



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE MINISTER EDNA
MOLEWA ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE
NANDONI BULK WATER SUPPLY AND ACCELERATED
BOREHOLE PROJECTS, TSWINGA VILLAGE**

29 APRIL 2014

The Premier of the Limpopo Province, Mr. Chupu Mathabatha

MECs, Executive Mayors, Mayors and Councilors

Chairpersons and CEOs of State Owned Enterprises

Traditional leaders

Religious Leaders

Members of the Community

Ladies and Gentlemen

Ndi masiari, Avuxeni, Rea le lotsha, Good day!

May I take this opportunity to thank the Premier and the people of this Province and the Vhembe District Municipality in particular for this great occasion to mark a very important milestone in water delivery.

Two days ago we celebrated 20 years of democracy and many good stories that have come to be associated with our hard-fought freedom. It is my pleasure to be here today to tell yet another good story of us as South Africans.

*Ten years ago, we completed a very big dam in this area – the Nandoni Dam - which I believe we all know. The aim of the construction of this dam was to address the water needs of the surrounding communities and the entire Vhembe District. In 2007, we began with the construction of bulk pipelines to deliver water to the communities. Unfortunately, that programme did not go well and it had to be restarted, thus creating the delays in the delivery of water to you. However, as a responsible government of the people, we restarted the process and vowed to deliver the water to you no matter the problems we experienced at first. It is that **appropriately restarted** programme that has brought us here today.*

We are, in essence, here to celebrate the good work that our democratic government has done for us in the past 20 years it

*has been in power. These achievements make us stand proud and say indeed **South Africa is a better place than it was in 1994**. It is for this reason that we need you, our people, to work together with us to move our country forward.*

Indeed ladies and gentlemen we have a good story to tell. In 1994 a mere 59% of the population had access to clean drinking water. At this moment in time a massive 95,2% of our people have sustainable access to a clean water supply. If that is not a good story to tell I don't know what a good story would be. If that does not reflect that South Africa is a better place to live in than it was before 1994 I wonder what it would. Despite all this spectacular success and achievement, we are not resting on our laurels; we are pursuing the 4,8% odd backlog in water supply with vigour and determination. In the words of State President Jacob Zuma, we shall "not rest until all our people have access to decent shelter, water and food."

At the centre of our hard fought democracy and freedom is our Constitution, which enshrines many rights of every South African. One of these rights is the right to access to water. As Government, we take our obligation to make potable water available to our citizenry very seriously. We have initiated the Nandoni Bulk Water Supply Project as an intervention to get cumulative water on the Luvuvhu Catchment to supply potable

water to the Vhembe area and some parts of Capricorn District Municipality. It is a massive scheme that will benefit the town of Thohoyandou and its surrounding villages, and the Malamulele area on the eastern side of the Thulamela Municipality. The project will also cater for areas of Vuwani, Valdezia, Kutama, Sinthumule and up to the Makhado town and the Tshikota Township. We have extended it to cover the areas of Matoks in the Capricorn District Municipality as well. It is, therefore, a massive project that will remove the hardships of many of our communities as we intend.

Various bulk water distribution pipes and reservoirs are being constructed to take water from the Nandoni Dam to these communities. With the exception of only one of these, the Vuwani-Valdezia Pipeline, the rest are being completed and will soon deliver water to the people. The Vuwani-Valdezia pipeline will also be completed as soon as the challenges facing it have been addressed.

We are here today to officially launch the NR6 bulk pipeline from Nandoni to Thohoyandou which is one of those already completed. The pipeline will supply water to all the villages along the way, including those of Budeli, Dumasi, and Mutoti, which are located closest to the dam but have never had water from it. The three villages have, as we acknowledge, been at

the forefront of various demonstrations and protests by communities complaining about lack of water while they live near this dam.

I must emphasise that it is unfortunate that not all these communities were aware that we have been implementing a well coordinated programme to bring them water from Nandoni for all these years. Some of them were protesting this morning and I was fortunate to get the opportunity to explain to their leaders how the programme has been unfolding and how it is envisaged to continue. They got to understand the work involved, I believe they now have a better understanding than before. I was hoping to meet and address community members as well but we will organise such an engagement in the near future. This because it is important to communicate with all our people all the time so that we develop the same understanding of the programmes we have in place.

