



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**KEY NOTE ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE DEPUTY MINISTER OF
WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, MS REJOICE MABUDAFHASI,
MP, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE WAR ON LEAKS PROJECT AT TSAKANE,
EKURHULENI METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY, GAUTENG**

24 MARCH 2014

Programme Director;

Your Worship the Executive Mayor of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, Cllr Mondli Gungubele;

MMC for Water and Energy, Mr Aubrey Nxumalo;

Councillors;

Representative of Rand Water;

Officials from all spheres of government;

Residents of Tsakane;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen

Dumelang, Sanibonani, Good morning.

I am delighted to be here at Ekurhuleni today, to launch the War on Leaks project and to celebrate National Water Week under the theme "20 Years of Water Delivery for Social and Economic Development". The theme coincides with South Africa's celebrations of 20 years of freedom and democracy.

This momentous occasion presents an opportunity for South African's to reflect on how freedom and democracy was achieved; the progress made in the past 20 years and how South Africans will work together to implement Vision 2030 of the National Development Plan.

Annually we celebrate National Water Week whereby we showcase the achievements of the water sector, encourage all water users to conserve water, engage with communities to get a better understanding of water related challenges and together recommend solutions.

We believe that communities or water users can make a contribution in improving water management and recommend solutions based on their indigenous knowledge and experiences.

I would therefore like to encourage all South Africans to focus on the need to restore and preserve the integrity of this most precious resource, water. South Africans must take responsibility to make sure this scarce resource is managed in an effective and sustainable manner.

Let me remind you that South Africa is a water scarce country, ranked amongst the 30 driest countries in the world with annual rainfall levels about half the world average. Yet we still lose a lot of water through leaking pipes and inadequate infrastructure.

In 2010, we received a directive from our Honorable President, Jacob Zuma, that we need to ensure that water loss is reduced by half in 2014. Our response to the President's directive was the conceptualization and implementation of War on Leaks Project as an intervention. This project aims to fix the leaks in the households, government institutions such as hospitals, clinics, schools, education and awareness about water conservation, whilst creating working or SMME opportunities and skills development for young people. This project was launched and piloted in Mogale City here in Gauteng in 2010. It was very successful as the water loss was reduced drastically and they are still implementing it.

In Gauteng province, a target water savings of 15% of the total provincial system input was set by the Department and it needs to be achieved by 2015. Each municipality in the province is expected to implement an aggressive water conservation and water demand management programme that will save its percentage portion of the total system.

The first phase of the War on Leaks in Ekurhuleni has already created 184 jobs for the Local Community for a period of 18 months (from November 2013 to March 2015).

The second phase (August 2014 to January 2016) will recruit 193 from unemployed local community members. As part of the empowerment of the Community, training will be provided to all newly recruited labour and all unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled & supervisors will be paid based on the minimum scales as laid down by Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality.

Our Department has partnered with Rand Water which is the Implementing Agent of this project. A grant of R10 million was made available by our Department towards the implementation of War on Leaks project in Tsakane.

About 43 000 households/ 92 000 unmetered stands in Tsakane/Langaville/Geluksdal in Ekurhuleni were targeted as an opportunity to reduce lost and wasteful consumption of water

and I have been advised that to date a number of activities have been undertaken as a result of this grant. These activities include amongst others: - Business Planning, pre- desk-top studies, fieldwork and logging of flows.

I have taken a special note of the inclusion of schools in this project. 27 schools in the Tsakane / Langaville / Geluksdal Area have been retrofitted to date and I would encourage that schools awareness programme be undertaken to instill good values and habits at an early developmental stage and it is invaluable in building a sound foundation for efficient water use behaviors.

We need educators and learners who will participate in water watchers programme in their respective schools where reporting of leaks and other water related problems are encouraged. I believe such initiatives will educate the learners on the challenges of water scarcity, efficient water use and the pertinence of active participation in reducing water loss.

As the Department of Water Affairs, we do realise the need for local government support as a lack of capacity and resources hinders the implementation of projects. This is the reason why our Department has embarked on intervention programmes such as the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant, to ensure that dilapidated infrastructure is improved, and the Accelerated Community Infrastructure Programme, to ensure that the rectification of water infrastructure is taking place.

Ladies and gentlemen, the project that we are launching here today is taking our implementation of interventions a step further in ensuring that the water loss is reduced and our community members are being educated on the importance of fixing leaking toilets and taps. I look forward to seeing a continuous reduction of water losses in this municipality, and would be encouraging to note that the efforts were not in vain.

Remember...

- A dripping tap (one drop per second) wastes up to 30 litres of water an hour, this means that you are wasting 10 000 litres of water per year;
- Check if you have toilet leaks; add a few drops of food dye to your cistern. If the colour seeps into the bowl, you have a leak. A leaking toilet can waste up to 30 litres of water per hour;
- Monitor your account for unusually high usage of water - your account and water meter are tools that can help you discover leaks;
- Report water leaks to the relevant authorities

Finally, I would like to extend a special vote of thanks to all of you for your commitment in ensuring that our water is conserved: the organisers of this event, the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, the staff of the Department of Water Affairs, the Municipality, Rand Water, and all other partners participating in this project – thank you. You continue to make me proud.

I thank you.