



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE HONOURABLE DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, MS REJOICE MABUDAFHASI, MP, ON THE OCCASION OF THE NATIONAL WATER WEEK, WATER CONSERVATION EDUCATION AND AWARENESS IN RAPOTOKWANE VILLAGE, BELA BELA, LIMPOPO

18 MARCH 2014

Programme director;

Honourable Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Mr Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim;

Your Worship the Executive Mayor of Waterberg District Municipality, Cllr Rosina Mogotlane;

Your Worship the Mayor of Bela Bela Local Municipality, Cllr Freddy Hlungwani;

Councillors;

Kgoshi Mahlangu;

Limpopo Water Affairs Head, Chief Director, Lucy Kobe;

Representative of Magalies Water Board;

Government officials;

Members of the community;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen

Thobela.

We have a good story to tell.

Prior to 1994 less than 56% of the South African population had access to clean drinking water, now as we celebrate the twenty years of democracy and freedom, we are proud to announce that 95% of our population have access to clean drinking water.

That alone is a testimony that our government has made many strides in water delivery and that is a good story to tell.

On the same breath we remain resolute that more work still needs to be done and we are confident that we will continue deliver water to our people even beyond the twenty years of democracy.

We are gathered here in Rapotokwane on the eve of Human Rights Day to talk about one of the fundamental Human Rights as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic. Water is life. Everyone has the right to have access to clean drinking water.

We meet at this juncture now during the National Water Week which will be celebrated from 17 to 23 March under the theme *“Celebrating 20 years of Water Delivery for Social and Economic Development”*.

The National Water Week aims to create a culture of water conservation for all South African consumers and users; support water management and water services institutions to implement water conservation; contribute to the protection of the environment, ecology and water resources and to increase awareness of Government’s efforts towards realising the constitutional right of all South Africans to have access to clean water and sanitation.

We are aware of the plight that the community of Rapotokwane is experiencing due to insufficient ground water. However the little water that is available is consumed by invasive alien plants and illegal connections amongst others.

The Working for Water team will do a site visit and come up with a plan to remove them before end of March. I appeal to the community to stop illegal connections as the existing water infrastructure is meant for communal stand pipes not yard connections.

The Department of Water Affairs working together with Bela Bela Local Municipality refurbished seven boreholes including a hand pump, the other two boreholes are currently being refurbished as we speak, the contractors on site were delayed by the heavy rains. We are confident that these two boreholes will also be operational in no time as part of our short term solution to the water challenges in this area.

The medium term solution will be implemented through the Department’s Accelerated Community Infrastructure Programme (ACIP) on two phases, Phase 1 consist of drilling and equipping three boreholes

and Phase 2 consist of construction of 11 km pipeline from Dr. J.S Moroka in Mpumalanga province to the existing elevated steel tank at Rapotokwane Village.

The anticipated completion date of Phase 1 is August 2014 and Phase 2 will be completed in January 2015.

Pertaining to the long term solution, Magalies Water Board is currently conducting a feasibility study to explore possibilities of constructing a pipeline from the existing bulk pipeline which supply Belabela town from Klipdrift Water Treatment Works (WTW) located in Hammanskraal, this study will benefit Rapotokwane village, Belabela Town, Modimolle Town and Mokgoophong Town.

When we realise this plan, the water challenges in this area will be a thing of the past.

However, water conservation is the key to sustainable water resources. Allow me to remind you that South Africa is a water scarce country and one of the 30 driest countries in the world.

The little water that we have should be Conserved, Respected, Shared and Enjoyed by present and future generations in our country.

If we can fail to do the basics we will also not achieve our socio-economic developmental plans.

South Africa is losing 37% of water through leaks which translates to R7 billion per year. The Department of Water Affairs initiated the War on Leaks project which is currently being implemented at different municipalities across the country.

This project is aimed at eradicating water leaks in households, schools, clinics and other public buildings, training of unemployed youth with basic plumbing skills and job creation.

I appeal to all water users to use it wisely and sparingly. Water can be made available but if we do not conserve it we will still experience challenges. The available water should meet the needs of everyone and should be shared equitably. All Municipalities in the country should set aside a dedicated budget to implement water conservation programmes.

Water conservation begins with each one of us; there needs to be a change in attitude and behaviour to use water more wisely in our daily activities. Government cannot do it alone. Report unlawful usage of water to the departmental's call centre 0800 200 200.

In conclusion, I would like to thank my colleague, Honourable Ebrahim Ebrahim, the Deputy Minister for International Relations and Cooperation for the support.

I also would like to thank both the Waterberg District and Bela Bela Local Municipalities for ensuring that we afford the communities their fundamental right to have access to clean drinking water.

Lastly, I also want to thank the officials from National Department of Water Affairs and the Limpopo Regional Office for the sterling job.

Let us continue to change lives as we celebrate twenty years of water delivery for social and economic development.

"Water is Life: Conserve it, Respect it, Enjoy it"

I thank you.