



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND
SANITATION**

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**ON THE OCCASION OF THE 5TH ANNUAL GREEN YOUTH
INDABA, INNOVATION HUB, LYNWOOD.**

29 JUNE 2018

Programme Director
Green Youth Network and its Partners
Green Innovator's Pitch participants
Young Entrepreneurs and Professionals
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning

I feel highly honoured to be invited to the 5th Annual Green Youth Indaba 2018. Initiatives such as the Green Youth Network, spearheaded by young people like you, are likely to succeed not only because young people are the future; but they have a high level of dynamism and vibrancy that is transferred from young people to the project itself. This combination is often attractive and admirable to the people who receive it.

I wish to thank the Green Youth Network for working together with the Department of Water and Sanitation in facilitating the Youth Indaba at the 2018 National Adjudication and Youth Summit in Birchwood, earlier this week. I have received great reviews from impressed officials of the Department's Transformation Unit. I look forward to more fruitful engagements between the Department and Green Youth Network, as well as partnering for the benefit of our youth.

A.P.J. Abdul Kalam once said, open quote: “the youth need to be enabled to become job generators from job seekers”, close quote. It is in this spirit that the robust interactions and sessions at the recent Youth Indaba that I have just mentioned concentrated on the **four pillars of: job creation; youth development; entrepreneurship; and innovation.**

As the Youth Month draws to an end, and as we carry the memory of the youth of 1976, there is a realisation that the youth today is faced with different challenges. That is the reason for a need for new, fresh, creative ideas, leading to innovation.

I commend the Green Youth Network for putting up their hand and playing a catalytic role by leading the youth in fighting for a cleaner and brighter environment. This is a legacy that will go a long way in creating a better world for generations to come. A cleaner and brighter environment also has a positive impact on the country’s water resources.

Healthy water resources will impact on better hygiene and a direct reduction of water-borne diseases. This will imply that there will be less of a bemoaning the negative impacts of water-borne diseases on our youth, with more being able to attend uninterrupted studies at school.

In green economy there is emphasis on the pursuit of opportunities to invest in sectors that rely upon and use natural resources and ecosystems services. Investing in the green sector, including water sector, more jobs and greater prosperity can be achieved. Arguably these opportunities are strongest in areas where people still do not have access to clean water and adequate sanitation services.

Early investment in the provision of these services appears to be a precondition for progress. Once more the rate of progress will be much faster and more sustainable, thus making transition to a green economy possible.

Water in the green economy focuses on the socio economic opportunities that proper water management provides to social and economic development whilst also safeguarding freshwater ecosystems. In green economies the role of water in both maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem services and in providing water is recognised, valued and paid for.

Crucial to the attainment of Millennium Development Goals is the transition to a green economy, an economy that not only improves human wellbeing and lessens inequality but also reduces environmental risks and ecological scarcities. One of the biggest opportunities to expedite a transition to a green economy is to invest in the provisioning water and sanitation services to the poor.

In a green economy growth in income and employment are driven by public and private investments that reduce carbon emission and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Industry can play a leading role in making water practices more sustainable by addressing over exploitation and contamination and improving water infrastructure and management. To reach these goals industry must do more with less ideally moving towards a goal of zero discharge.

South Africa has a youthful population. It is therefore absolutely logical that there is none better than the youth to lead us on the Green economy and Environmental issues. This is why I am very impressed by the objectives of this Indaba; and as some of you may know, youth empowerment is very close to my heart.

I take my hat off to the young innovators whose ideas will assist the world in reducing environmental risks and ecological frailties, with an aim for sustainable development without degrading the environment. This is important to ensure that our country keeps in step with the ideals of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG – 6 which speaks to issues of water and sanitation.

The green economy cannot exist in isolation and the Department of Water and Sanitation is there to support these initiatives, considering that water is an essential for all socio-economic development. We would also like to instigate for much needed support and partnerships from the private sector to boost these efforts of empowering the youth, eradicating youth unemployment and poverty. Such partnerships will also ensure that the youth is adequately trained for careers that will be central for the economic development of the country, that is be fit for purpose.

This is why partnerships with entities like the Innovative Hub, Water Research Commission (WRC), and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) remain vital.

By strengthening the appeal of the green economy, young people can effectively be used as change agents in their respective communities. Young people ought to be educated about environmental issues and the various ways they can conceive ideas contributing towards the green economy on individual, community, and broader societal levels.

In conclusion, I would like to echo Jose Rizal when he said, and I quote: “the youth is the hope of our future”, close quote. I wish to urge the Green Youth Network to keep up the good work and continue being catalysts in this field.

Thank you for inviting me to address you and good luck to the finalists of the Green Innovator's Pitch.

I thank you!