



water affairs

Department:  
Water Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL  
AFFAIRS, MRS EDNA MOLEWA ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
LAUNCH OF THE MIDDELDRIFT WATER TREATMENT WORKS,  
KWANXAMALALA SPORTS GOUND, NKANDLA, KWAZULU NATAL**

**08 APRIL 2014**

*Programme Director*

*Premier Senzo Mchunu*

*MEC's present amongst us*

*Mayors representing the beneficiary communities*

*Chairperson of the Provincial House of Traditional Leaders*

*Our esteemed traditional leaders from the area*

*Senior managers from the three tiers of government*

*Board and Executives of Mhlathuze Water Board*

*Members of the media*

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

*I am inspired to echo the profound remarks made by the revered president of the ANC, Chief Albert Luthuli, in reaction to his banning in July 1954. He said "the road to freedom is full of difficulties. Before we reach the summit of freedom many would have fallen by the way side as a result of the enemy action and others through personal despondency may abandon the fight."*

*He is no longer with us but his words and spirit still lives with us. We never abandoned the fight and we are here and it is through his sacrifice and the endurance of many others that we are able to celebrate not only twenty years of our hard won democracy but also here today to launch this completed Middeldrift Water Treatment Works.*

*We know that in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and the Eastern Cape, there are still challenges of access, especially where the topography is not ideal. We commit ourselves that we shall not rest until all our people are able to access water in a sustainable manner. We cannot afford to point political fingers at each other while our people continue to suffer. It is everyone's right and is in our collective national interest that these projects are prioritised and decisively finalised. We are well aware of the fact that as we chase the 100% target, the old areas require attention through operation and maintenance as well as higher level of service aimed at improved economic development. We cannot therefore afford to be complacent.*

*The UThungulu District Municipality, covering the six local municipalities of Mfolozi, uMhlathuze, Ntambanana, uMlalazi, Mthonjaneni and Nkandla, is a fairly young District Municipality, having been formed only in 2001. It is therefore opportune for us to demonstrate that we are capable of working across the political divide in the interest of our*

people. You will recall that at the time of this District Municipality's creation, the water and sanitation backlogs stood at 81% for water and 89% for sanitation, respectively. These were unacceptably very high. But I am now informed that at the end of 2011/12, the estimated backlogs for these services stood at 41% and 55% for water and sanitation, respectively. We must appreciate that there has been some movement towards attending to these challenges, but I think you will agree with me that these figures are still too high for our people.

This project sources its supply of water from the UThukela River through the Tugela-Mhlathuze Transfer scheme. It already supplies parts of the benefitting local municipalities of uMlalazi and Nkandla, and it has reduced water backlogs in these two local municipalities by 40% and 21%, respectively. Our estimation is that we require an amount of about R3,81 billion to completely eradicate these backlogs. This is a challenge indeed, but working together we know we can and do it we must. There is no better gratification than the realisation that the work we do, does have an impact and a positive one for that matter on the lives of our people.

At the moment, the capacity of this Treatment Works stands at 10 Mega Litres per day (ML/D). It will eventually be raised to an ultimate capacity of 20 Mega Litres per day (ML/D). Once that happens, a total number of approximately 131 000 people within its service area will be able to access safe potable water. As I said earlier, this comes with huge positive impact on the community. This will be by way of a secure and sustainable water supply and water services. It will enhance economic development - driving towards the attainment of the national services target - as well as the objectives of water for growth and development, employment and redistribution. We know that at least 222 temporary

*jobs were created during the construction phase that has been completed.*

*In being able to deliver on the ideal of this WTW project, the water supply infrastructure that ensures security of supply to this Middeldrift WTW has been constructed and is in place. The spirit of co-operative government and partnership was demonstrated through a process of delivery in this project. It was funded by the Department of Water Affairs' Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant (RBIG) as well as the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs' Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG). This project being Phase 1 of the WTW came at a total cost of more than **R63 million**.*

*Phase 2 of the project will be the construction of a 60 kilometre pipeline from uThukela WTW to this Middeldrift WTW. This pipeline will then replace the one being used currently which is the Tugela-Mhlathuze transfer scheme. The cost for Phase 2 will be **R140 million** over the next three-years.*

*As we know, water is central to all life and all developments. This is the reason we emphasise that in all social and economic development planning, the issue of water and water availability **MUST** be pivotal; it cannot and should not be peripheral.*

*Honourable Premier, I am encouraged and therefore pleased to indicate to you that I believe this District Municipality is serious about attending to the issues of water in all aspects. As we should all be aware, we have developed an Interim Water Supply Strategy. This Strategy was critical in the formulation of the new Municipal Water Infrastructure Grant (MWIG). This effort is meant to ensure that everyone has access to water as soon and as quickly as possible.*

*In this regard, Honourable Premier, ladies and gentlemen, an amount of R267 million has been set aside for KwaZulu-Natal for the 2013/14 financial year. Of this amount R57 million has been identified for projects in the UThungulu District in the same financial year.*

*Over the MTEF, UThungulu District has an amount of R284 million set aside through this MWIG that I referred to earlier. I am quite pleased as well that the UThungulu District Municipality has in the meantime submitted project proposals for funding. The necessary funding agreements have also been concluded in this regard. This is a good indication of being pro-active and also understanding the basis of being in office to serve.*

*I am also pleased to note that amongst the projects identified for funding as I have indicated there are also projects related to issues of the Water Conservation and Demand Management Strategy. We know by now, that South Africa, with all its beauty, is a water-scarce country. We need to do all in our power to ensure that any amount of water we get is used sparingly and with the utmost care. We do say as the Department: **“Water is Life, Respect It, Conserve It, Enjoy It”**. This slogan captures all that we can say in terms of using water sparingly and guarding this resource jealously. It is ours to use now but also for us to conserve for posterity.*

*We acknowledge all the challenges that we faced when we took over government twenty years ago. We took over as a democratic government from a system that used this wonderful resource as a tool of power and discrimination. At the time, only around 59% of the population had access to water. The bulk of the remaining 41% was obviously in the less developed and mainly rural and black domains.*

*As we celebrate this launch today, we must remember that we are also in our twentieth year of our democracy. We must also remember that our rights to this infrastructure come with our collective responsibility as the community. Therefore we must protect and preserve these facilities so that they can serve us better and for longer.*

*Indeed we celebrate this launch under our banner that also celebrates our twentieth democratic anniversary which says we are: **“Celebrating Twenty Years of Water Delivery for Social and Economic Development”**.*

*I thank you.*

*Ngiyabonga*