



water affairs

Department:  
Water Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, MS REJOICE MABUDAFHASI ON THE OFFICIAL HANDOVER OF THE MEDIA CLASSROOM TO TLHAME PRIMARY SCHOOL IN MMAMETLHAKE, DR JS MOROKA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE**

Programme Director;

MEC for the Department of Education: Mpumalanga: Ms. Reginah Mhaule;

Your Worship the Mayor of Dr. J.S. Moroka Local Municipality: Cllr Grace Mthimunye;

Acting Executive Mayor of Nkangala District Municipality; Cllr. A.P Mafume;

Councillors;

Kgosi ya Bakgatla ba Mocha;

General Manager of the MTN Foundation: Ms Kusile Mtunzi Hairwadzi;

Government officials;

The principal, educators and learners;

Members of the Media

Ladies and gentlemen

I greet you all

It is indeed a pleasure and a privilege for me to be here today to celebrate the achievement of Tlhame Primary School for winning the Baswa Le Meetse Traditional Music category in 2011.

The community must be very proud of the school, especially the learners and the mentor who put the area and the Mpumalanga Province on the map by scooping the national first prize in a competition whereby winning schools from all the nine provinces participated.

As a reward for their hard work and dedication, the school received a state of the art media classroom sponsored by our partners, the MTN Foundation.

The media classroom will take teaching and learning to another level in the school and ensure that the learners are well resourced in preparation for their lessons and improve their knowledge as it is equipped with 21 computers, data projector, multifunctional printer, two modems, two data cards and a R1000.00 internet subsidy for twenty four (24) months.

I would like to thank the parents, principal, educators and the Department of Education for supporting the learners and the mentor. If it was not for the support and encouragement, the learners would not have achieved this success.

As we celebrate with Tlhome Primary School, I would like to acknowledge the presence in our midst of representatives from Duma Primary School in Mbombela who also won first prize in the national competition in 2011.

South Africa is a water scarce country and one of the 30 driest countries in the world. As a country, we are losing a lot of water through water leaks and inefficient water use. Water loss through leakages and water use inefficiency is a major challenge for our country, and we cannot address it alone as a department. We all need to actively participate as water conservation is everybody's responsibility.

Water is life. We need to take care of the available water we have for our own and future generations. If we do not take care of the available water we currently have, we might find ourselves in a difficult situation. It is therefore each and everyone's responsibility to conserve water and to educate our peers about the importance of water conservation. We need to take responsibility and ensure that we lead the brigade of water conservation and use water efficiently and sparingly.

As a way of creating awareness and educating our communities of the importance of water conservation, water use efficiency and creating an interest amongst the youth on the water sector, the Department came up with the 2020 Vision for Water Education Programme (2020 VWEP), of which Baswa Le Meetse is one of its components.

The other components include the South African Youth Water Prize and Aqua Enduro. The programme is aimed at addressing the key challenges of water scarcity, water use efficiency and water sector skills shortage in a sustainable way by educating and empowering learners on water conservation.

Baswa Le Meetse is a key project of the 2020 Vision whereby Grade 6 learners convey messages of water use efficiency and water conservation and health and hygiene through art forms such as drama, traditional music, praise singing, poetry and posters.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to share with you the successes and highlights of the 2020 Vision programme in the Mpumalanga Province:

- In 2008, Khokhovela Primary School won in praise poetry and received a media centre.
- In 2010, Buhlebuyeta Primary School obtained 3<sup>rd</sup> position in the Drama Category.
- In 2011, Duma and Tlhame Primary Schools obtained first positions in the Praise and Traditional Music categories respectively and were awarded media centres.
  
- In 2013, Eastdene Combined School won first position in the Poster Category and was awarded a media centre, thus bringing the total number of media centres awarded to schools in the Mpumalanga Province to a total of four (4) to date.
  
- Since 2010, 19 bursaries (8 SAYWP, 8 Aqua Enduro and 3 Public Speaking) were awarded to learners in various schools within the province to pursue water related careers.
  
- Specific reference can however be made about Khoza Sibusiso who participated in the SAYWP in 2009. Although he was not a national winner, with the support from the Regional Office, he went on to pursue a water related career and is now a graduate trainee within the Policy and Strategy Directorate within the Department.

I would like to commend the school for its outstanding work in leading the water conservation, health and hygiene and food security campaign in the area. As a way of conserving water, water is collected through buckets and placed in classroom where learners use a jug and a cup to drink.

This saves water in that the taps are never left running while learners quench their thirst. The school is also reusing grey water, which is the water used for washing hands to water the garden. The vegetable garden is watered only in the morning to avoid evaporation. As the Champion of the War on Leaks campaign, I say thank you and keep it up as there are no leaks in the school's water system.

In conclusion, let me convey our special words of appreciation to our key stakeholders and sponsors for your support. Without your support and dedication, this programme would not be what it is today.

The programme is growing in leap and bounds because of your special support. Let us keep and strengthen this relationship for the benefit of our youth and our country as a whole.

Lastly, as we leave this place, I request that we all leave here as Water Ambassadors and spread the message of water conservation and water use efficiency and protect our water resources.

*Water is Life: Respect It, Conserve It, Enjoy It.*

I thank you all