



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND
SANITATION

HON. PAMELA TSHWETE

ON THE OCCASION OF THE WOMEN IN WATER AND SOCIAL
ENTREPRENEURSHIP: FROM RESEARCH SCIENCE TO IMPACT.

CAMBRIDGE, EAST LONDON

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Programme Director

1

DEPUTY MINISTER PAM TSHWETE: WOMEN IN WATER AND SOCIAL
ENTREPRENEURSHIP.

Office of the Premier

Eastern Cape Department of Education

WRC CEO and Top Management

African Development Bank

Amanz'abantu Services

Project beneficiaries

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning

The Water Research Commission makes an interesting observation in their School Sanitation Management Handbook, one that describes a situation whereby learners feel that they cannot use their school toilets because they are dangerous or degrading which undermines their physical health, psychological wellbeing and academic progress. This partnership arrangement between the African Development Bank, Government Departments, and the Private sector and women franchisees is a ground-breaking initiative which should be given the recognition it

deserves. I am proud to learn about the huge potential for significant impact on school sanitation, female learners, women franchisees, faecal sludge treatment and beneficiation, as well as Public Private Partnerships.

UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Funds) overall objectives in the Water and Sanitation sector is to promote the survival , protection , and development of children , and to promote behavioural changes essential to realising the full potential of water and sanitation services.

These and other objectives cannot be met without the participation of women. In the world women and girls are traditionally responsible for domestic water supply and sanitation and maintaining a hygiene home environment. Women as Managers at the household level also have higher stake in the improvement of water and sanitation services and in sustaining facilities.

The lack of safe separate and private sanitation and washing facilities in schools is one of the main factors preventing girls from attending school particularly when menstruating. The health and lives of more than half of

the world's children are constantly threatened by environmental hazards as they get sick through contact with excreta in the environment.

In the birth month of Mama Albertina Sisulu I am overjoyed that women are at the forefront of this project, changing the not so pleasant face and perceptions of school sanitation. On the 14th of August 2018 President Cyril Ramaphosa launched the 'SAFE' School Sanitation Initiative which he described as one that will save lives and restore the dignity of tens of thousands of our nation's children, as our Constitution demands. SAFE is an initiative between government and private sector, which aims to fast track the eradication of pit toilets in the Country's schools this project can be then seen as an extension of the SAFE project.

The schools project of water, sanitation and hygiene will lead to improved schools attendance, academic performance, as well as hygiene behaviour through a comprehensive hygiene education and promotion. Through the efforts of all the stakeholders and partners in this project, a child missing school for sanitation and hygiene reasons will soon be a thing of the past.

The lack of facilities and appropriate sanitary products can push menstruating girls out of school, temporarily and sometimes permanently. There is a relationship between menstrual hygiene and school dropout of girls and these results in girls dropping out of school to stay at home until their menstrual cycle is over. As such, girls can miss many days of school due to lack of sanitary resources. I am thus happy that one of the elements of this project is the School Menstrual Hygiene Management Pilot. This management plan has been developed and piloted at 10 pilot schools. The guidelines have been used to assess the state of menstrual hygiene management at the pilot schools.

The element of School Sanitation Operation and Maintenance Work among others advocates for menstrual health management education.

The milestone of empowering women with these projects in the Eastern Cape is very heart-warming, even more so that it is to better the future of our children.

Realising the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development hinges on placing women at the centre of growth and development. A

growing body of evidence illustrates that advancing women's economic empowerment has multiplier effects across the spectrum of development. Reducing gender gaps in health, education and labour markets have been shown to continue to lower poverty, higher economic growth, greater productivity and more resilient communities. Unleashing the entrepreneurial spirit and leadership of women through social enterprises provides a unique opportunity to dismantle some of these barriers. Women are playing prominent roles in harnessing the power of markets and business to tackle society's greatest challenges. Social enterprises harness trade, investment, and business activity towards social environmental objectives, and are being recognised as critical drivers of innovation for sustainable development.

I appeal to all involved to make this project a great success so that we can see it rolled out to the rest of the country's schools, and with determination we will achieve this. Such partnerships between the government and the private sector can only propel our nation to greater heights.

I thank you.