



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Speech delivered by honourable Deputy Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Mme Rejoice Mabudafhasi ,MP, during the Women in Water Awards in Mzilela village, Giyani

Friday, 23 August 2013

Programme director;

First lady, Mama Sizakele MaKhumalo Zuma;

Your Worship the Executive Mayor of Mopani District Municipality, Cllr Joshua Matlou;

Your Worship the Mayor of Greater Giyani Local Municipality, Cllr Patrick Hlungwani;

Councillors;

Traditional Leadership;

Representative of Rand Water;

Representative of the Water Research Commission;

Representative of Lepelle Northern Water;

Representative of Trans Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA);

Representatives of women organisations;

Government Officials;

Members of the Mzilela and surrounding villages;

Members of the media;

Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the leadership and the community of Mzilela village for the warm welcome.

During this month of August, South Africans from all walks of life pay tribute to more than 20 000 women who marched to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956 in protest against the extension of pass laws to women.

We draw inspiration from women such as Helen Joseph, Lillian Ngoyi, Rahima Moosa, Sophia Williams De Bruyn and many others who participated during the 1956 women's march.

This year we celebrate this milestone under the theme: **A Centenary of Working Together towards sustainable Women Empowerment and Gender Equality**".

The focus for this year is also on the impact of the 1913 Natives Land Act, as well as programmes and projects to accelerate women's access to land.

Since the dawn of democracy in 1994, government has made significant progress in empowering women in the spheres of politics, the public sector and education. The country has moved from the past where women suffered oppression based on their gender, colour and class to one where gender equality is now a constitutional imperative.

Today marks the 10th anniversary of the annual Women in Water Awards programme. This programme was initiated by the former Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, Comrade Ronnie Kasrils.

Through programmes such as the Women in Water Awards government will continue to make many strides beyond the second decade of our democracy.

Since its inception the Women in Water awards programme has reached many milestones in empowering women whilst preserving our precious natural resource.

Women are most often the collectors, users and managers of water in the household as well as farmers of irrigated and rainfed crops.

Because of these roles, women have considerable knowledge about water resources, including quality and reliability, restrictions and acceptable storage methods, and are key to the success of water resources development and irrigation policies and programmes

It has been calculated that in South Africa alone, women collectively walk the equivalent distance of 16 times to the moon and back per day gathering water for families.

Women always achieve something from nothing, because God created us to be Special and Blessed us with very unique qualities which enable us to persevere in difficult situations. A woman puts a smile on her face even if she is deeply hurt, problems do not stop her from achieving her plans.

Vamanana, Basadi, Vho Mme, this is our day to enjoy and celebrate the hard work and achievements of our families, communities and the country.

In this month we celebrate women's achievements and also get a better understanding of the challenges experienced by women. Women played a crucial role towards the development of our country and their secret to success is unity and prayer.

Our government has great plans for the development of women and we will not rest until women especially rural women are liberated from the shackles of poverty, unemployment, crime, abuse, illiteracy, landlessness, their girl children not going to school, not having access to financial grants for their small businesses, not having access to water.

We need to leave our posh offices and spend more time with women out there creating awareness and disseminating information to women about government programmes and resources available for women and ensure that they participate in such initiatives. Our government has enough policies and strategies what we need now is implementation.

Women are known worldwide that they are custodians of water from year memorial. The indigenous knowledge, passion and commitment of women to conservation of water resources can be one of the solutions to address the prevailing water challenges such as water leaks, pollution of rivers, waste dumping, water wastage amongst others. Thus the reason we brought all women on board to prove that water resource management is not for engineers and scientists only.

It is for this reason that the Department have specific projects targeting women. We have a full functional Gender Directorate which is charged with a responsibility of ensuring that we are complying with the national targets on women development.

Ladies and gentlemen allow me to outline the milestones achieved by our Ministry which benefitted women:

- One thousand three hundred and forty three (1343) job opportunities for women have been created through adopt a river project since its conception in 2010. All of them have been provided with basic training skills;
- Twenty young women (20) are currently being trained on waste water treatment works in Shixini Adopt a River project in Eastern Cape. Twenty nine (29) were trained last year;
- One hundred (100) women from Limpopo were trained in waste management;
- Ten (10) women from Western Cape were trained in water resource management
- Twenty four (24) young women from Adopt a River project are in a process of getting registered to various universities to study water related careers.
- One hundred and eighty one (181) women from various municipalities of the Western Cape were trained in plumbing. They will be part of the War

on Leaks teams in their respective municipalities. This milestone has been achieved through our partnership with Development Bank of South Africa and the University of Stellenbosch.

- Two hundred and fourteen women (214) from the nine provinces (9) have been trained as process controllers with funding from the Local Government SETA

Earlier this week I attended the Working for Water programme women's dialogue, I was so touched by the testimonies given by women about how that programme has restored their dignity, changed their lives and their families. Some of them started as labourers and today they are fully fledged trained contractors who employed others. They have been trained on technical skills and life skills which benefit their children and community.

Women in Water Awards honours women who actively participated in addressing challenges related to water resource management. Women identify water related challenges in their areas, conceptualise and implement projects aimed at addressing the identified challenges and register such projects for the competition.

The prizes are awarded in the following categories:

- **Water Conservation** - The project should clearly support the national objectives on water conservation and demand management. It should also demonstrate the best, economic and simple ways of conserving water in

the process of doing daily activities that should contribute to poverty eradication;

- **Adopt a River** – It should encourage communities not to pollute rivers. The project should also promote innovative and sustainable solutions to water management and demonstrate greater women’s participation and involvement;
- **Education and Awareness** – The project Should demonstrate clear water related awareness and education campaigns in communities;
- **Community Development** – The project should provide evidence of greater community involvement and development.

The Adjudication panel is composed of water experts from various institutions in the water sector.

It is with greatness of humility that I stand here to honour ordinary women of our country who made a difference in water management, to help eradicate the threat of water shortages and promote efficient usage thereof. Water contributes towards the eradication of poverty in the globe.

“Basadi ba tswara thipa ka bogaleng”. Let us salute them.

It is through such initiatives and participation by ordinary citizens, that department of Water Affairs, also grow, learn and discover other means of addressing water problems.

On that note let me acknowledge some of our previous winners from all over South Africa who are present here today (May you please rise).

Whether you participated as an entrant, a winner, a finalist, attended the mobilisation workshops, you made a difference.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to convey our utmost thanks to the First Lady Mama Sizakele MaKhumalo Zuma for making time out of your busy schedule to come and be part of this historic celebration that seeks to honour and encourage women to continue to conserve and preserve our finite natural resource.

I would like to thank our partners Rand Water, Trans Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA), Lepelle Northern Water, Water Research Commission, for their generosity.

I also want to extend my appreciation to the panel of judges who spent extensive time evaluating entries.

I also thank all the department's employees who have managed this process up to where we are today. Thank you for a job well done.

'Wathinta' bafazi wathint' imbokodo'

Malibongwe!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I thank you.