We agreed that we will collaborate in addressing this problem. We pledged an amount of R18,6 million of which R14.5 million was contributed by Vhembe District Municipality and 4.1 million by the Department of Water Affairs.

We gave a directive to our officials to establish a Project Steering Committee which comprised of Department of Water Affairs National and Regional Office, Vhembe District Municipality and Thulamela Local Municipality, Royal Council and Mukula Community representatives. The responsibility of the committee was to identify a reliable water resource, analyse the resource in terms of water quality and quantity, costing, develop a project plan and provide progress reports to the Mayors and myself.

The Mukula Bulk Water Supply project was conceptualized and the Tshikundu Water Treatment Work was identified as the source that can supply drinking water to Mukula. The bulk water supply project consists of 1.8 Ml reservoir and a 15.4 km bulk pipeline to mitigate water shortage in the 17 sub-villages.

Programme Director, allow me to commend the community representatives for the leadership and guidance they provided during the conceptualisation of this project. The indigenous knowledge of our communities is key to sustainable development, without their input we would have considered other water sources and incurred unnecessary costs, this milestone should be recorded in the history books of our country. Despite the extent of the water shortage challenges, the Mukula Community never resorted to illegal protestations and vandalism.

I am thrilled to report that the Mukula bulk water supply project is now complete and the community have access to clean water, as government we delivered on our promise to Mukula community. There are minor challenges on the internal reticulation which the technical team is working tirelessly to address them before end of March.

Having said that, I want to acknowledge water challenges experienced by the communities from Satani Village which was not included in the project we are handing over today. I am committing that jointly with the municipalities we will scratch for funding and address the problem.

I am also requesting the community to employ water conservation from the very onset, water is very scarce in our country, and we have no option but to use it efficiently. We must guard against water leaks, if you see unaccounted for water meaning unclosed taps, water leaks don't just pass the area as if nothing happened - You must act by reporting such mishaps to the ward committee, councillor, municipality and the Department of Water Affairs immediately.

Officials from the Department will come to this community to conduct water conservation campaign educating communities about the importance of conserving this scarce resource.

In conclusion I would like to appreciate the following:

- The co-operation and commitment of the two Mayors on this project and the entire service delivery of the Vhembe District Municipality as well as the Traditional Council under the leadership of Chief Takalani;
- The hard work of all our officials from the three spheres of government who committed themselves to deliver on our mandate, I know it was not easy but you have made it. We are proud of you

Working together as government, private sector and communities we can achieve more

Programme director, allow me to take this opportunity and say that I am officially handing over the Mukula Water Supply Project during the beginning of Water Month under the theme **“Water is life - Respect it, Conserve it, Enjoy it”**.

We seek to accentuate and emphasize the fact that water is central to all forms of life and that everyone has a responsibility to conserve and use it sparingly.

I invite all of you to support this campaign by doing some activities in your areas.

I thank you