



**MINISTER
WATER AND SANITATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION, HON SENZO
MCHUNU, MP ON THE OCCASION OF THE WORLD WATER DAY AND THE
CELEBRATION OF THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE STRATEGIC WATER
PARTNERS NETWORK (SWPN)**

Date: Tuesday, 22 MARCH 2022

Co-Chair of the SWPN, Ms Conny Motau

Programme Manager of the Strategic Water Partners Network (SWPN), Ms Thembi
Mkhize, and her team

Representatives of the Private sector Partners

Representatives of the Civil Society organizations

Representatives from the Public Sector Organizations

Management committee of the SWPN

Ladies and Gentlemen

All protocol observed

We are gathered here today on a very important month of the water calendar. This gathering coincides with the 9th World Water Forum that is currently taking place, in Dakar, Senegal, under the theme: "*Water Security for Peace and Development*". As a country, we are well represented in that important forum by a strong team from the DWS.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in 1992, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a Resolution to declare the **22nd March** as a World Water Day. The Resolution was adopted as a means of focusing attention on the importance of freshwater and advocating for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. It is about taking action to tackle the global water crisis, in support of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 on “water and sanitation for all by 2030”.

This year, the World Water Day is celebrated under the theme: “ ***Making the invisible visible***”. This year’s topic refers to a very important subject on water resources management which is ‘groundwater’. Groundwater is invisible, but its impact is visible everywhere. As a Department and as a country, we are committed to exploring ground water as an alternative water source to ensure water security in communities affected by water supply challenges in our country.

To date, more than 50% of available ground water is being utilised in five Water Management Areas (WMA) across the country with the highest utilisation happening in the Limpopo province. Our country is rich in technical expertise required to explore the maximum utilisation of groundwater.

There is a need to strengthen collaboration between the Public and Private sector to ensure that we improve our utilisation of the groundwater resources as well as preventing pollution of our groundwater.

The advent of COVID-19 has also highlighted the importance of co-operation between the public and private sector. The coming together of all sectors was evidence that we are able to work together in protecting and advancing the interests of the citizens of the Republic of South Africa and to this end, we must not tire in our efforts.

In appreciation of the importance of collaboration between the public, private and civil society organisations, I have joined all of you in celebrating the 10th Year Anniversary of the “Strategic Water Partners Network” (SWPN), which is an important collaboration platform between the public, private and civil society organisations. This platform has been created to reduce the projected 17% water demand-supply shortfall by 2030, which poses a significant threat to the country’s growth if measures are not taken to reverse the trend. Furthermore, let me congratulate the SWPN on its award-winning partnership model and on its efforts to mobilise resources to undertake joint projects to support the Department of Water and Sanitation to address major water issues.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this platform resonates with my 10-Point Plan developed towards ensuring water services improvement in the country. On my 10-point plan, the 3rd point is all about *“increasing involvement of private sector financing and management in municipal water and sanitation services”*. In simple terms, our plan for the private sector involvement entails:-

- Creating an environment and opportunities that will allow for an increase in the involvement of the private sector in municipal water service delivery. Private sector involvement will include funding (grant related), financing (as

part of blended finance solutions) as well as opportunities for implementation (capacity, design, construction, refurbishing, operation and maintenance).

- Developing a relationship with various private sector partners to jointly identify the needs in various areas of interest and to determine mutually agreed remedial projects to benefit from private sector funding.

I have heard a lot about the Strategic Water Partners Network (SWPN) and I am glad that today, I have an opportunity to meet all members of the team. I have been informed about the good work that the private sector is doing in support of water and sanitation programmes and I am confident that this collaboration will be improved to greater heights.

The Department of Water and Sanitation, as a sector leader, is committed to this partnership and will continue to support this platform to ensure that it becomes a flagship programme from which other countries may be able to learn.

The participation by the big multinational brands on this platform gives us hope that one day all the water users will become members of the SWPN and work with us towards water security for all. We must work hard together to bring more private sector partners on board to grow the platform and encourage innovation towards reducing water usage in our manufacturing lines.

As a caring government, we do not compete with you as private sector, instead, we create a conducive environment for the private sector to operate, thrive, grow the economy and create jobs. It is for that reason that this platform must ensure that we

guard against the duplication of services. The duplication of roles and responsibilities leads to inefficiencies and wastage of the scarce resources.

My office will soon arrange a special meeting with the Management committee of the SWPN to focus on areas of common interest in line with the vision of the Department.

Happy 10th Year Anniversary to the SWPN

Together we can do more.

Thank you!