

**OPENING ADDRESS OF THE 2015 NATIONAL ANNUAL YOUTH SUMMIT  
BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER, MS PAMELA TSHWETE  
BIRCHWOOD HOTEL, BOKSBURG  
29 JUNE 2015**

**Programme Director**

I would like to extend my warm greetings to our Summit hosts the Ekurhuleni municipality, represented by the Executive Mayor, Councillor Mondli Gungubele, the Member of the Mayoral Committee, Councillor Nkosindiphile Xhakaza and Head of Department Water, Philemon Mashoko.

Allow me Programme Director to also greet our Sponsors, Partners and Friends who are always at hand to give support in ensuring that this Annual Youth Water and Sanitation Summit is a success.

I wish to also salute the participating schools represented by educators and children.

My greetings also go to organisations working with youth, parents and government officials who have worked tirelessly since the last Annual Youth Water and Sanitation Summit in June 2014 my greetings to you all.

I have noted the presence of the water supporting institutions such as research bodies, water boards and technology innovators which all form part of our big water and sanitation family.

I am very pleased to welcome our honoured guests the youth represented by:

**In School  
Out of School  
and Young Water and Sanitation Professionals**

These are all the owners of this Summit and the product of this Summit will be realised only by these young people to whom we are investing this behavioural change.

Ladies and gentlemen my heart is filled with boundless joy as I welcome all of you to this historic Annual Youth Water and Sanitation Summit, held in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng.

It is always good to bring young learners and teachers to Gauteng because of its strategic location. Gauteng is located in the Highveld. The Highveld forms South Africa's inland plateau and shares borders with almost all the other nine provinces except the Western Cape.

The Highveld presents very unique features compared to the experience known in the coastal provinces in terms of rain patterns and general weather conditions.

Although Gauteng is the smallest of the nine provinces of South Africa, it remains highly urbanised and being the most populous province of them all. The households and the industries in this province account for more water consumption than anywhere in the country in youth development.

The quality of water and sanitation service operations in Gauteng has always been good and the municipalities in this province are always amongst the top performing municipalities in the country and hence, I wish to declare Gauteng our training ground.

Ladies and gentlemen, sixty years ago the people of South Africa black and white declared in the Freedom Charter the people's document that "The doors of learning and culture shall be open to all".

This noble vision was frustrated for the past 38 years never to see light and hence the majority of the African people do not possess the requisite qualifications and technical skills so much needed in the provision of services to the people.

Ladies and gentlemen we are gathered here in **JUNE** the **Youth Month** in South Africa which the democratic government declared as such in honour of the heroic struggles waged by our youth in 1976 against the system of education that was divided, inferior and authoritarian controlled.

Today we are gathered here to move forward the vision of the Freedom Charter, the ideals of the 1976 generation of young people and redress the shortage of skills legacy brought about by the system of apartheid.

This Annual Youth Summit is an assemblage of young South Africans who have recognised that South Africa is a water scarce country and the sanitation provision levels are not adequate.

These young people have taken upon themselves to work towards conservation of nature and reduce the most pressing threats to diversity of life on earth. Their **JOURNEY** in life is about security of fresh water for people and animals.

The Department of Water and Sanitation working with business, the Department of Basic Education, the Department of Higher Education, the Department of Arts and Culture and many water

supporting institutions is implementing a school based education programme called 2020 vision for water and sanitation, which is one of the strategic programmes aimed at, educating youth in schools about water resource management , sanitation health and hygiene and also promote careers in the water and sanitation sector.

The programme focuses on development of curriculum aligned educational resource materials, capacity building workshops for educators, action projects such as :

- Baswa Le Meetse.
- Aqua Enduro.
- Public Speaking.
- South African Youth Water Prize.
- ECO Schools Project.

Through this programme we instil to our youth values of water conservation, general hygienic and care of the environment. Young people are able to identify water and sanitation related challenges in their communities, conduct comprehensive research, make recommendations and develop interventions to address challenges.

Careers in the water and sanitation sectors are promoted to address the water sector skills shortage and broader communities are reached as children transfer the knowledge to their parents, families and

communities as an old saying goes. **“You educate a child you educate the nation.”**

The Annual Youth Water and Sanitation Summit will expose youth to various programs and activities that will further enhance their knowledge and interest in water and sanitation related careers.

During this Summit, young people will participate in educational excursions, lectures, in career expositions, in public speaking through youth debates, in exhibitions and in competitions. This week long programme will culminate into an award ceremony to acknowledge excellence in teaching and learning on issues of water and sanitation.

During this period, the **Out of School Youth and Young Water Professionals** from all the nine provinces will be working with the water supporting in crafting plans on how they will assist **In School Youth** address water and sanitation challenges facing their schools.

The successful or the winning plan will be tabled to me during the Gala Dinner to be held on Wednesday, 01July 2015. As I welcome you all to this Youth Water and Sanitation Summit I wish that we could see this session as a transformation programme that government is unfolding with relevant partners through youth participation and development.

The importance of education in this programme is in keeping with the words of the old Senegalese ecologist, *Dr BabaDioum* who wrote in 1968, that education is a critical response to achieving behavioural change to issues of natural resource management. I quote

*“In the end we will **conserve** only what we **love**;  
We will **love** only what we **understand** and;  
We will **understand** only what we have been **taught**.”*

*So educators **teach** your learners ...  
so they may **understand** ...  
for if they **understand** the importance of water ...  
they will **love** our precious resource  
And when they **love** water ...  
They will **conserve!***

In those few words I wish all youth participating in this Summit interesting and challenging times during their stay and great success in their future careers.

The adults offering educational services I wish them to see value in their endeavours to develop a child and positive change in their role in the conservation of the natural resource.

I hereby declare the 2015 Annual Youth Water and Sanitation Summit open and all delegates present here must make it another platform of great excellence and quality learning. **I THANK YOU.**

