



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

AMSTERDAM INTERNATIONAL WATER WEEK ADDRESS BY DEPUTY MINISTER WATER AND SANITATION, SOUTH AFRICA MS PAMELA TSHWETE 02 NOVEMBER 2015

Programme Director

Your Excellencies

Honourable Ministers

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Government Representatives

Private Sector Representatives

Non Governmental Organisation

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me take this opportunity to commend the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the organizers of the Amsterdam International Water Week for constantly reminding us of the importance of water.

This Conference is taking place against the backdrop of the recently held World Water Week 2015 Conference which took place in Stockholm, Sweden, from 23 – 28 August. The Conference reaffirmed the position that access to water plays a key strategic role in the socio-economic transformation of societies.

The 2015 Amsterdam International Water Week is a historic event. It is happening in a year which represents the target year for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) and the beginning of the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

South Africa is one of the water scarce countries in the world. We experience very little rainfall, skewed water distribution nationwide and low water levels in storage. But as a country we managed to provide access to clean water to 95,2% of our population. The drought that has just hit South Africa and other countries in Southern African Region is making it impossible for us to guarantee sustainable supply of water for domestic and economic development. This is a reflection that Climate Change is a reality, and as countries and private sector organisations, we have to do more to strengthen our efforts towards mitigating the effects of climate change.

As a country we have prioritized water conservation demand management measures to ensure that we recover, reuse and recycle water. The water, energy and food security nexus is part of our master planning and implementing appropriate methodologies and technologies in ensuring economic and social development .

As a representative of the developing countries I must emphasise that we are more dependant to these ecosystem services for our livelihoods, food security and protection from pollution as they naturally improve our water quality. In the protection of our ecosystems we must invest in the most cost effective ways with regards to human capital development and finance

Ladies and Gentlemen, historically access to water in South Africa, like access to many rights and privileges were determined by the dictates of race and gender.

Access to water was further complicated by the link between access to land and access to water. Since access to water is linked to access to land, the rights of Africans' access to water was further limited by their limited access to land.

This was all the results of the apartheid policies and legislations. Thanks to the Netherlands Anti-Apartheid movements that fought tirelessly to ensure that apartheid is declared a crime against humanity.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is Forums like the Amsterdam International Water Week that provide appropriate platforms for governments and private sectors to explore alternative means to guarantee sustainable supply of water and to improve our capacity to deliver water infrastructure and to operate and maintain such infrastructure.

As we engage and share experiences during the course of this conference, it is important to acknowledge the role played by research on water and innovation on water towards investing in the sustainable future.

As governments and private sector organisations we must continue to support research initiatives that aim to enhance understanding of water and innovation on water to ensure sustainable supply of fresh water for the current and future generations.

Remember “*Water is Life, Sanitation is Dignity*”.

Dankie

Ngiyabonga.