As I have already pointed out, the completion of the Nandoni to Valdezia pipeline will be concluded soon. It will ultimately service villages from Mavambe, Dakari, Gondo Na bada all the way to Valdezia and ultimately Makhado and Kutama/Sithumule. There are some delays particularly in Dakari to Gondo Na bada villages. Together with the Vhembe District Municipality, we are doing all in our power to unlock the

current bottlenecks to ensure that the communities earmarked to benefit from the pipeline duly benefit. It is important that we all understand how far we are progressing in this regard and I am of the firm belief that the people of the concerned areas will bear with us in this regard.

It is important to note that in order to ensure that water challenges are a thing of the past in the entire Vhembe District, we must take all water sources seriously. It is for this reason that the Department has commissioned what we call “Accelerated Boreholes Project” with Lepelle Northern Water Board as an implementing agent. Through this programme, we have managed to fix 96 boreholes in the Vhembe District Municipality which were part of over 200 dysfunctional boreholes. This means 96 extra sources of water that are bringing water to the people in addition to the bulk water supply we are also busy with.

In this regard, I want to quell the misperception among some of our people that ground water is bad and unhealthy as compared to water from the dam. I want to assure you that ground water is by no means of inferior quality. What you must know is that in some cases we mix the water from both sources and many other big towns in the country and the world respect ground water. Government cannot and will not recommend

anything that would be dangerous to the health of our nation. Therefore, go and tell others that there is nothing wrong with our ground water and that it is as good as the dam water.

I also want to appeal to the communities that the infrastructure that we are presenting to you today should be jealously protected and owned by yourselves. We have observed that the high levels of vandalism contribute a great deal towards destroying our infrastructure. People steal electric cables and other metal objects and in some instances even remove the pumps themselves. By the way, two of the 96 boreholes we have recently fixed had already been vandalized and this is cause for concern for all of us. It means minus two water sources for our people and extra costs for our government. We are currently training community members to provide security for this infrastructure but it is important for people to provide ownership of it as it will always be difficult to police those who destroy it without the help from the communities.

Ladies and gentlemen, as much as we have rights which are enshrined in our Constitution, these rights come with responsibilities. It remains our responsibility to jealously guard and take care of our water infrastructure which has cost billions to build. It is your duty to report vandalism of infrastructure to the State security institutions. It is in our interest that the water

infrastructure is perennially in good working condition. In the same breath, those who are enjoying access to clean drinkable water must ensure that they abide by water conservation and water demand management principles. Do not waste water, re-use and recycle water. Report without delay any leaking water infrastructure to your local authorities

In line with one of the keys priorities of Government, job creation and socio - economic beneficiation were integral to this project. To date a total of 625 local jobs were created during implementation of this project. Of these, only 222 were sourced outside the Vhembe District Municipal area and through accelerated boreholes project 24 jobs were created. We will never lose sight of the importance of empowering local communities and beneficiating local service providers both in terms of skills development and economic opportunities. A total number of five companies were appointed to render various services which include amongst others: factory and field inspection services as well as construction of pipelines.

A number of fatalities have been reported previously which came about as a result of illegal fishing and swimming along Livhuvhu river and the dam. I call upon you fellow compatriots to abide by the bylaws that govern activities around the dam. Included among these is pollution and illegal dumping. It is

therefore important to keep our water resources healthy and free of foreign objects that could negatively affect their integrity.

In conclusion, fellow South Africans, this freedom we are enjoying today was not free. Many freedom fighters were imprisoned for decades, many others even lost their lives fighting for democracy. Finally freedom came about in 1994, thanks to the selfless sacrifices of these gallant compatriots. Freedom secured the right for every South African to be active participants in our democratic system. We owe it to ourselves to take responsibility to protect the legacy of Nelson Mandela and those who fought for this freedom by participating in elections. Your participation in the upcoming elections will ensure that the good story of South Africa continues.

The work we are here about today really is part of us
"Celebrating 20 Years of Water Delivery for Social and Economic Development".

I thank you.