



**water & sanitation**

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**2018 NATIONAL ANNUAL YOUTH SUMMIT CLOSING  
ADDRESS**

**BY THE HON DEPUTY MINISTER, MS PAMELA TSHWETE  
BIRCHWOOD HOTEL, BOKSBURG**

**26 JUNE 2018**

Programme Director

Youth Programme Champions

National and Provincial Coordinators

Educators and Learners

Honoured Guests

Adjudicators

Department of Basic Education

Department of Water and Sanitation

Youth Development Partners and Sponsors

Ladies and Gentlemen

### **Good evening**

The 2018 Youth Water and Sanitation Summit has been a resounding success. Educators, learners, the National and Provincial coordinators, our Sponsors and Partners must be thanked immediately before I speak further. Transformation Unit needs special thanks for pulling out all stops, burning the midnight oil, and leaving no stones unturned in making this Youth Summit a success story – against all odds. The Department hosts this event annually as part of its 2020 Vision Programme.

[Please give yourselves a **round of applause**]

I won't be long this evening because my aim is to reflect on our achievement and to show our gratitude to all our supporters. When I arrived here on Monday morning, I spoke about the importance of empowering our learners with knowledge about the impact that water and sanitation have on our lives.

We encouraged the participants to learn from their counterparts and this knowledge must be used to close the skills gap when we go back to our respective provinces. The expected outcome of this programme is behavioural change with regard to water use which will manifest in the form of increased water savings, and reduced water leaks in schools and communities. It also contributes to effective water resource management, which will be indicated in the form of reduced pollution of water resources. It also cannot stress enough but rather to highlight the importance of water conservation. We depend on you to teach your peers, parents and society on the importance of using water sparingly.

To the educators, I know that being water conscious does not stop here, we must influence the rest of our learners not present here and our communities as well.

A society that is educated about its natural resources can begin to build a future that sustains a better quality of life free from devastating impact of poor health, poverty, and inequality. And who better to head us into the desired water and sanitation space other than our youth.

A success story that I have to relate, among many, is that of Lutendo Rhinah Singo. Born in a Venda rural area, outside of Thohoyandou where she did her primary and secondary schooling.

Lesson 1: it does not matter where you are born.

She was diagnosed with severe deafness while in Grade 2, endured difficulties from being ridiculed by other learners to being misunderstood by her teachers.

Lesson 2: your situation does not determine your destination.

Against suggestions from the social workers her parents rejected the offer for her to attend special school, and instead of Sign Language they got her to be trained in Lip Reading which she excelled in over the years.

Lesson 3: you can achieve anything you put your mind to.

After Matriculation, she attended a TVET college where she obtained N3 National Certificate and N6 National Diploma in Engineering Studies. She enrolled for Bachelor of Earth Science in Hydrology and Water Resources with Honours, at the University of Venda. Upon graduation she was awarded with a Certificate for Best Graduate in the university's department of Hydrology and Water Resources.

Through determination she graduated for Master of Science in Hydrology and Water Resources, and she is currently a PhD candidate in the school of Environmental Sciences at the University of Venda.

She is working as a Hydrologist Graduate Trainee with the Department of Water and Sanitation and is focused on completing her PhD.

Singo could not join us this evening but she sends this message, "my life experiences have taught me that I must never give up on things I believe I can achieve in this life. I refuse to be disabled in my inner self as well as mentally because I want to live beyond my limitations and inspire others. With all I have accomplished, I believe that I am living proof that disability doesn't mean inability".

In September we will once again converge to give out the bursaries, trophies and certificates to the recognised best performers of these National Adjudications. It will also be an opportunity for the runner ups to improve on their presentations and do even better next time, not just here but life in general.

Young people of South Africa face a number of challenges and on daily basis the biggest being unemployment .The political freedom which we attained in 1994 has paved a way for us as a nation to address all forms of inequality. We are determined to completely do away with the legacy of the past. We have to empower our youth to become future leaders and be actively involved in the main stream economy.

In conclusion, I wish you all safe journey home to your respective Provinces and communities. I hope to see some of you again in September as I will be awarding the winners of this august occasion and next year at the 2019 National Adjudications in our journey to empower the youth of our country.

I THANK YOU.