



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL
AFFAIRS MRS EDNA MOLEWA, MP, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE
BLOEMENDAL-DELMAS BULK WATER PROJECT, VICTOR
KHANYILE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, DELMAS, MPUMALANGA**

16 JULY 2013

Programme Director

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

District and Local Mayors

MMC's and Municipal Managers

Acting DG of DWA and Senior Managers of the three tiers of Government

Traditional and other community leaders represented here

All guests

Ladies and gentlemen.

It is once again a great honour, Premier, to be welcomed so warmly in the Province of Mpumalanga. It is also with a great sense of appreciation of the amount of work that government is doing to bring basic services to the people of our country. We are gathered here today again, in a different area of this province, to honour our people with our humble services, in particular, that of ensuring security of water supplies for the social good and economic development. As we say in the Department "water is life", we do mean in all senses of life. We are here today to launch the Bloemendal-Delmas Bulk Water Project, which project we unveiled earlier.

As we all know, Delmas has a history of water-borne diseases, namely diarrhoea and typhoid. We painfully recall the outbreaks during 1993, 2005 and 2007. We also are acutely aware that the water service area of Delmas is prone to diarrhoea outbreaks normally following first rainfalls of a new summer season.

Remembering the outbreaks of typhoid fever and diarrhoea in November 1993, when an unfortunate total of 14 people were reported to have died, about 2000 cases of gastro intestinal disease treated, of which 57 people were confirmed to have contracted typhoid fever. Typhoid was also confirmed on 5 September 2005 when about 528 cases were reported, with 5 people reported to have died while 59 people were hospitalised for typhoid fever.

Programme Director, ladies and gentlemen, these statistics, which did not take into account the numbers during the subsequent outbreak of 2007, are meant to help us keep in mind what kind and size of responsibilities lie on our shoulders in the need of our people for safe drinking water as well as water for all other uses. Government cannot afford to be lax in addressing the needs of the South African populace. This has explicit command therefore to all of us to carry out our duties with the utmost responsibility. Our Constitution dictates that water is a constitutional right for all of us. We dare not fail our communities.

As a result of the needs of this area, government had to make a concerted effort to meet the needs of the community. A number of efforts and activities were undertaken that led to where we are today, launching the Bloemendal-Delmas Bulk Water Project.

In 2007 the Department of Water Affairs availed R750 000 to appoint a private contractor to assist the Municipality to improve the management capacity of the municipal potable water works. A total of R75 995 397 has been spent under Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant (RBIG) in this area of Victor Khanye Local Municipality since 2007/8 to 2012/13 financial years. Of this amount R57 481 397 was spent towards the Bloemendal Bulk Project and the balance of R18 514 000 was spent on groundwater development project. A total of R1 180 000 was spent on the refurbishment of Delmas waste water treatment works under Accelerated Community infrastructure Programme (ACIP).

In October 2008, the Department, together with Rand Water, which had been appointed as the implementing agent, the Victor Khanye LM, and the Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) signed an agreement for bulk water infrastructure to supply potable water to the town of Delmas. That water infrastructure was Bloemendal- Delmas Project. This project aims to supply 25Ml/d of potable water to Delmas via a 37,2 km 610 mm diameter pipeline to meet the project future demand until 2026. The Bloemendal pumping stations have been upgraded to comprise of two new 25 Ml/d x 120m duty, both dedicated to Delmas.

The total cost of this project is R171 500 000-00, with the project scheduled for March 2010 till July 2013. We are in the month of July 2013 and duly unveiling the project; this is within schedule and must be applauded. This project will serve 6880

households, created jobs for 204 people, out of which 42 were women, provided training for 117, of whom 40 are women.

Honourable Premier and guests, it is also important to point out that even as the project encountered ten wetland crossings, the necessary Water Use Authorisations were approved for construction in these areas and the wetlands are not compromised.

One aspect that has been brought to my attention is the value of the funding needed and at the moment unavailable for further infrastructure development in the Municipality. This I believe is part of the R673 billion we need as a country over the next ten years for water infrastructure. We have to work together with our sector partners, even and especially in the private sector, to realise this funding and ensure that even as we develop new infrastructure, the operations and maintenance do not fall behind and ultimately compromise the delivery of such infrastructure and ultimately, water services.

We have recently launched the Strategic Infrastructure Project number 18 (SIP 18), under the auspices of the Presidential Infrastructure Co-ordinating Commission. This SIP 18 is responsible for all matters of water and sanitation services' delivery.

The completion of this project we are launching today, dictates that we now move our focus towards a concerted effort towards addressing the question of overloaded waste water infrastructure in both Delmas and Botleng. This so that an honest attempt needs to be made to ensure that derelict or over-stretched waste water treatment systems do not compromise the delivery of good quality potable water to the communities in time. We have to work hard to ensure that the performance of not just Victor Khanye but the other five local municipalities too that comprise the Nkangala District Municipality raise their level of performance within the Blue and Green Drop assessment initiatives.

With regards to the issues of Water Conservation and Water Demand Management, we need to ensure that all the communities are aware of the little things that have a major impact on water delivery. I am informed that Victor Khanye has had to ration water so as to reduce water losses. Water losses in the area are supposedly due to the network being operated at high pressure as well as household leakages. This level of non-revenue water stands at 30% for the municipality which is very high. The introduction of the Bloemendal-Delmas pipeline implies that the available water supply will exceed the demand in the service areas. It will be critical to exercise oversight or control on order to ensure that this available supply does not compensate for water losses in the system.

I am of the firm belief, Premier, that if we continue as we have done over the last while; where we drive the officials in the areas of responsibility we have been given, to understand our thinking; to realise the needs of the communities we serve, that these communities cannot and should not wait forever for our services; that the

agencies that do the work on behalf of government get to understand their responsibilities within the broad delivery mandate of government, the people of this country will not have to wait a lifetime to experience “a better life for all”.

I thank you!!!