

International Water Security Network Regional Launch Speech
By Deputy Minister Water and Sanitation
Mrs Pamela Tshwete
16 September 2014

*Apology from DM and commitment made to follow up.
I was asked to sit in this workshop until the end so that proper
connection can be made with the Department and to report on ways
to follow up on the programme*

Programme Director

Professor Chad Staddon of the University of West of England

Dr David Love of Golder Associates

Representatives of Lloyd's Register Foundation

Representatives of the University of Arizona

Representatives of Monash South Africa

Representatives of the University of KwaZulu Natal

Representatives of the University of Cape Town

Representatives of Water Entities

Conference Delegates

Conference Organisers

All protocol observed

Ladies and Gentlemen, please receive our fraternal and warm greetings on behalf of the Department of Water and Sanitation, the water family in our country and all the people of South Africa.

Let me also welcome this well considered move to launch the region of the International Water Security Network, and also thank Monash South Africa for being the host of prestige gathering.

This regional launch has come at an opportune time; at a time when in our country the water technology that has been in use in some areas for more than hundred years is beginning to fail us.

The International Water Security Network Regional Launch has come at a time when as the South African Government with limited

resources we are **intensifying** the rollout of the water infrastructure to areas which were never supplied with potable water services.

This conference has come at a time when new technology is required to rehabilitate and replace the old water infrastructure and speed up the rollout process to new areas that we could not service in the past.

Since the beginning of this fifth term of government we have been consulting with all our water entities, the municipalities and the provinces in an attempt to address the sustainability of equitable water availability for all communities, review of and exploring solutions for an equitable water plan in the country that will supply and service all communities.

During these consultative sessions, we have picked up more challenges in our water and sanitation system and these amongst others included the following:

- Limited water resource,
- Poor management of the existing water resource,
- Limitation in the implementation of cost recovery
- Ageing infrastructure,
- Poor electricity supply,
- Unauthorised connections,
- Vandalism of water infrastructure,
- Lack of personnel with technical skills,
- Lack of Professional Service Providers,
- High water losses due to water leaks,

In dealing with these challenges we have held a Water Summit in an attempt to mobilise the water family and identify game changers in the work we do to provide and supply water to all our households and industries.

Today I wish to launch on behalf of the Department of Water and Sanitation, the entire water family and all South Africans this regional chapter of the International Water Security Network.

This five year collaborative initiative will complement our strategies as the country and the work we have been doing as part of water provision in the different spheres of government.

The programme of equitable access to water resource we seek to unfold in the water sector in this country has been met with a number of challenges as stated above.

As the Department we are very happy to see so many universities collaborating and consolidating efforts as part of their academic programmes to reach out to communities and provide services we could not provide as government. Thank you so much for taking time in pursuing this effort.

The kind of research work that has been conducted so far in our country and elsewhere, the educational programmes that have been in place targeting various sectors have indeed introduced a number of game changers in the water sector.

Our communities have been prepared to see water as a resource and an asset to be looked after and the District and Local Municipalities are beginning to assume the role of protecting this asset.

As the Department we are very much pleased that this programme will also assist in skills development through ushering future leaders and individuals qualified in teaching and research on water management services. Such a dual programme will provide the country with the requisite capabilities to manage the water resource and systems.

The rollout programme we are witnessing through this regional launch will certainly provide more skilled personnel and water authorities with better capability to perform the function and responsibilities of water services.

We take note of the fact that South Africa has been selected to be amongst the first countries targeted for this programme. Our participation in this programme will also improve participation, collaboration and cooperation in other international platforms where we are involved in relation to water security, sourcing, control and provisioning to all our communities.

At the end of the five years I strongly believe as a country we would have turned the corner in terms of raising awareness on the importance of water, focused areas of study in water management, provision of new technology for water supply and generally dealing with our challenges.

As the country we welcome this initiative and hope that all those involved will embrace each other, learn from experienced partners and we wish you all interesting and challenging times during this period.

We also wish to thank the sponsors of this programme, Lloyd's Register Foundation for their generous gesture targeting the developing countries in the equitable and sustained provision of water resource.

May you all enjoy this launch and find value as this project expands and reaches to the most deserving communities in this region.

Thank you very much