

**SPEECH BY MS RT MABUDAFHASI, MP, DEPUTY
MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL
AFFAIRS AT THE YOUTH WATER SUMMIT
OPENING CEREMONY BIRCHWOOD HOTEL,
BOKSBURG**

01 JULY 2013

Programme Director

Your worship Mayor of the City of Ekurhuleni: Mr Mondli
Gungubele;

Councillors;

CEO of the Birchwood & Soweto Hotel Mrs. Lindiwe
Sangweni-SiddoPartners;

Head Masters;

Educators;

Learners;

Members of the media;

Ladies and Gentlemen

As we usher in the month of July, the month in which people from across the world both young and old, united in diversity celebrate the birth of our icon, Tata Madiba, our thoughts and prayers are with him during these difficult times. We wish him well and a speedy recovery from his ailing health.

I was encouraged to see the commitment and determination you (young people) have shown during our water conservation awareness 2 kilometers walk prior to this opening ceremony.

One of the happiest times of my life in each year is the week of the Youth Water Summit as I know that I meet water ambassadors, future leaders, patriots and the most intelligent people of our country who go out of their way to research and learn more about water related issues,

internalise it, implement good practices and impart it to their families and communities.

This gives us hope that when we die our country, mother earth will be in safe hands. I always learn new things from all of you and share it with other people.

As I welcome you all to this summit I wish to remind you that this programme serves as a practical application of the words once echoed by the Senegalese ecologist, Dr Baba Dioum in 1968, that education is a critical response to achieving behavioural change to issues of natural resource management.

I quote

"In the end we will conserve only what we love;

We will love only what we understand and;

*We will understand only what we have been **taught.**"*

Unquote

So educators **teach** your learners ...

so they may **understand** ...

for if they **understand** the importance of water ...

they will **love** our precious resource

And when they **love** water ...

They will **conserve!**

Allow me to share with you very important information which some of you know and others not - Water has no borders, it is no longer a village, local or a country issue, it is a global issue - it is uniting nations of the world. Thus the declaration by the United Nations that 2013 is the Year of International Water Co-Operation with the objective of promoting cooperation amongst countries to ensure global

water security and sustainable development.

Water security will only be achieved if water conservation is prioritised by all the nations. All countries are expected to put water management plans in place towards water security, thus the prioritisation of water conservation in the South African Water Resource Strategy amongst others. The National development Plan also emphasises water conservation. Thus the implementation of the 2020 Vision programme.

The 2020 Vision programme educates you about water resource management and promotes water sector careers. The knowledge you attained from educational resource materials opened your eyes to identify water challenges in

your areas and take action by developing projects which you will showcase during this youth summit.

It also enabled you to educate your families and communities. Hence you are called Water Ambassadors. Your involvement, participation and contribution in the 2020 vision programme is very important to us as a department as you enable us to achieve the strategic outcomes of water conservation.

We are proud of you, continue to do the good work of promoting the conservation of our natural resources as they are the source of life.

I declare the 2013 Youth Water Summit officially open.

I wish you all the best, enjoy each and every moment.

Enjoy the fruits of our democracy which brought you excellent opportunities which we were never exposed to during our time.

To those who will participate in competitions, remember that you are a winner already from your province, show us the best innovations and creativity that will put your schools on the map, remember it is not just about participation, it is also about making a difference in your community. Working together for youth development and a drug free South Africa.

Let me end by the words once said by our icon, Tata Madiba,

I quote

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”

Unquote

Water is Life, Respect it, Conserve it and Enjoy it.

I thank you