



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

ADDRESS BY MINISTER FOR WATER AND SANITATION, HON. NOMVULA MOKONYANE ON THE OCCASION OF A MINISTERIAL VISIT TO COLLIERY TRAINING COLLEGE TO ASSESS WAR ON LEAKS TRAINING IN EMALAHLENI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY; MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

06 May 2016

Deputy-Minister of Water and Sanitation, Pam Tshwete

MEC of Human Settlements, MEC Siwela

Executive Mayor of Emalahleni, Cllr Ntshalintshali

Our War-On-Leaks Trainees

Ladies and Gentleman;

- In August 2015, our President, Jacob Zuma, launched the War-On-Leaks programme at an event held in Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality. The launch was the realization of an announcement made in his State of the Nation Address that a government we would train 15, 000 young people to assist the country to minimize current water losses.
- Annually, as a country we lose approximately R 7 billion worth of water due to leaks. Through the War-On-Leaks programme, government seeks to reverse this reality and safe-guard this precious and scarce resource.

- Today we are here, along with the Deputy-Minister, to assess progress being made in the training of the 134 young people currently in training here at the Colliery Training College, Emalahleni Campus.
- At this campus we have been exposed to young people training in a variety of skills. The college is currently training providing our trainees with welding, plumbing, instrumentation and electrical skills.
- These skills have also been complemented with water demand management, water conservation and entrepreneurship training.
- What we are doing through this programme is providing our youth with the necessary capacity to serve and assist in the War against Leaks and water losses whilst at the same time providing training to empower them to operate and manage their own small and medium enterprises in future, doing work for government and the private sector in the water sector.
- At the launch of the programme, President Zuma outlined that we would be recruiting 3,000 young people in the first phase and 7,000 in phase 2, with the remaining 5,000 in Phase 3, which will be in 2017/18.
- We have successfully enrolled the targeted 3,000 in the 2015/16 financial year and Rand Water, as the implementing agent, is now in the process of recruiting the 7,000 young people targeted for this financial year.
- Again, these numbers will be spread across the country targeting in particular those areas known and recorded to have the highest water losses linked with the absence of skills to decisively deal with them.
- We have also placed immense importance on the need to train and develop water agents, whose task will be to educate and empower communities on how to use water responsibly and manage demand in communities.
- This is specifically important given that South Africa is a water scarce country and recently, we have experienced the worst drought in decades, from which we are still counting our losses and recovering.

- South Africa is the 30th driest country in the world and with the effects of global warming and climate change upon us, we are forced to take a new and vigorous approach to water saving and management.
- It cannot be 'Business as Usual' and to this end, we have introduced many initiatives aimed at promoting adaptation amongst citizens and promoting awareness on water the responsible use of water.
- The month of May is Sanitation month and one of our key initiatives has been the introduction of the sanitation revolution.
- We have adopted a stance that seeks to promote alternative sanitation solutions that will rely less on water and explore the use of recycled (grey) water if necessary or dry sanitation.
- We have also began a successful campaign known as the 'Drop-a-Block' initiative where we are encouraging households and businesses to drop a block in their cisterns and reduce the amount of water lost per flush.
- All these efforts are in place to ensure that we use water wisely and give back to the system for increased storage and access.
- Importantly, as government we have a duty and priority of serving the unserved. Many amongst you would be aware that there are still areas in our country that are still to receive access to water.
- It is those people and areas that are on top of mine and the department's priorities to ensure that we promote access and give more people access to water. Water is a constitutional right.
- Significant strides have been made and work continues to connect more communities and people to water. Currently, over 90% of South Africans have access to water.
- This is a significant development and sign that indeed our government is committed to restore the dignity of our people and eradicate situations where our people drink water from rivers with animals.

- As we lay out new infrastructure to serve these communities, our intention is for some of you to take up opportunities within municipalities to operate and maintain these new and refurbished water systems and pipelines.
- The training being provided through this programme, will give you the skills to access work opportunities within the water sector and family, as employees or as service providers.
- My personal hope is that this programme will also instil within you a sense of civic responsibility. This year we celebrate 40 years since the historic events of June 16, 1976.
- The young people of 1976 never had the opportunities that this government is today providing you. What they did however have, was a vision to liberate South Africa so that you could sit here today and receive free training to help build South Africa.
- We must never forget the sacrifices made by that generation of youth and the many before them, who lost their lives in pursuit of the freedom we, together with you, enjoy today.
- As the first detachment in the War-On-Leaks, you must also be exemplary in your social conduct and consciousness. You must inspire hope in your communities and share the lessons you learn.
- On 03 August 2016, we will have our Local Government elections and as young people, you must go out and participate in the elections in your numbers. You must do so to show that the struggles and suffering of the generation of 1976 was not in vain.
- Your vote is important for government to continue to implement such programmes so that more and more young people can move from street corners into workshops, classrooms and opportunities like some amongst you have.
- It is your right and you must exercise it freely to take South Africa and our young democracy forward.

- In conclusion, I am pleased to have visited you and seen the good work and progress you are making in your training.
- I am hopeful that once you complete this phase you will continue to display the necessary commitment as you go out to begin working in your areas to repair leaks and maintain water infrastructure.
- I must let you know that I am aware of the challenges that have been experienced in the beginning of this programme which included delayed payments of stipends etc. I can assure you that we have resolved most of the problems and are doing our best to resolve the remaining challenges.
- You were the first intake of this programme and as such, some of the challenges have brought lessons for how we must improve the programme as we move into phase 2.
- Thank you for hosting us and we wish you all the best as you continue with your training and are hopeful you will be role-models in your work.

Dankie. Ngiyabonga!