

**SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS MRS. EDNA MOLEWA AT THE LIMPOPO CELEBRATION OF THE NATIONAL WATER WEEK 2013 AND THE LAUNCH OF THE TSHIKUNDAMALEMA COMMUNITY WATER PROJECT, TSHIKUNDAMALEMA SPORTS GROUND, MUTALE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, VHEMBE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, LIMPOPO**

**22 MARCH 2013**

Programme Director

AaabaMusanda!

Premier of Limpopo, Comrade Mathale and MEC's present

Executive Mayor of Vhembe District and Local Mayor of Mutale Local Municipalities respectively, as well as the respective Councils Members

Local and ward councillors here represented

Representatives from the SADC region and donor organs here represented

Members of the community within which we are

Officials from the Department of Water Affairs and their counterparts at all levels

Members of the media

Ladies and gentlemen

It is always an honour to be amongst the people who are the reason for our existence as public representatives and public servants. We are here in your midst this morning because we have to demonstrate the seriousness with which we take our responsibilities, which in the case of the Ministry and Department of Water Affairs, is the constitutional right of all South Africans to access good, clean and safe water for domestic and all other uses.

We take this opportunity as part of the National Water Week 2013 programme that seeks to raise the importance of water in our lives. The theme of the campaign says: ***“Water is Life – Respect It, Conserve It, Enjoy It”***, therefore the purpose of the campaign continues to demand of us as communities and a people to appreciate this resource that is so critical to our very existence.

We are working very hard to ensure that we deliver water to all our communities progressively and sustainably. The government has over the years delivered water to progressively. We do have a deadline of **2014???** to deliver to all and we believe that we are on track.

We live in a country that is one of the thirty driest in the world. In that stead, it is incumbent upon all of us as a people to conserve the water that we have. We are enjoined by the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 that it is important to improve water supply, use and management, and at the same time, there is a great concern about the potential impact of water-related risks. Beyond the issue of water-borne diseases due to unhealthy supply, we also stand the risk to the economy and development in the case where water supplies are not assured.

We are here today as well because the Strategic Infrastructure Project number 18 (SIP 18) is a ten-year delivery programme that will assist us to make up the backlog to deliver water and sanitation. At the moment we have a backlog of 1.4 million households to water and 2.1 million households to adequate sanitation. We cannot do this without active participation of and partnership with communities. This is why the Tshikundamalema community water project which we are here to launch is so critical. This is a perfect example of the kind of resilience coupled with innovation that we have come to expect from our communities. Ba-Musanda, what you and the community here have initiated is truly remarkable. I therefore put it to you that the DWA will by all means partner you in ensuring all the correct processes are followed to ensure safe water is delivered to your households.

Premier, between the DWA Limpopo Region and the Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism Department (LEDET) there will be a need for close co-operation and partnership to ensure that all legal processes are not delayed, thus the necessary and associated infrastructure be not delayed.

Furthermore the partnership with our donor friends, through the efforts of SADC efforts through the GIZ will ensure that all relevant expertise is channeled into this project to ensure sustainability, not just in terms of water delivery, but also with regard to the sustainability of the sources and environment. I am excited to know that through the GIZ there is funding to the tune of 250 000 Euros to support the project. I am also informed that a feasibility study will be undertaken to look into further funding to assist its sustainability.

From what I have seen of this place, there is a desire within me to ensure that it remains as pristine as possible so that the community can continue to enjoy life here whilst sustainable development is continued. I believe the Premier and his executive, together with the District and Local Municipalities, will also be very interested in how this example is replicated in the province and more communities living around springs, waterfalls and streams benefit, with the ultimate benefit being for its replication where such a programme is needed in the country.

Even as we continue to endeavour to provide access to water to all, we cannot undermine the need to continue to raise awareness and provide education around the importance of water saving, integrated water resource management, climate change and environment including water-related careers. The DWA has the 2020 Vision to educate our learners in this. We must collectively bring this to the fore so that what we plant now must be taken forward to the next generations. We owe at least that much to our children.