



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Budget Debate Vote No: 38 Water and Sanitation

Honourable Deputy Minister Pamela Tshwete

Tuesday 15 July 2014

Honourable Speaker

Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers

Honourable Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee

Honourable Members of Parliament

Honourable Guests in the Gallery

- 1.1 *Let me take this opportunity to greet you all in the name of the Department of Water and Sanitation.*
- 1.2 *First and foremost, I would like to thank the African National Congress for giving me the opportunity to stand before you today as the Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation, and most importantly the people of South Africa for voting the African National Congress into power to serve the nation.*
- 1.3 *I would also like to thank the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform where I served as a Deputy Minister in my first stint in the Executive.*

1.4 *With this being my maiden Budget Vote speech as a Deputy Minister for the new Department I want to say that I look forward to working with Minister Nomvula Mokonyane in the water and sanitation family in bringing quality basic services to the people of South Africa.*

1.5 *The President has asked Minister Mokonyane and I to set up a new Department for Water and Sanitation as part of improving delivery of water and sanitation services to communities.*

Honourable Chairperson, the Good Story we are telling as the Department of Water and Sanitation will focus on how we have moved forward by increasing the number of people with access to water and sanitation services, and how these interventions are rewarding the country with job creation, skills for priority groups, and better access to potable water and sanitation.

1.6 *Because of the democratic government leading South Africa today, more than 94 % of our people have access to water, 84% have access to sanitation systems, whilst 81 % of people have electricity, and 71% have domestic waste removed from their homes. And these numbers are growing.*

1.7 *NgelixeshakusalawulauRhulumente we-ANC, sizakunciphisaabantuabalandaamanziemifuleninabantuabanyanzelw aukusebensizaamabucketiekubonakalaukubaafanelethinabantuabam nyamaabizwangokubangoPota-PotaphayaeKhayelitshaaphakweliPhondoleNtshonaKoloni.*

- 1.8 *Honourable Chairperson, one of the good stories we have to tell is that the Department hosted its 6th annual Youth Water Summit. The purpose of the Youth Water Summit is to motivate youth to study maths, science, and technology so that we can build their interest in selecting engineering courses at tertiary institutions particularly among females. We want to develop more female engineers.*
- 1.9 *More than 600 delegates from all 9 provinces were hosted this year, including children, educators, sponsors, and partners.*
- 1.10 *Towards the end of the Youth Water Summit, an awards ceremony was held where bursaries, laptops, prize money, and a fully equipped media classroom worth R2 million was won by Qumbu Junior Secondary School in the Eastern Cape.*
- 1.11 *Since the inception of this programme, 46 media classrooms have been won to date and this has made a big difference in rural communities where the gap between the poor and rich is being bridged.*
- 1.12 *The winners of the South African Youth Water Prize from the Youth Water Summit will now represent the country during the World Water Week event in Stockholm, Sweden between 31st August and 5th of September 2014.*
- 1.13 *We are glad to mention the overall winners of this year's Youth Water Prize as learners from Taxila Secondary School in Polokwane, Limpopo. I'd like us to congratulate Nthabiseng Motona, DipuoNthane and TebogoMamabolo. These students are our winners of the South African Youth Water Prize. Their innovation that won them the prize looks at purifying rain water to the level of drinkability.*
- 1.14 *Indeed we have a good story to tell.*

