



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

CLOSING REMARKS BY Ms. NOMVULA MOKONYANW, MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION AT THE SANITATION INDABA HELD AT ENKOSI ALBERT LUTHULI IN DURBAN, KWAZULU-NATAL

14-15 MAY, 2015

KEY MESSAGES:

Programme Director,

Water and sanitation are the two opposite sides of the same coin, thus the strategic decision by government to establish the new Department of Water and Sanitation.

Whilst South Africa met its Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) of ensuring access to sanitation in 2010 – Statistics SA suggests that South Africans enjoy 74% access to sanitation. Despite the many strides we made over the last twenty years, we cannot rest until we have universal coverage to dignified sanitation in South Africa.

What then become the Game Changers that can turn the situation around to ensure that we bring about effective and efficient alternative technology to our predominantly water-bourne sanitation system?

At the outset, what we need are dignified and sustainable alternatives that should carry the message that “A dignified toilet is not all about flushing.”

Sadly, we have to deal with the sanitation reality that not everyone can get a flushing toilet.

As part of a process to consider sanitation solutions, government needs to create a conducive legislative and fiscal framework that ensure political will and the introduction of a paradigm-shift that challenges the old way of dealing with the sanitation challenges.

What is becoming clearer now is the fact that for us to achieve the radical transformation in the sanitation sector we need a sanitation revolution. Nothing short of a revolution will achieve the universal access target in the country, let alone Sub-Saharan Africa.

To us the sanitation revolution should become a vehicle through which the objectives of the National Development Programme (NDP 2030) can be achieved in a more organic and integrated manner to realize a people-centric radical strategic socio-economic transformation.

The question that begs an answer is - understanding that South Africa is a water-stressed country - how do we develop a sanitation infrastructure that is effective and demonstrates less dependent on water, yet promotes water re-use and harvesting?

At the centre of this approach, as the deliberations here at the Indaba have pointed out, is the effort at introducing the use of innovative and technological advances that brings about benefits at every step of the sanitation value chain.

Obviously, there can never be a one-size-fits-all technology, and therefore, as we move forward with the sanitation revolution we have to be alive to some factors, such as the climate change as well as geographical and

environmental conditions that may impact on the applicability of specific technologies.

This revolution has many dimensions. The first is the systems change as we move from highly centralized, expensive wastewater treatment dominance to one that has a combination of centralized and localized waste treatment.

The second component here is the movement from high-energy waste treatment technologies to low-energy using and actually energy producing waste treatment systems.

The next component of the revolution is water. We must move from highly wasteful water-borne sewerage to low-water and no-water solutions. And where we continue to use water, it has to be majority grey-water. It is incredible that the majority of sanitation still uses drinking quality, very expensive water to flush a toilet.

Flowing from the above framework, we then need to have a sophisticated roll-out model that empowers local communities. The principle of nothing about us without us should serve as a constant reminder that whatever we do, we should not do it for self-gratification, but for the restoration of the dignity of our people;

The Water Research Commission and Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (WRC/CSIR) social franchising model that was used in Eastern Cape schools is highly encouraging. The School Toilet refurbishing program funded with assistance from both national and provincial government as well as the Government of Ireland trained local players, developed companies with local people who then went on to perform the

refurbishment roll-out. This has been recognized by the African Development Bank who are coming on board as the principal funder of the next phase of the project.

The final component is the Governance Model. High-levels of local community participation in governance is the key to ensure longevity, and ward committees must be core to this enterprise. In this connection, we need to empower ward councilors with information about our plans, programmes and offerings to deal with water and sanitation challenges on the ground.

Furthermore, community social mobilization should be at the centre of every programme we intend implementing. What we have seen in the past is that with the best of intentions, without the community involvement and engagement, projects have fallen flat and collapsed.

The issue of constant education cannot be over-emphasized. Educational programmes, both from the hygienic and the technophobia point of view should be put in place to ensure a change in the old habits and culture of doing things.

Importantly also, this sanitation revolution needs a strong social compact and partnerships that straddles across the various stakeholders, both in the public and the private sectors as well as community structures. Collaboration between various the government departments should also take place at the level of planning.

Lastly, it is upon all of us to agitate for this sanitation revolution; however, it is important to prepare our people for such a revolution; lest we become a group of sanitation rebels. We need a common message with many voices.

Indeed, the sanitation evolution has taken us thus far in the last twenty years of our democracy, now is the time for the sanitation revolution to take us to the future.

Dankie.

Ngiyabonga.