

KEY NOTE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE
HONOURABLE DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER
AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, MS REJOICE
MABUDAFHASI, MP, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE
WAR ON LEAKS PROJECT AT RANDFONTEIN
LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, MOHLAKENG
RECREATION CENTRE, RANDFONTEIN,
GAUTENG

18 APRIL 2013

Programme Director;

Executive Mayor of West Rand District Municipality;

Cllr. Mpho Nawa

Mayor of Randfontein Local Municipality; Cllr Sylvia

Thebenare

Mayor of Mogale City Municipality; Cllr Calvin

Seerane;

Member of Mayoral Committee: Randfontein Local
Municipality: Cllr Arthur Sampson

Councillors;

Rand Water Foundation Chairperson: Prof Otieno;

CEO of Independent Development Trust:

Ms Thembi Nwendamutswu;

Distinguished guests;

Government officials;

Water Conservation Warriors;

Members of the community;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen

We meet here in Randfontein now during the Freedom Month. It is in this month of April that South Africans from all walks of life celebrate religiously the attainment of freedom. Deepening the gains of this hard earned freedom government

remains resolute to address the triple challenges of unemployment, inequality and poverty.

In his State of the Nation Address in 2010, President Zuma reminded us that we are a water scarce country, therefore we have to conserve it in order to meet our social and economic developmental needs and that we have to reduce water loss by half in 2014.

It is for this reason that the Department of Water Affairs introduced the War on Leaks Project which aims to eradicate water leaks at household level, educate users about water conservation, fixing leaks, creating jobs for young people and skills development.

We are here today to launch the Randfontein War on Leaks project and to handover competency certificates to the youth trained on basic plumbing course. War on Leaks project seeks to further intensify Water Conservation and Demand Management Programme that focuses on means to conserve water to meet current and future water demands.

Through the War on Leaks project in Randfontein, 30 local indigent youth were trained and appointed as Water Conservation Warriors to implement the education and awareness programme as well as the retrofitting and leak repair initiative. A total of 3017 households have been visited and educated about the importance of conserving water. The greatest contributors to the water loss were

identified to be tap and toilet leaks which accounts for 88% of the water loss in Randfontein.

The local schools also forms a significant component of the community awareness programme as it is envisaged that instilling good values and habits at an early developmental stage is valuable in building a sound foundation for efficient water use behaviours. The school programme comprises of workshop sessions for the educators, caretakers and learners which normally take place during the assembly or life orientation periods.

A water watchers programme also forms part of the school programme. The groups of children from each school are requested to be responsible for reporting leaking fittings and other water related

problems and behaviours to be addressed by the school. I believe such initiatives will educate the learners on the challenges of water scarcity, efficient water use and the pertinence of active participation in reducing water loss.

To date 9 schools have been audited for leakage to establish the extent of water loss within these institutions which have been earmarked for inclusion in the retrofitting and leak repair.

The War on Leaks project presents an ideal opportunity for the municipality to contribute positively not only to reducing water loss but also to employment creation and poverty eradication. The presence of the 30 water conservation warriors of Mohlakeng today marks a tremendous commitment

to conserve our limited water resources for the benefit of the present and future generations.

Mogale City is a successful case study where the War on Leaks project was first implemented. I personally launched the project in 2009. A number of households and schools benefitted tremendously from the project. The monthly households and schools water bills were reduced due to fixing of leaking taps and toilets. Unemployed youth were recruited to assist in the implementation of the project. The quality of life of these youth improved as they acquired advanced plumbing skills and they were placed at a level where they were able to compete for work opportunities within the municipality or private sector. This is what I would like to see happening to the 30 water conservation warriors that were recruited in this project.

The Department of Water Affairs realises the need for local government support as a lack of capacity and resources hinders the implementation of projects. This is the reason why our Department has embarked on intervention programmes such as the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant, to ensure that dilapidated infrastructure is improved, and the Accelerated Community Infrastructure Programme, to ensure that the rectification of water infrastructure is taking place.

Ladies and gentlemen, the project that we are launching here today is taking our implementation of interventions a step further in ensuring that the water loss is reduced and our community members are being educated on the importance of fixing

leaking toilets and taps. What is also important to note here today is that, through this project, we are also celebrating women empowerment in the water sector because out of the 30 youth recruited 18 are young women.

I am looking forward to seeing not only a significant improvement in the water loss that is experienced in this local municipality, but the overall district municipality. It would be encouraging to note that the efforts were not in vain.

In conclusion, I would like to commend the funders of this project the Rand Water Foundation and the Independent Development Trust working together with the Randfontein Local Municipality to implement the War on Leaks project.

The Department of Water Affairs will provide the needed support during the implementation of this project and also investigate ways to ensure that this project is sustainable.

Let water unite us!

Water is life – Respect it, Conserve it, Enjoy it!

I thank you.