



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, DURING THE LAUNCH OF OPERATION TSWELOPELE MILITARY VETERANS JOBS PROJECT IN STANDERTON, MPUMALANGA

11 APRIL 2014

Programme director

Honourable Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Thabang Makwella;

Your Worship the Executive Mayor of Gert Sibande District Municipality, Cllr Nhlabathi;

Your Worship the Mayor of Lekwa Local Municipality, Cllr Morajane

Councillors

Director General of the Department of Military Veterans, Mr Tsepe Motumi;

Secretary of the South African National Military Veterans Association, Mr Tshidiso Paka;

Mpumalanga Water Affairs Regional Head: Mr Fikile Guma;

Military Veterans;

Government Officials;

Members of the community;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen

I am delighted to be part of this auspicious occasion of the launch of Operation Tswelopele Military Veterans Jobs project here in Standerton.

We meet here today just a day after the commemoration of the brutal killing of one of the Military Veterans, the late Comrade Chris Thembisile Hani, who lived a selfless life dedicated to the liberation struggle.

We also remember Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu, another Military Veteran, who was executed in this month of April at the age of 23.

This auspicious occasion of the launch of Operation Tswelopele Military Veterans Jobs project happens now as the people of South Africa both young and old celebrate Freedom Month under the theme: ***“South Africa a better place to live in”***.

The Military Veterans are an integral part of our communities across the country. I would like to reiterate that if it was not because of them we would not be celebrating the freedom and democracy here in South Africa. We acknowledge their hard work and we Love them.

So it is equally important that we care for them, so that they also can enjoy the fruits of their hard earned freedom and democracy so that they can proudly say that South Africa is a better country to live in than it was twenty years back.

The Department of Water Affairs' involvement with the Military Veterans comes as a response to the clarion call by the President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma, for government departments to create employment for the Military Veterans.

As the Department of Water Affairs we stood up to be counted amongst other government departments that are committed to create employment for the Military Veterans, hence we conceptualized operation Tswelopele.

We signed the Memorandum of Understanding between the Departments of Water Affairs and Military Veterans as a formal commitment to create job opportunities for the Military Veterans in the Water Sector.

Through this project we have created 101 jobs from our National Resource Infrastructure Branch which subsequently identified vacancies in the Central Operations and Construction units for the Military Veterans here in Mpumalanga province.

Ninety One (91) Military Veterans are employed permanently in the Central Operations Unit whereas the remaining ten (10) are on a two to three years contract in the Construction Unit. Their trades vary from assistant artisans, general workers, operators for equipments and machinery, drivers, cleaners, assistant carpenter, assistant mechanic, admin clerks and industrial technicians.

The Department of Military Veterans and Department of Water Affairs jointly facilitated the matching and verification of these Military Veterans who are now employed in terms of the Public Service Act and they will be subjected to a tailor-made one week induction programme and continuous assessment on the job will be done quarterly upon assumption of duty.

We are committed to continue working together with the Department of Military Veterans to expand this project to other provinces wherein we will create more job opportunities and a better life for our beloved Military Veterans.

Through Working for Water Programme of the Department of Environmental Affairs, we have employed 40 Military Veteran Contractors/SMMEs who have created jobs for other people. They have undergone the SMME training and technical training. 15 Military Veterans have been employed at management level as project managers, area managers, Health and Safety Coordinators and Administrators.

Military Veterans, Patriots, let me remind you that the work you will be doing in the Water and Environment Sectors is a continuation of the excellent work you have done and It will not go unnoticed.

You will be mainstreamed in government and be part of executing a Constitutional mandate of affording citizens of this country their democratic rights to have access to clean drinking water and to an environment that is not harmful to their health and wellbeing.

Chris Hani once said,

I quote

*"I belonged to a world, in terms of my background, which I think suffered the worst extremes of apartheid -- a world where our mothers and sisters would walk 3 km, sometimes 6 km, whenever there was a drought to fetch water."*

Unquote

In 1994, only 59% of our South African people had access to clean and safe drinking water, and by 2013 we had progressed to a national average of 95.2%.

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.

In conclusion, I would like to thank my colleague and comrade, Honourable Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Thabang Makwella for the support and commitment towards this project.

I would also like to thank both the mayors of Gert Sibande District and Lekwa Local Municipalities for their commitment and working together towards the betterment of the lives of our people.

We thank the government officials from all spheres of government for the good work you continue to do in your respect portfolios.

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

I thank you.