



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE HONOURABLE DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, MME REJOICE MABUDAFHASI, MP, DURING THE HANDOVER OF THE R163 MILLION PHASE 1 CHRISTIANA / HERTZORGVILLE BULK WATER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT AT HERTZORGVILLE, FREE STATE

14 MARCH 2014

Programme director;

Honourable Premier of the Free State, Ntate Ace Magashule;

Your Worship the Executive Mayor of Lejweleputswa District Municipality, Cllr Leeto;

Your Worship the Mayor of Tokologo Local Municipality, Cllr Seakge;

Councillors;

Free State Region Water Affairs Head, Mr Tshidiso Ntli;

Chairperson of Bloem Water Board;

Government officials;

Members of the community;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen

I am glad to be part of this august event of the official hand over of the R163 million Christiana / Hertzorgville Phase 1 Bulk Water Infrastructure project.

Programme director, allow me to join fellow South Africans in paying tribute to Mrs Martha Mahlangu, mother of the late freedom fighter Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu. She passed on early this week.

Let us observe a moment of silence..

This event takes place now during the Water Month and just a week before Human Rights Day. Water is a Human Right. It is enshrined in our Constitution that everyone has the right to have access to clean drinking water.

This year we celebrate Water Month under the theme: ***“Celebrating 20 years of water delivery for social and economic development”***.

Government has made many strides in the past twenty years in delivering water to the majority of our people and we acknowledge the fact that more still needs to be done.

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.

As the custodian of water resources, we are faced with the following key challenges which might hinder us from attaining our goals and they are summarised as follows:

- Huge water loss brought about by old infrastructure, leaking taps and general ignorance about the importance of water conservation in our society;
- Increased environmental pollution from various economic sectors like manufacturing, mining, agriculture also not forgetting the domestic sector;
- Ageing infrastructure which does not only results to disruption in services but also inhibits new development in many parts of our cities;
- Ageing workforce;
- Lack of appreciation of the importance of water as an enabler or catalyst for development.

We are doing our best to address these challenges through various programmes such as Regional Bulk Infrastructure Programme (RBIG) which is addressing the ageing infrastructure, War on Leaks addressing water loss, 2020 Vision Programme educating schools and communities about water conservation and career promotions, Supporting Municipalities to implement water conservation and water demand management.

Our Government has a good story to tell about service delivery over the period of this Administration and for the twenty years of the democracy.

Indeed South Africa is a better country to live in now than it was twenty years back. Our presence here today to handover a completed bulk water infrastructure project is a testimony to what I have just said.

The communities of Tokologo Local Municipality have been experiencing severe water challenges, our response was the implementation of the Christiana / Hertzorgville Phase 1 Bulk Water Infrastructure project. This scheme will benefit more than 10 000 community members in Hertzorgville.

The Department of Water Affairs will continue working with the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Lejweleputswa District and Tokologo Local Municipalities to ensure completion of the Phase 2 of this project.

Phase 2 is aimed at eradicating water backlogs for Tokologo Local Municipality communities. It will provide water services to over 9,409 people within the service area.

This project will also ensure the delivery of sustainable basic water services, the enhancement of economic development towards achieving the national services target this year, the objectives of water for growth and development as well as job creation initiatives.

In conclusion allow me to encourage the community to guard against vandalism and theft of infrastructure that government is providing for them. Be the owners of these assets and report illegalities to the municipalities.

I am appealing to you to work together with government in the quest to create a better life for all. Government cannot achieve this alone - Together we can change many lives.

Mahatma Gandhi once said "*Be the change you wish to see in the world*".

I would like to thank the Honourable Premier, Ntate Ace Magashule for his continuous support.

In the same breath I wish to thank the municipalities both the District and the Local Municipality for the good working relationship towards changing the lives of our people.

Also to thank Bloem Water for always leading from the front in delivering water to our communities.

Lastly let me thank the team from the Department under the leadership of Tseliso Ntli for the good and hard work, representing us well in the Province. We are proud of You.

I thank you.