



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**CONCLUDING STATEMENT AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE  
FOURTH WATER AND DEVELOPMENT CONGRESS  
BY DEPUTY MINISTER WATER AND SANITATION, SOUTH AFRICA  
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KING HUSSEIN IN BIN TALAL, CONVENTION CENTRE, AMMAN,  
JORDAN  
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*The theme of the Congress is “Water and Development” with the core focus on “Water Security for Sustainable Growth” as per the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as committed to by Heads of State on 25 September 2015. The request is that the DM must inspire the global water community (the congress) to move on and make the SDGs happen.*

Programme Director  
Honourable Minister  
Congress Delegates  
Honoured Guests  
Water Association Organisations  
Partners in the Water Sector

Good afternoon and warm greetings from the Republic of South Africa.

I am happy to be here today and team up with you and mobilise the nations of the world to realise the new adopted Sustainable Development Goals.

Thank you for the invitation to share some of the vital issues facing water management in South Africa, and the opportunity to say a few words on “Making the SDGs happen”.

As a water scarce country with extensive associated development challenges, effective water management has become a critical issue and requirement. I will highlight a few of the most critical issues we are dealing with:

- I. The social and moral obligation to ensure that all our people have access to reliable, sustainable and affordable water and sanitation services. This commitment is embedded in the South Africa’s Constitution and is supported by comprehensive programmes and actions. We have already achieved the MDG targets and now our objective is to ensure universal access. We have set a new goal of hundred percent (100%) coverage and ninety percent (90%) reliable water services by 2019, and we are moving.
- II. There is a need to ensure water security for growth and development. South Africa is a water scarce country. We need to extensively investment in “smarter” water management and governance, over and above infrastructure development, to enable sustainable growth, development and security. This implies maximizing existing resources, re-use, wise use, appropriate solutions as well as more effective discipline and control.
- III. Being a water scarce country, water resources and the associated ecosystems must be protected. Disaster

management and climate change is also a reality and integral part of the South African water business.

- IV. A key issue is the promotion and establishment of water as a critical and strategic resource. This includes the centralization and prioritization of water within the economic, social and environmental development agenda. We need to establish a water care culture which includes issues such as respect for, valuing and appreciation of and make the water sector co-accountability for water and its management.
- V. A priority focus area is the issue of sustainable and reliable water management and services, as well as viability and affordability of water supply and protection. This demands water management transformation to include value and life-cycle management, focus on operations and maintenance, as well as business and behaviour management.
- VI. South Africa is obliged to move into a new dimension and era of “smarter” and more mature water management. This demands extended water management and governance.
- VII. Investment in skills and capability is one of the critical success factors. Hence South Africa is partnering with other strategic countries in the South and in the North.
- VIII. Advanced integrated, business and financial management, investment in research and appropriate solutions, as well as sector and role player mobilization and partnerships are as important.

This Congress needs to come up with approaches of setting ourselves up to succeed in achieving the committed water goals and targets.

We need clear indicators per target, we need proper reference frameworks, we need dedicated programmes and associated support; we need resilient water and sanitation infrastructure, culture; we need skills in the water and sanitation sector (engineers, technicians, scientists, hydrologists, etc) to service, operate and maintain the infrastructure; we need resources and most importantly, we need strategic partnerships to invest in the water and sanitation sector achieving the SDGs, we need the will and drive to win.

This means achieving the agreed water targets and thereby creating a better world for all our people, women and children. We have a very serious obligation.

**Can we all get up? Are we ready to move? Are we committed?**

**Let us get going.**

I thank you