- 1.15 *Honourable Chairperson, projects that deal with women's emancipation are very close to our heart and the upcoming Gender, Water and Development Conference will be instrumental in bringing to the fore women's experiences in the water sector.*
- 1.16 *Honourable Chairperson, another good story to tell is that in response to the shortage of scarce skills, the Department has a Learning Academy that has awarded 648 bursaries since its establishment in 2007.*
- 1.17 *The Learning Academy is a pivotal branch of the Department because it injects into society capacitated individuals who will go on to work in water sector related projects such as infrastructure and conservation.*
- 1.18 *In the financial year 2013/14, R12.7 million was transferred to the Learning Academy for student bursaries relating to science and engineering. I will urge the Department to continue employing its own graduates so that we can curb the trend of using consultants consistently.*
- 1.19 *Honourable Chairperson, the backlog in providing water and sanitation is not new but comes from the colonial and apartheid governments who deliberately created restrictive and racist laws like the Native Land Act of 1913 which caused dispossession and led to millions of people living in informal settlements with no access to basic services like clean water, sanitation, and electricity.*
- 1.20 *During the democratic dispensation we banished all racist water legislation and put in its place the National Water Act and Water Services Act, which treats water as a public resource that needs to be sustainably protected and used for social and economic development.*

- 1.21 *In order for the legislation to continually address the needs of our changing society, we have taken a decision to review the amalgamation of the National Water Act and Water Services Act into a single piece of legislation.*
- 1.22 *Government's responsibility now is to accelerate the delivery of water and sanitation to communities in need such as those in deep rural areas and in informal settlements - amatyotyombe.*
- 1.23 *Our programmes for improved access to clean quality drinking water seek to implement the National Development Plan, which calls for greater investment in social and economic infrastructure.*
- 1.24 *The Department has been awarded a budget of over R12, 4 billion over the 2014/15 financial term, and this budget is set to grow over the Medium Term Expenditure Framework.*
- 1.25 *What makes this 20th year of democracy revolutionary is the amount of investment in infrastructure that the Government has prioritised.*
- 1.26 *Honourable Chairperson, our National Water Resource Strategy serves as a clear guide for adopting better water management strategies. The possibility of a water shortage in South Africa is a reality if we do not adhere to the principles in the National Water Resource Strategy.*
- 1.27 *The current trend is for people in the cities, urban and suburban areas to gain easy access to water. Though in many rural areas, there are taps for water, some people that are based in the deep rural areas still fetch water from the rivers.*

- 1.28 *The challenge with fetching water from rivers is that river water is not as clean as it used to be in my era. I grew up fetching water from the rivers, but over the years urbanisation, farming, and mining have dominated water usage, which has also resulted in polluted rivers.*
- 1.29 *Last year, up to R2-million was set aside for a further 12 months to fund the Adopt-a-River Programme, which created close to 600 job opportunities for the financial year 2012/13.*
- 1.30 *The River Health Programme was implemented in 110 rivers in 2012/13, and plans are underway to implement it to more rivers in the current financial year. By 2016/17, we will have implemented the Programme in 125 different rivers. This programme improves the protection of our natural water resources, enhancing the likelihood of clean quality water over a longer period of time.*
- 1.31 *For rural communities, pollution in rivers means that water in many rivers is no longer safe to drink. As such, measures must be taken to hold big businesses accountable and to make them more responsible.*
- 1.32 *In response, the Department is implementing the “polluter pays principle” whereby those responsible for producing pollution are made responsible for paying for the damage to our water resources.*
- 1.33 *Traditionally water rights are dominated by big establishments like farms and mines. Shortage of quality water affects poor households and emerging Black farmers who struggle to access water for their crops.*

- 1.34 *The Department runs a programme for providing rainwater to poor farmers. In 2013/14, 146 poor farmers received the support of the Department and 1080 rainwater harvesting tanks were installed thus far.*
- 1.35 *The effort to preserve water and produce quality water is done through various interventions in partnership with District Municipalities to ensure that communities have access to clean drinking water.*
- 1.36 *And so, in closing, I can say with confidence that the electoral mandate of voters is being addressed through the formation of a new Water and Sanitation Department.*
- 1.37 *I wish to thank our Honourable Minister Nomvula Mokonyane for her guidance and the Honourable Chairperson and Members of the Portfolio Committee.*
- 1.38 *I also want to thank all our water boards and all water sector stakeholders for their commitment towards a better life for our communities, understanding that hard work has just begun.*
- 1.39 *Phambilingomzabalazowamanzinoqoqosholelindle!*

Thank you.