



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**OPENING ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION, MS MAGADZI ON
THE OCCASION OF THE NATIONAL WORKSHOP: TOWARDS
LOCAL WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

BIRCHWOOD CONFERENCE CENTRE, BOKSBURG

11 FEBRUARY 2022

Programme Director

The Honourable Deputy Minister, Mr MD Mahlobo, MP

The Director-General of the Department, Dr Sean Phillips

Chairpersons and CEO's of State-Owned Entities and Agencies,

Senior Government Officials,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

I wish to express my gratitude to everyone for honouring the invitation to attend this event. It is imperative to recognise that the National Water Act (Act No. 36 of 1998) sets the framework for Integrated Water Resource Management with emphasis on a well-managed stakeholder engagement process. This event would not be a success without partners that aim to ensure protected, sustainable, and resilient water resources.

Water is a precious resource that supports All socio-economic development.

The Department is enjoined by the Constitution and relevant Act to contribute positively towards the goals of the nation. The Department consistently aims towards ensuring the ideals of the National Development Plan (NDP) are realised.

South Africa adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and seeks to ensure that SDG 6 which aims to **"Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all"**. As a developing country this has to be an imperative.

The Constitutional obligations require the Department to be positively responsive in providing water as a basic human right to all.

In ensuring that the Ministry, renewed as at August 2021 as a specific Ministry of Water and Sanitation, gets a full grasp of the mandate of the Department and the depth of the challenges facing the Department and the sector, Minister Mchunu and his two Deputies undertook Provincial Ministerial Working Sessions throughout the country. I must assure you all, this was a very fruitful and intense exercise. It was also very informative and a worthy one, even if I say so myself, without a fear of contradiction.

It was interesting to find that the issues of concern all across are in the main similar, with slight emphasis from province to province. These matters that have suggested we gather here today include in the main:

- Capacity of Water Service Authorities (WSAs), that is local government, which capacity speaks to capacity to spend (particularly lack of qualified CFOs)
- Lack of technical capacity where some municipalities only have technicians instead of qualified engineers, thus impacting on Operations and Maintenance of infrastructure
- Boreholes being inoperative due to the correct water table not being identified, while some not being energised due to ESKOM not being paid
- Non-cooperation between WSAs and Irrigation Boards or Water User Associations
- Infrastructure that leaks leading to huge water losses
- Ageing water and sanitation infrastructure.
- Incomplete projects, as well as those behind schedule
- Under collection of revenue by Municipalities.
- Lack of forward planning

Program Director one of the most important responsibilities for the Ministry and Department is that of authority over water resource management. This responsibility cuts across government but needs input of the private sector and other interested parties, including non-

profit organisations. The clarion call is bestowed upon all of us to serve citizens with caution and reverence.

The Department's approach in developing the local water resource management institutions is meant to improve service delivery and ensure resilient water resources. Water Management Institutions are established through the National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998) which include **Catchment Management Agencies (CMAs)** and **Water User Associations (WUAs)**.

These entities are established for purposes of ensuring subsidiarity and management of water resources at the lowest practical level. Managing water at the local level is meant to ensure that local communities within water management areas are key stakeholders in the decision-making process.

The objective of the workshop is to address and find resolutions to the key issues that affect stakeholders which the Department needs to prioritise; in addressing these issues, we must forge partnerships with private, government and public role-players to ensure sustainable water practices.

The key issues to consider include:

- Unlawful water use
- Water resource quality objectives and reserve determination
- Water resource tariffs
- The assignment of delegations to the lower water resource management institutions,
- Delays in issuing of Water Use Authorisation for Agricultural activities and Historically Disadvantaged Individuals (HDIs), and
- The state of the verification and validation of existing lawful water users, the transformation of Irrigation Boards and current governance of Water User Associations.

These challenges create an opportunity to conceive innovation and can steer the country to become a better place for the citizens of South Africa.

Water is a central resource for all its users; it is a basic need that requires the attention of all role-players. We need to capacitate ourselves as a Department and respond to all challenges with a fresh

approach. Solutions may exist however they need people that are responsive and use them with an outcome-based mind-set.

This workshop provides an opportunity to engage and identify possible interventions on issues raised by the stakeholders. Dialogue is key as it fosters inclusion, as well as in the spirit of being a participatory democracy. Issues raised in the programme emanated from the Minister's provincial working sessions and it was deemed critical to have a National Workshop to unpack these issues, whilst the outcomes thereof will also influence the content for the upcoming National Water and Sanitation Summit.

Active participation is important from all stakeholders. This will ensure that key points and proposals are highlighted by the attendees that we regard as water resource stewards. This event needs to raise key investment opportunities and solutions to the identified constraints against private sector participation.

Today, we look towards how we can all contribute towards a renewed hope, and that hope must give impetus to develop and sustain the capacity to protect our water resources.

In closing, I would like to remind all stakeholders of the importance of your participation and support on this matter. I strongly believe that we will find solutions, action them and provide the comfort that our future generations will benefit from the decisions we will reach

Water is life and sanitation is dignity.

Thank you.