

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS ON THE WAR ON LEAKS IN LAINSBURG
BY DEPUTY MINISTER WATER AND SANITATION
MS PAMELA TSHWETE
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Programme Director
Honourable Members
Honourable Councillors
Community Leaders
Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me take this opportunity and greet you all today in the name of the Department of Water and Sanitation. You are most welcome to join hands with us in the fight against water leaks in this community.

We are gathered here today to make a clarion call and mobilise all our people to work with municipality in protecting our assets. In some communities big business are stealing water, community members are also vandalising our water infrastructure and the youth is stealing the copper pipes, transformers, electrical cables taps and water pumps.

In other communities where people are not happy with the level of service delivery they protest by vandalising the municipal infrastructure and block drains and break the main pipes feeding the entire town.

The war on leaks was adopted by the Department after realising the amount of water that we lose through leaks. Nationally we lose forty percent of our water resources. If we lose forty percent this means the country loses money and time spent on salaries.

The money we lose could be used to create more to the unemployed and deliver services better in areas where the municipality has not done well.

This is a huge loss to our fiscal because we pay municipal workers employed in the water treatment plants. We pay these workers for the full production of water to our reservoirs but instead we deliver to the household almost half of what we have produced in our water treatment plants. The rest of our water gets wasted in the system that runs to the households.

South Africa is a water scarce country and therefore we cannot afford this loss. We have to work together, mobilise all community structures, conscientise community leaders and organise all sectors of this community especially the youth behind this campaign. We must teach the youth on how the entire water value chain works. They must be made aware of the entire water treatment process.

We have to make this campaign our daily activity and drastically reduce the water leaks and save water. Water is life and there is nothing we can do without water. We cook our food, we wash our bodies, and we drink when thirsty and even grow our plants for food and the beautification of the environment.

Water must now be considered as an essential resource so much required in our lives. There are many challenges that affect our water resource. This country is prone to draught where we may run without water for very long periods. The climate change conditions are putting a great strain on the rain season.

Secondly we are faced with the pollution of our rivers that constitute our water catchment areas. Water pollution is a huge challenge and it makes it very difficult and expensive to purify the water resource. In some communities car owners wash their cars in the river.

We therefore cannot afford to lose the water resource that has been purified for consumption. Let us join hands and declare war on leaks and save our water resource. We need to identify an army of soldiers who will be at the forefront of this campaign.

These community soldiers must be found in all the streets and sections of this community. These community soldiers must work with the water section in the municipality. As we embark on this campaign the municipality must help provide the necessary resources.

Through this campaign the municipality, must create jobs, save the water resource and give life to the people. With this campaign properly and successfully managed we can save thousand and thousand litres of water. When we save water we save money.

In our own homes we witness dripping taps all the time and we are so used to it and see nothing wrong with it. In our neighboured our streets are running water which accumulates into swamps that attract mosquitos that are dangerous to our children. We cannot afford this pain we are inflicting to ourselves.

Let us be protectors of our health and avoid infections from water swamps found in some areas. We need to save our money by keeping the cost of treating water very low. There are many other municipal services that the municipality should provide instead of spending money where there is no value for money.

From today onwards this community must do an audit of the area, visit public institution such as schools, community health centres, churches and detect any leaks that could be found. This act should begin with our homes where we will visit the entire neighbourhood and assist the elderly and the vulnerable groups in ensuring that there are no leaks in their homes.

We need to save water so that we can connect areas we have not connected with water. We must save water so that we could utilise it in other areas of need such as community swimming pools and community gardens. The more we lose water the more the provision of other community facilities becomes distant and impossible to achieve.

War on leaks is also about maintenance of the environment, is about cleanliness. In nowadays we spend money on grass cutting caused by many swamps found in our communities as a result of dampness caused by water leaks.

All of you have a role to play and save life as we save water. I am happy to join you in this resolve of taking ownership of your community and environment. Let us make this campaign work and see the difference it will make in the long run.

I thank you