



**water affairs**

Department:  
Water Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL  
AFFAIRS MRS EDNA MOLEWA, MP, AT THE DELMAS IMBIZO,  
VICTOR KHANYE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, DELMAS, MPUMALANGA  
12 October 2013**

**Programme Director**

**Premier of Mpumalanga, Honourable DD Mabuza and Members of the  
Provincial Legislature present here**

**Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr  
Lechesa Tsenoli**

**District and Local Mayors**

**MMC's and Municipal Managers**

**Directors-General and Senior officials from the represented  
Departments and Provincial Government**

**Traditional and other community leaders represented here**

**All guests**

**Ladies and gentlemen**

*Let me to begin by thanking all of you present here today at this event  
which is part of the Imbizo Focus Week for October 2013. Government has  
set aside this period to specifically visit communities around the country to*

*listen to their views, advice, concerns and suggestions on matters concerning them. We have therefore chosen to come here so that we can have an opportunity to interact directly with you. It is for this reason that none of us here will deliver a long speech because we want to give you enough time to speak and ourselves enough time to listen and respond to you.*

*Earlier today, Premier Mabuza handed over houses built by government and Exxaro. As part of this event, The Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr Lechesa Tsenoli, is starting a programme that will lead to the total eradication of the bucket toilets in this area. I rise before you to support these programmes and to commit my Department to continue with its programmes that will make sure that both the housing and sanitation projects proceed well until there is no family that is homeless and no person with inferior sanitation.*

*Three months ago, we came here to launch a Bulk Water Supply Project as part of creating a better life for the people of Delmas and the Victor Khanye Local Municipality as a whole. We anticipated that with the provision of adequate water supply, more development would take place. Today's event is therefore testimony of the importance of water in the socio-economic development of any community. As we always say, water fulfills an economic, social, cultural, political and ecological role in improving people's quality of life. In the Department of Water Affairs we say "**water is life**", by this we mean water is central to all that we do.*

*Every year, 3.5 million people die of waterborne illness worldwide. Diarrhoea has become the second largest cause of death among children under five in many countries of the world, while lack of access to potable water kills more children than HIV and AIDS, malaria and smallpox combined.*

*In many countries, approximately one in eight people lack potable water. In just one day, more than 200 million hours of women's time is consumed by collecting and transporting water for domestic use.*

*The situation of lack of sanitation is far worse, for it affects 2.6 billion people, or 40% of the global population. According to the report on sanitation by the independent experts, sanitation, more than many other human rights issue, evokes the concept of human dignity; considers the vulnerability and shame that so many people experience every day when, again, they are forced to relieve themselves in the open, in a bucket or a plastic bag.*

*Therefore, it is a fact that the vast majority of illnesses around the world are caused by poor sanitation or bad management thereof. On any given day, half of the world's hospital beds are occupied by patients suffering from illnesses associated with lack of access to safe water and lack of sanitation. It is estimated that proper sanitation could reduce child death due to diarrhea by more than one third.*

*In South Africa, about 20 million people did not have adequate sanitation in 1994 when this government came into power. 15 million more did not have*

*access to potable water. These figures have since improved drastically due to efforts we have put in place to redress the past imbalances.*

*Minister Tsenoli, I would like to bring you up to speed with some of the work that we have done in this area as the DWA working hand in glove with the Province under Premier Mabuza, ably supported by the relevant MEC's, particularly MEC Skhosana and the District and Local Municipalities.*

*During the launch we had here in July, we acknowledged a history of water-borne diseases in Delmas, namely diarrhoea and typhoid and painfully recalled the outbreaks of these diseases during 1993, 2005 and 2007. We also reflected on the fact that the water service area of Delmas has been prone to diarrhoea outbreaks usually following first rainfalls of a new summer season and the need to end this state of affairs.*

*We therefore committed government to working towards the eradication of these challenges and reflected on a number of steps we have taken and those we envisage to take to end these problems. Six years ago, the Department of Water Affairs made available R750 000 to improve the management capacity of the municipal potable water works. We have also spent close to R76 million under the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant (RBIG) in the Victor Khanye Local Municipality in the past six years. Of this amount over R57 million was spent towards the Bloemendal Bulk Project and the balance of R18 514 000 was spent on groundwater development project, including drilling and equipping of 17 boreholes. We have spent*

*nearly R1,2 million on the refurbishment of Delmas Waste Water Treatment Works under the Accelerated Community Infrastructure Programme (ACIP).*

*With the Bloemendal-Delmas Bulk Water RBIG project in particular we have increased the level of services, including sanitation related services in the Delmas area. With the rest of other efforts, we have indeed made Delmas water safer and opened the doors for healthier conditions for the people of Delmas.*

*With the project aiming to supply 25MI/d of potable water to Delmas via a 37,2 km 610 mm diameter pipeline to meet the project future demand until 2026, I believe this is a huge step towards ensuring security of supply of water such that the eradication of the bucket system will surely have sufficient support to ensure longevity. As we know that the Bloemendal pumping station has been upgraded to comprise of two new 25 MI/d x 120m duty, dedicated to Delmas and fitted with variable speed drives, the DWA is showing seriousness in supporting this important function.*

*Minister Tsenoli and Premier Mabuza, the Launch of the bucket eradication system today, therefore, finds the ground work regarding water supply truly already done. We hope sector partners involved in the sanitation related services will make concerted efforts to address the funding mechanisms to speed up delivery and finalisation of this project in the entire Victor Khanye Local Municipality.*

*As government, we have demonstrated over the past 19 and half years that our aim is to create a better life for all. We have also demonstrated through*

*strategic partnerships within our relevant sectors how a lot can be achieved and this also within even a shorter time where necessary. It is through these efforts that today “**South Africa is a much better place than it was in 1994**”. We can also bravely put to our electorate that post 2014 we will continue to work harder and smarter to ensure that as we listen to the cries of the populace, we matchh that with with the requisite delivery of the services that will continue to make ours a better country, within a better Africa and a better world.*

*I thank you.*