



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE HONOURABLE DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, MS REJOICE MABUDAFHASI DURING THE CLOSING AND AWARD CEREMONY OF THE YOUTH WATER SUMMIT AT THE BIRCHWOOD HOTEL IN BOKSBURG, EKURHULENI

05 JULY 2013

Programme director

Your worship the Executive Mayor of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality: Cllr Mondli Gungubele;

MMC for Water and Energy: Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality: Cllr Aubrey Nxumalo;

Councillors

President of African Water Association and Chairperson of South African Association Water Utilities: Ms Dudu Myeni;

Chairperson of Rand Water Board: Advocate Petlane;

Representatives from our sister Departments of Basic Education and Science and Technology;

Representative from Rand Water;

Educators, Mentors and Learners;

Members of the media;

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning

*Today marks the closing of the intensive week long activities of the Youth Water Summit under the theme: **Working together for youth development and a drug free South Africa.***

This year we celebrate the 37th anniversary of the 16 June Soweto uprising. While the youth of 1976 fought for freedom and the creation of a democratic state, today's youth activism is directed towards successfully tackling the challenges of poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, HIV and AIDS, personal development and economic

freedom.

I would like to encourage you to emulate the class of 76 but this time fighting for a different cause that is relevant to your generation. You are the vanguards of our water resources and the environment.

In this month of July, we are all expected to dedicate 67 minutes of our time to make a difference in our communities and in the lives of other South Africans in honour of the oldest statesman, Tata Madiba.

The Department of Water Affairs hosts the annual Youth Water Summit which is aimed at giving an opportunity to learners participating in the 2020 Vision Educational Programme showcasing their projects through national competition, expose them to water related excursions, exhibitions, lectures, debates etc. Hundreds of delegates from the nine provinces including daily visits attend this summit.

The 2020 Vision programme educates learners about water resources and environmental management and also promotes water sector careers as a response to the scarce skills challenge faced by the Department and the entire water sector.

This education programme is done through the development of curriculum aligned water related resource materials, conducting workshops for educators to be able to use the resource materials as well as coordination of career exhibitions.

Ladies and gentlemen, we need to ensure that the limited water resources we have, is enough for our socio-economic development. We can only achieve that if we educate all citizens of our country about water conservation. Water loss through water leaks and pollution of our rivers are major challenges amongst others. Thus the implementation of programmes such as 2020 vision, War on Leaks, Adopt a River and others.

This year's youth water summit started with a water walk by all delegates which was aimed at creating awareness about water conservation in Boksburg. The water walk was initiated by Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality. The young people have spoken collectively, they say enough is enough – South Africans Stop wasting water, Stop polluting water sources- Save our water, Save our environment.

During the Greenest Municipality Awards held in KwaZulu Natal last week, I was impressed with Grade R learners who gave us an excellent performance educating us about water and waste management.

At the New Age breakfast on SABC 2 Morning Live, young people who are delegates of this Youth Water Summit engaged very well on issues affecting youth in the country and they unapologetically cemented the fact that they are the leaders of tomorrow. They are doing all they can to ensure that they inherit a preserved earth from us. These future leaders are challenging us big time we have no choice but to do the things right.

Ladies and gentlemen, the above mentioned does not need rocket science, it is evidence that our educational programmes are making an impact, we have instilled values and a culture to conserve natural resources. Our children know that Water is a gift from God which must be conserved. Thank you learners for being Water Ambassadors. Educate a Child to Educate a Nation.

Through the 2020 Vision programme :

- 5000 schools have been reached and provided with curriculum aligned educational resource materials, participated in the South African Youth Water Prize, Baswa Le Meetse, Aqua Enduro and Public Speaking projects;*
- 1200 schools which were national winners of Baswa Le Meetse Award have been provided with media classrooms composed of computers, internet connection and inter-active boards sponsored by MTN. Most of these schools are rural schools.*
- National winners of the South African Junior Water Prize have been given an opportunity to participate in the Stockholm Junior Water Prize. I am proud to inform you that South Africa won the prize twice.*
- 89 learners have been awarded bursaries to study water related careers. Motebele Moshodi who is one of the bursary beneficiaries graduated already and he is a graduate trainee in the Department.*

Claire Reid also graduated and she is implementing her project and employed 10 women.

- During 2012 youth summit, the out of school African youth gathered here in Birchwood and developed the draft Africa Youth Water Strategy which has been approved by African Ministers last month.*

Even though we have the above mentioned successes the big challenge is inadequate capacity to reach all the schools. We will address it soon.

Learners, I hope you enjoyed your stay in Gauteng and attained a lot of information which you will share with your families and communities.

Today is the last day of the summit, national winners will be announced. If you did not make it in the national competition, don't worry because the mere fact that you worked hard to reach this stage of the competition makes you a winner.

You are all winners from your respective provinces and are eligible for the provincial prize, another prize is that of travelling to Gauteng to participate in the activities of the Youth Water Summit and to meet so many friends in one week.

Those who are national winners, more work still need to be done, you will be registered for Eco - Schools project and participate for 3 years. The Eco Schools and Water Affairs team will provide hands on support. We want to ensure that you are Model Schools in water resource and environment management.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the educators for the sterling work, without your dedication and love for these children, we would not be gathered here today.

I would also like to thank the adjudicators for their impartiality throughout the competitions.

This Summit would not be successful if it wasn't for the partnership with our sister Departments of Basic Education and Science and Technology.

Our most sincere gratitude goes to our sponsors MTN, Rand Water, Sedibeng Water, Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality for their continued support.

Lastly I would like to thank the departmental staff for coordinating such a successful Youth Water Summit, I know it was not easy you had sleepless nights but you have managed to pull it through.

Let water unite us....Water is life, Respect it, Conserve it, Enjoy it.

I thank you.

