

**SPEECH FOR THE LAUNCH OF JOURNEY OF WATER AND SANITATION WEEK  
BY DEPUTY MINISTER WATER AND SANITATION  
MS PAMELA TSHWETE  
11 MAY 2015**

Programme Director

Leadership of the World Wide Fund

Honoured Guests

The Media

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What brings us here together today is a common mission between Government and Civil Society to find ways of mitigating water challenges.

We seek to mobilise the audience present here to work with us as Water Ambassadors in our educational programmes on water conservation and sanitation.

You must remember during the struggle the word went around and people were mobilised through art, poetry, and music.

You have influenced your followers in many ways, now we want you to do the same in the water and sanitation sector.

Once more we are in the KwaZulu Natal province for the "Journey of Water Launch". Two weeks ago we visited the Zululand District to talk about the water situation.

We have also met His Majesty, King Goodwill Zwelithini who gave us good advice on what needs to be done.

We are taking keen interest in this province because of the drought conditions in the area and we are going to elaborate on the government disaster plan intervention.

Part of the reason why it is so difficult to manage water supply is because of the history of imbalanced distribution of water resources such as bulk water supply. This is in the main through the shortage of engineers in our country which is as a result of the previous system of education.

The Department of Water and Sanitation recognises that South Africa's natural resources - such as freshwater, arable land, clean air, plants and animals - have a limited lifespan. As government and a nation we have to protect these resources to ensure ongoing food security, human health and overall economic prosperity.

As the custodian of our water resources the Department of Water and Sanitation is extremely proud to launch the second Journey of Water and Sanitation Week 2015 in collaboration with WWF. The Journey of Water campaign will highlight the key elements of the water value chain from source to tap, and the fact that **Water Doesn't Come from a Tap.**

We begin our Journey today in the *uKhahlamba* Drakensberg World Heritage Site; this area is one of our country's strategic water source areas. Water Source Areas are national assets. As the custodian of our nation's water resources, DWS is mandated to protect these crown jewels in the water value chain.

The second National Water Resource Strategy outlines the department's intentions to meet the challenges of water

resource management in the coming years. In this regard implementation plans are being drafted with all stakeholders to look at the most appropriate mechanisms to protect our Water Source Areas and ensure that we cater for the needs of the downstream users and ecosystems as we know and understand the value of healthy rivers.

The Department of Water and Sanitation has pioneered legislation on which to build its protection of our natural resources. The Ecological Reserve, within the Resource Directed Measures, enables us to specify and protect the quantity and quality of water required to support our freshwater ecosystems.

Our National Water Strategy prioritises this work for the Department and Catchment Management Agencies. These agencies are rapidly coming to fruition, completing an essential part of our institutional capacity to give effect to sustainable management of water resources to ensure – Some, for all, forever. This reflects our commitment to equity and sustainability as well as redressing previously imbalanced access to water resources.

Although we acknowledge the vital role nature plays in delivering our water, we must not lose sight of the social challenges that our people face and these are often magnified through water and sanitation issues in the country. It is for this reason that the DWS has assumed the sanitation function.

The lack of waste disposal and sewer maintenance in our communities affects everyone in the end. We need to work together when people have few resources and ensure that

we work with what we have to improve the lives of those communities and people who need themmost.

Also, we must protect the water we all need. On Day 3 of the Journey we will highlight some of the service delivery challenges and we will remind us what can be achieved by the helping hands of Ubuntu.

Finally, water and sanitation will always be everyone's business and campaigns like the Journey of Water highlight the importance of Government, NGOs, Community and Business Partnerships to protect our water sources and address our sanitation challenges.

I would like to wish all the participants well during the walk and hope that by the time you reach Pietermaritzburg you would have an understanding of the complexities and value of our water systems, and most importantly you will remember that **water doesn't come from a tap.**

**Thank you**