



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 SOUTHERN GAUTENG  
WATER WEEK SUMMIT, EMERALD CASINO AND RESORT,  
GAUTENG**

**3 APRIL 2014**

*Programme director;*

*Your Worship the Executive Mayor of Sedibeng District Municipality, Cllr  
Mofokeng;*

*Your Worship the Mayor of Emfuleni Local Municipality; Cllr Hlongwane;*

*Your Worship the Mayor of Ilesedi Local Municipality: Cllr Maloka*

*MMC for Infrastructure, Water, Sanitation, Roads and Electricity, Cllr Thulo;  
Councillors;*

*Members of Rand Water Board ;*

*Distinguished Guests;*

*Members of the media;*

*Ladies and gentlemen*

*Let me start by expressing my utmost gratitude to the Mayor of Emfuleni Local  
Municipality (Councillor Hlongwane) for inviting me to this august occasion of  
the Southern Gauteng Water Week Summit under the theme “**Water is life –  
Celebrating 20 years of Water Delivery for Social and Economic  
Development**”.*

*It is an occasion that serves as a platform to share knowledge and expertise on municipal water and sanitation service deliverables.*

*This occasion gives us an opportunity to tell a good story on what we have achieved over the past 20 years through working together and how we will continue to work together to implement Vision 2030 of the National Development Plan.*

*In 1994, only 59% of our South African people had access to clean and safe drinking water, and by 2013 we had progressed to a national average of 95.2%. It is indeed a good story to tell.*

*Emfuleni Local municipality is amongst the municipalities that are striving towards 100% water supply coverage to all their formal and informal settlements. Hence the municipality needs to be commended on this progress even though Sanitation provision is still a challenge not only at Emfuleni but throughout the country.*

*I would like to encourage the municipality to improve its sanitation coverage in all formal and informal settlements. Remember, Water is life, Sanitation is dignity.*

*I am aware that there are a number of challenges that the Municipality is faced with especially regarding the pollution of the Vaal River system as well as waste water infrastructure which is ageing and dilapidating. As the custodian of water resources, our Department is very concerned that if the wastewater infrastructure is not developed, operated and maintained properly, it will pose a pollution risk to the environment.*

*It is for these reasons that our Department has put in place a series of support interventions geared towards assisting the municipality with its infrastructure development. The Department is providing financial support to Emfuleni Municipality through a Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant (RBIG). We*

*provided R18.8 million (in the 2010/11 financial year) for refurbishment of Waste Water Treatment Works (Riestpruit and Leeuwkuil) to significantly reduce the occurrence of spillages of raw sewage, while also maintaining consistently better effluent quality from these Waste Water Treatment Works.*

*Furthermore, the Department has provided R 240 Million (during Financial Year 2012/13 and 2014/15) for upgrading the Sebokeng Waste Water Treatment Works. Through this project, 54 jobs were created in the past year.*

*South Africa has prioritised Infrastructure Programme and the underlying principle is to drive economic growth, stimulate industrialization and create jobs. It is worth noting that the Sedibeng Regional Sewer Scheme is part of the catalyst project in (Strategic Infrastructure Projects) SIP 18: Water and Sanitation and through this infrastructure development intervention, that more businesses and housing development in the Emfuleni area will be attracted and thus boosting the economic development in the area. I would however like to indicate that there is still a need for additional funding for a new proposed Sedibeng Regional Waste Water Treatment Works.*

*Allow me to remind you that South Africa is a water scarce country, ranked amongst the 30 driest countries in the world. Yet we still lose a lot of water through leaking pipes and ageing infrastructure.*

*In Gauteng province, a target of 15% water savings of the total provincial system was set 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. Big question to the municipalities? Are we on track, can we boldly proclaim that we are on course to meet the set targets?*

*I must, also congratulate the Emfuleni Local Municipality on its partnership with Sasol New Energy and GIZ for the excellent work in reducing water loss in Emfuleni area through the Boloka Metsi project. Project Boloka Metsi has not only achieved water loss reduction, but also created 102 jobs during the*

*first phase consisting of water warriors, plumbers and engineering technicians.*

*I have been informed that Phase 2 is currently underway, and I believe we will achieve more water savings, and the robust community awareness and education campaigns will be undertaken to educate our communities on conserving our limited precious resource. What excites me more is the accredited training which was provided to the ward councillors and ward committees to Demonstrate understanding of the water cycle, water and wastewater processes as one of project Boloka Metsi community focus areas. We will be awarding the competency certificates to that group today.*

*Honourable Mayor, I must emphasise that my department is not only providing support but has a critical regulatory role to play as the custodian of water resources. We do this through our existing incentive-based regulation model of blue drop, green drop and now the No Drop which “Water use efficiency and water loss reduction” has been included as part of our national regulatory focus.*

*We applaud the Gauteng Province in occupying the first position leading all the other Provinces in the Blue Drop. I am putting a challenge not only to Emfuleni but to Gauteng Province to set an example and lead SA in the NO drop by reducing water losses and improve water use efficiency as they have done with the Blue drop*

*Your Worship, I must also congratulate your municipality for retaining the Blue Drop status in the last three years, and I am told that the current Blue drop cycle is underway. Let me take this opportunity and wish you the best and hopefully you will retain your Blue drop status. Given that this is a Southern Gauteng water week summit, your neighbouring municipalities Lesedi, Midvaal, Metsimaholo would have some lessons to take home from this gathering.*

*This is clearly demonstrated by your Municipality and the Rand Water Board's continuous commitment in providing reliable and uninterrupted water supply to consumers.*

*Finally, I would like to extend a special thanks to the municipality for its commitment in ensuring that our community members are provided with clean and safe water and dignified sanitation and all efforts are made in ensuring that our precious resource is conserved for future generations.*

*Thank you once again to the organisers of this event, the officials of the Department of Water Affairs, the officials of Emfuleni Municipality, Rand Water and all the other stakeholders involved in ensuring that this occasion is a success. Thank you for your cooperation. It really shows that "working together we can achieve more".*

*I thank you.*