



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SPEAKING POINTS FOR SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERVENTION AS CO-HOST BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION

HON. PAMELA TSHWETE

AT THE LAUNCH OF THE VALUING WATER INITIATIVE: VALUING WATER THROUGHOUT THE 2030 AGENDA

"Reflection on the Valuing Water initiative from co-hosts"

17 JULY 2018

Moderator

All Ministers and Vice Ministers present

Excellences

Distinguished guests

Honored co-hosts of this event

Ladies and Gentleman

Moderator, allow me at the onset to register my appreciation of this event that seek to remind the world of the value of water, of which all of us agree that indeed water is one of the valuable natural resources. But unlike most other valuable resources, it's proven hard to put a price on water.

South Africa is proud to co-host this event that talks to a topic that is yet to be unpacked by the world, if we are to save this valuable resource that threatens depletion in future, should we not act to save it. While we agree that there is value in water, for some reason, the world cannot get natural consensus of what actual values can we put on water. This is a topic that has many interpretations influenced by location, politics and economic situations in different parts of the world.

Moderator, experts and researchers estimate that by 2050, the world population will reach 10 Billion which puts a strong case to Valuing Water

debate and if we do not act this future numbers will find dry wells at that stage. If we were to find common understanding of the value of water, and allow engagements on the topic, we would change the narrative and the approach in this matter globally.

This is one of the objectives that the High Level Panel on Water aimed to achieve, to change the way in which the world view the issue of water. The main issue is that unlike most other valuable resources, people in most parts of the world still think it's hard to put a solid value and price on water. I am keen to listen to how different regions of the world approach this topic, as we seek to agree that there is real value in water.

Moderator we all have an opportunity made available once again today to engage and contribute our respective approaches on "valuing water"- a subject that requires interactive and robust engagements between political, business and social grouping. I appreciate and applaud the Government of Netherlands that took it upon itself to go around different regions of the world on a consultative mission to listen to the views of people on this matter. South Africa hosted the second big multi-stakeholder consultation in May 2017, which contributed greatly on the agreed pillars of valuing water today. It proved to be very important to consider to seeking political input and engage policy makers in this important topic that will give a policy perspective, including participation and engagements with, water experts, funders, investors, researchers,

academics and industry in the category of bulk water users agriculture, mining beverage companies and many others

Moderator, the concept of this session states clearly that there is an enormous challenge that lies ahead of all of us, which is reinventing our water future together. The fact that water is so important to people, economies, and the environment, makes it almost impossible to ignore this topic, or we can ignore this topic at our own peril. In addition the trade-offs between the use of water as a commodity and scarce resource to be priced and paid for, and the use of water as a human right for societies face difficult trade-off that must factored into the valuing water process and debate. We therefore cannot postpone this action is but to build on the momentum created by tis High Level Political Forum, towards a common and better stewardship of water resources around the world, with valuing water as an important part of that vision.

The strong commitment that is expressed by the concept of this session, talks to the overall title of the outcomes report of the High Level Panel on Water, entitled “Making Every Drop Count” inspired renewed confidence in the United Nations and the water sector contributing and leading the new narrative on water to positively influence the implementation of the SDG 6 in particular.

The HLPW Panel launched and endorsed this initiative on valuing water with the aim to build a global consensus and common language to guide better approaches to valuing water across four critical dimensions – social and cultural, environmental and economic. It is therefore imperative for Member States to consider implementing the principles that came out of this process. I will not engage the principles as we sit here with a country that bravely consolidated the importance of “Valuing Water” for the benefit of the Globe, that is Netherlands, and I would at this stage congratulate them for this eye opening initiative.

The dialogue on valuing water was aimed at developing a set of shared principles to motivate and encourage governments, business and civil society to consider water’s multiple values and to guide the transparent incorporation of these values into decision-making. To the Dutch, I would say let us elevate this engagement to the leaders, as this is their product, to engage further on this when they meet during the upcoming United Nations General Assembly, to guide the process further, as we all agreed in the many platforms, including yesterday’s session on WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE, where all speakers recommended keeping water High on The Agenda of the Multilateral Platform.

Ladies and gentleman, alongside strong political commitment, the delivery of the water and sanitation SDG (SDG 6) can only be a success if effective vehicles for delivery are put in place such as the initiative on

valuing water. It is also important to take note that South Africa deems it important for governments across the globe to own and ensure the implementation of goal-6, while all partners should be prepared play their strategic role with us. We hereby once again reiterate our support to this very important initiative.

I thank you