

**SPEECH BY MR RONNIE KASRILS, MP, MINISTER OF WATER AFFAIRS
AND FORESTRY AT THE FUNCTION OF THE OFFICIAL
ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE WINNER OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH
WATER PRIZE 2002 ON 6 AUGUST 2002 AT THE BEACON HILL
SECONDARY SCHOOL IN MITCHELL'S PLAIN, CAPE TOWN**

Greeting:

Programme Director; Prof Kader Asmal, MP, Minister of Education and Mr A Gaum MEC: Education; Honourable Members of the Western Cape Executive Council for Education and Training; Chief Directors and Directors of the Western Cape Provincial Government; Honourable Councillors; Residents of Mitchell's Plain; Members of the Adjudication Panel for the South African Youth Water Prize Competition; Principals, Educators and Learners; - Good morning, Goeie Môre, Molweni.

Today is a very important occasion for the youth of our country and Mitchell's Plain. Our gathering here, today in Mitchell's Plain, is auspicious, as we honour the youth of our nation. Today we honour some of the outstanding young citizens of our democratic country, and we praise our learners whose achievement will place South Africa on record in the history books of the world. There is a saying I would like you to remember, "The Greatness of any Nation is measured by the way it celebrates its children and their achievements."

Today is the day South Africa can be proud of, a day that will live in the minds of the people of the Western Cape especially here at Mitchell's Plain where we gather again so soon after the celebration of Youth Day (16 June). A day set aside to commemorate the sacrifices that our young people made towards our freedom. They sacrificed their lives for and staged protests in 1976 against an inferior education that was called "Bantu Education." Today we are witnessing how their sacrifices have changed the quality of education in our country. Today we are here to bury yet another legacy of the past, inferiority in education.

Today, Comrade Kader; we celebrate excellence in education. Congratulations Mitchell's Plain, congratulations young people of this country, congratulations for rising up to the challenge to leave inferior education behind and embrace a world of opportunities through the 2020 Vision for Water Education Programme of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry.

We are witnessing a shift from student protest to student prominence. There is another great saying, which says "The pen is mightier than the sword." I acknowledged that, we achieved much through the sword, and yet we will achieve much more by the pen. The struggle of our country forced us and many young people to abandon schools and engage in the armed struggle. We are not sorry for that, but we realize that the time to fight by the sword is over, now we must fight with the pen. The young people of this country will rewrite the history by their achievements and will bring honour to their fallen young heroes by the manner they achieve recognition for South Africa through platforms such as we celebrate here today. Today we are here to honour the youth and their mighty deeds using the pen.

2020 Vision For Water Education Programme & South African Youth Water Prize

My Department is implementing a national programme called 2020 Vision for Water Education Programme in schools. Part of that Programme is a special competition called South African Youth Water Prize. It is actually an international competition that was started in 1994 in Sweden by the Stockholm Water Foundation. When the competition was opened for participation by other countries of the world in 1997, our young democracy jumped right in. We knew we were not ready, but my Department did not want to marginalize our children. Since 1997 we sent South African Youth Water Prize winners to the International Youth Water Prize Competition in Stockholm, Sweden.

The 2020 Vision for Water Education Programme was initiated during the time of my diligent predecessor Professor Kader Asmal. Since I have come on board, I continued with it and the programme has grown tremendously with Kader's support from the Department of Education. The programme has reached over 10,000 schools from all backgrounds races, rural and urban nationwide, and the balance will be reached soon.

I am very pleased that the Department of Education has incorporated environmental education into the school curriculum. Water education will not be regarded as an extramural or add-on anymore, it now forms part of the syllabus. Hence my Department supports the implementation of the new curriculum through the 2020 Vision for Water Education Programme. We support it through participating to your Department's Professional Development Support programme for educators, and also furnishing water related educational resource materials to the schools that are engaged in the programme.

Every year our learners in schools learn about water related issues and engage in many activities that demonstrate efficient water use and water resource management. They conduct research, do experiments and write essays, poems, perform drama and dance,

draw posters, compose music and so forth. All these activities are implemented within the framework of the OBE, active learning model. I consider us as a lucky country to have so many children who spend many days, weeks and months dedicating their lives to promoting water as a valuable natural resource that is crucial in our lives. I am sure all of us now, are aware that this country is water scarce. We have limited rainfall compared to the demands of water by various sectors in our country through our children who are the participants to the 2020 Vision for Water Education programme. I have been to many occasions such as National Water Week, where these young people have impressed me with their talent and creativity. They are really meeting all our expectations of this Programme, of educating the society about water related issues, and they have internalised it

The Staff and Officials of the Departments of Water Affairs and Forestry and Education Nationally and Provincially have reached high levels of partnerships in supporting the programme.

I am very proud to be here today to announce and honour young people for creating and coming up with brilliant ideas through their water projects, where they identified water related problems in their schools and communities, took action and come up with recommendations to solve those problems. Those recommendations will be taken seriously in the planning and implementation of Integrated Water Resource Management.

It gives me great pleasure to be a witness to the efforts of the educators in enhancing our learner's interest in the water sector throughout the country. As Government we are committed to youth development programmes that will enhance the youth in Science and Technology; hence my Department has programmes such as the 2020 Vision for Water Education Programme. These initiatives will address the skills gap, in the engineering

pool, which is a challenge right now, but also contributing to a more holistic and integrated approach to the management of our water resources.

My Department will be engaged in a process of mobilising the water sector throughout the African Continent to initiate similar youth programmes, through the 2020 Vision for Water Programme. Our Nation must be at the forefront of the African Renaissance We cannot afford to undervalue the beginnings that lead our youth to these big challenges. I see the South African Youth Water Prize as one of the conduits towards that Renaissance.

Recognition of Support

Before I announce the national winners, I first want to give my personal appreciation and thanks to:

- Prof Kader Asmal, MP, Minister of Education and his officials for their support to this Programme, I am honoured by our partnership. My Department is grateful for the positive manner you have upheld our partnership over the years.
- All our partners for their support, especially to the adjudicating team from various institutions, “Isandla sihlamba esinye, Yenzani njalo ukuxhasa amalinge esizwe sethu”which means(Two hands work better together, you must continue to support the initiatives of our country).
- Parents of all the learners, the principals and educators of Beacon Hill Secondary and to educators nationally who support them. They moulded us and they are doing the

same for our children, I want to say to them “Long Live Educators Long Live”, God bless you!

- To the learners who have entered the competition, and those who have not yet entered the Competition I encourage you to continue or to start even if you do not win. It is not all about winning; it is about gaining new experiences through participation and taking on new challenges.
- Officials of my Department who have tirelessly managed this programme for five years now. You know I value your support and wish you growing strength and I pledge my support to you as well.

This competition is for both national and international. Today we are here because the competition has come to a stage where all the provincial winners have been selected. We recognise them as the “Cream de la Crème. I want to congratulate and announce the runner- ups who are:

1. Carina Moore from Middleburg High School, Eastern Cape; and
2. Garth Lepperman from Creston College, KwaZulu-Natal.

Announcement of Winners:

Mr Programme Director, Now, let me announce the national winners of the South African Youth Water Prize 2002 - the young ambassadors of our country, who will carry our national flag in Stockholm, Sweden next week. They are from Beacon Hill Secondary School in Mitchell's Plain:

1. Tracey - Kim Petersen;
2. Zainodeen Isaacs; and
3. Antonio Dixon

Ladies and Gentlemen, I present to you our SAYWP Ambassadors to Stockholm Sweden. We hope and are confident that this year you will bring the Stockholm Junior Water Prize to South Africa

I thank you.