



MINISTRY

WATER AND SANITATION

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**OPENING ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION
MS NOMVULA MOKONYANE, ON THE OCCASION OF THE WATER
AND SANITATION SUMMIT, BIRCHWOOD HOTEL AND CONFERENCE
CENTRE, BOKSBURG**

01 AUGUST 2014

Programme Director, Trevor Balzer, the Acting DG

Pravin Gordhan, Minister of COGTA,

Pam Tshwete, Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation,

David Makhura, Premier of Gauteng Province,

Supra Mahumapelo, Premier of North-West Province,

Senzo Mchunu, Premier of Kwa-Zulu Natal,

Cllr Mondli Gungubele, Executive Mayor of Ekurhuleni Metro,

Imraan Patel, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Science and
Technology

Chairpersons and CEO's of State Owned Entities and Agencies,

Senior Government Officials,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning

On behalf of both myself and the Deputy Minister, I wish to humbly express my gratitude to all of you for having honoured our invitation to this two day summit.

It is imperative to remind you that not so long ago, millions across the length and breadth of South Africa went out to cast their vote.

The different Political Parties through their Manifestos made communities to choose a party that is better positioned to hold high the legacy of Nelson Mandela. Notwithstanding the challenges and the shortfall of the past 20 years of democracy, the majority of South Africans endorsed the ANC election Manifesto

This was also an affirmation of the maturity of our hard won democracy as we move South Africa forward hence we are here today, with humility, been assigned the responsibility as the 5th Administration to lead, for yet another five years. We are also inspired by our people's resolve to embrace the National Development Plan (NDP) which gives them hope for the future.

South Africans expect from this Administration decisive leadership that can assert authority across government, communities and private sector to bring about radical socio-economic transformation.

For us to bring about this radical socio-economic transformation in real terms, we have to deal with matters in a manner that demonstrates:

- Effectiveness;
- Efficiency;
- Accountability;
- Accessibility, and
- Co-operation amongst all of us.

Therefore, it is on this basis, that we found it befitting to host this summit as a platform to deal with key areas that require game changers in a radical way. And these are:

- Meeting the service delivery challenges;
- Water and Sanitation challenges;
- Water Research, Technology and Innovation;
- State of South Africa water resource;
- The role of the Private sector; and
- Community Participation.

Transformation and de-racialization of South Africa through the provision of Water and Sanitation should be fast-tracked. For us to contribute meaningfully to the realization of the NDP objectives

and the electoral mandate, we have to do things differently. In finding solutions to the current challenges, this calls for our collective wisdom in changing the lives of women. In place like Kwa-Mhlaba Uyalingana, for an example, women should no longer share water with animals or walk bare-footed and pregnant to fetch water in the river whilst there is Jozini dam next to their village.

As part of the drive towards radical socio-economic transformation, we need to ensure that solutions to water and sanitation challenges must be about opening the sector to those that have been dis-enfranchised. This will have to be done by providing skills development, economic empowerment as well as access to quality water and dignified sanitation.

The game changers will firstly have to be about revisiting the water ownership patterns and water use rights in our country. Secondly, it is about educating and creating awareness amongst our communities on conservation, preservation and security of our scarce resources as well as innovation.

Furthermore, the game changers will have to harmonize the roles and responsibilities of institutions and all spheres of government in the best interest of the end-user both individually and collectively.

We can achieve this, only if we put communities first in what we do and demonstrate that it is business unusual.

As stated by His Excellency President Jacob Zuma, this department has a national obligation to ensure that we infuse life in the provision of quality water and restore the dignity of our people through sanitation.

We are here for the next two days to consolidate the work done in the last 20 years to bring about radical socio-economic transformation in service delivery. It is that partnership that is essential in moving South Africa forward. We all look forward to a sustainable relationship beyond these 2 days.

As we move South Africa forward let us remember the words of the founding father of our democracy, Nelson Mandela, in a document titled “Why Advocate for water, sanitation and hygiene?” where he said: **“Sanitation is more important than independence.”**

Our preoccupation should be about “Water is life and Sanitation is dignity.”

Dankie

Ngiyabonga.