

**MEDIA LAUNCH**

**The *Working for Water* Programme  
1999/2000 ANNUAL REPORT**

**ADDRESS BY**

**MR RONNIE KASRILS**

**Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry**

**Chairperson of the Board of the *Working for Water* Programme**

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Members of the press, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

May I begin by thanking you for attending this function today, to launch the 1999/2000 Annual Report of the *Working for Water* programme. Here are some of the key statistics for the past year:

- ◆ 92% of the programme's budget of R241 million was spent. The massive flooding in many parts of the country compromised the programme's spending.
- ◆ 20 999 people, largely from the marginalised sectors of our society, received employment and training in the programme during the past financial year. (In terms of "person-years" of employment, it had the equivalent of about 11 000 full-time work opportunities.)
- ◆ Of these, 58% of these are women, 23% youth and 1% disabled.
- ◆ 95% of the budget was spent on labour-intensive clearing of invading alien plants.
- ◆ Of this, 85% was task-based work – ie, payment only for work completed.
- ◆ 884 emerging contractors are employed by the programme. (Of these, 15% are collectives, while 85% are run by individual entrepreneurs.)
- ◆ Of the 85% that make up individual entrepreneurs, 33% are women, 10% are youth and 98% are black.

- ◆ A total of 134 718 training days were provided. 56% of training initiatives were targeted at women and 39% at the youth.
- ◆ Teams throughout the country cleared 238 823 hectares of invasive alien plant species (47% was “initial clearing”, 51% “follow-up clearing”, and 2% “follow-up rehabilitation”).

As part of the successes of the past year, I feel that it is important to further highlight the following accomplishments:

- ◆ The first was the Best Management Practices for Preventing and Controlling Invasive Alien species Symposium, which was held in February of this year. The symposium attracted many of the world’s leading experts on invasive plant species and a full spectrum of South African stakeholders.
- ◆ The second was the launch of the *Santam / Cape Argus Ukuvuka: Operation Firestop Campaign*, which was formed in the wake of the devastating fires along the Table Mountain chain in January of this year. The campaign attracted tremendous private sector support, with R20m from Santam, R5.4m from the Cape Argus, R5m from Nedbank and R4m from Total. Local government, through the R30m support from the Cape Metropolitan Council, has also played its full part.
- ◆ The Impumelelo Award for Innovation that was given to the programme, as well as to one of its spin-off projects, the *Greater Hermanus Water Conservation Project*.
- ◆ The bestowing of the Stockholm Water Prize on my illustrious predecessor, Professor Kader Asmal, was a particular highlight.

There has been a very strong emphasis placed on integrated rural development, and on the clustering of Departments, by the Office of President Thabo Mbeki and Deputy President Jacob Zuma. It is clear that the only way in which initiatives will work is through an integrated approach between Departments; between the various tiers of Government; between the public and private sectors, and the labour movement, and between all these groups and civil society. The challenge that has been put out by the Presidency is to make partnerships work.

The success of the *Working for Water* programme is largely due to this commitment to partnerships. The programme has a Board comprising of twelve Ministers, and has extensive linkages with other Departments and programmes. The manner in which the Department of Agriculture has reached out to the programme in the development of the regulations around the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act, for example, is indicative of the reciprocal commitment to partnerships.

The links to the private sector are also strengthening, and today offers us the opportunity to launch a new partnership.

It gives me great pleasure to announce a R200 000 partnership between the *Working for Water* programme and three of the countries top herbicide companies: Cyanamid, Dow AgroSciences SA (Pty) Ltd, and Zeneca Agrochemicals.

Since the inception of the *Working for Water* programme, the herbicide companies have been active partners through the provision of large-scale training programmes. This new partnership will ensure the development and application of the best practices for the use of herbicides, which will include the safe and responsible use of herbicides and the development of policy standards and national guidelines.

I would like to thank all people who have helped us to achieve success in the programme. As with any programme of this size, problems do arise. But the commitment that is so evident in the programme, both to the control of invading alien plants and to poverty relief and development in our country, should ensure that the programme continues to improve.

I would like to pay particular tribute to my fellow Ministers who sit on the Board of the programme. It is through such partnerships that our greatest successes can unfold.

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