

**SPEECH BY MR RONNIE KASRILS, MP, MINISTER OF WATER AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY
AT THE BASWA LE MEETSE (YOUTH IN WATER) AWARDS CEREMONY ON THURSDAY,
13 MARCH 2003 AT HELDERFONTEIN, KYALAMI, MIDRAND**

Programme Director, Honourable Guests, Parents, Educators and Learners.

Dumaleng, Good Afternoon

On 21 March 2002 during the National Water Week, I was in Mqanduli, Eastern Cape. By that time, the area was affected by cholera. A multi-disciplinary team composed of various stakeholders was established to treat the affected people and educate the community about the prevention of cholera. The learners who are participants to my Department's youth development programme, called the 2020 Vision For Water Education Programme played a key role in educating the communities about the prevention of cholera. As a continuation of their campaign, on that day they also presented my speech before I presented it. In my speech I meant to educate the community about prevention of waterborne diseases. These learners presented fundamental issues on water and sanitation through drama, traditional music, poetry and praise singing. They were emphasising and promoting the WASH Campaign and the use and care of toilets. The really inspired everybody who was there. During their presentations, I observed that everybody was listening attentively and they became excited.

That day I realised that children are the best teachers to their parents and communities and they can save people's lives. I also realised that indigenous education methods, such as art is very effective, as it reaches all sections and marginalised groups of our communities. In recognition of the indigenous education methods (art), talent and intelligence of our youth and their role in educating communities, I announced that my Department will award the best school or group which conveyed the inspiring message about water and sanitation to the communities through art, during National Water Week 2003.

As a follow up to that announcement, my officials co-ordinated a competition called the Baswa Le Meetse (which means Youth in Water) which started from district, province and national levels which culminated to the national award.

Today we are gathered here to honour and praise the young citizens and future leaders of our country, for their participation in the development of their communities. They are already pledging their social responsibility to the communities (they are paying back). We are here to celebrate excellence in education. We buried the past apartheid inferior education, called "Bantu Education".

We are now showcasing the product of our government's new education system (Outcomes Based Education).

A Great Nation is measured by the way it celebrates its children and their achievements. It gives me great pleasure to be a witness to the efforts of the educators in enhancing the learner's interest in the water sector. As Government we are committed to youth development programmes that will empower the youth and attract them to Science, Arts and Technology in order to pursue careers as such. Hence, my Department has programmes such as the 2020 Vision for Water, to educate the learners about water resource managers. These initiatives will address the skills gap, in the engineering pool, which is a challenge to us 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. Our Nation must be at the forefront of the African Renaissance. I see the 2020 Vision for Water Education Programme as one of the conduits towards the African 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.
- Dr Ben Ngubane, MP, Minister of Arts Culture, Science and Technology and Ms Buyelwa Sonjica, MP, Deputy Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology for providing their experts to support us during the adjudication process.
- Parents, principals and educators of all participating learners, for exposing the talents of these children to the nation. Without your support, these children would not have come this far. We commend your professionalism and patriotism in developing our youth. You moulded us and you are doing the same for our children.
- 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.
- The adjudication panels at all levels for the enthusiasm and hard work; I know it was not easy to select winners from a wide range of intellectual learners like these.
- Officials of my Department who have tirelessly co-ordinated this school based water education programme and the event of this magnitude. Within no time they mobilised the networks throughout the country to ensure that the national award is presented to learners. You know I value your support and wish you growing strength and I pledge my support to you.

Programme Director, allow me to declare Bawsa Le Meetse as an annual national award for the youth.

Drama

The winner of the drama category is Vuxeni High School from Limpopo Province – Prize is R3000

2nd runner up is Kwazi Senior Primary from KZN – Prize is R2000

3rd runner up is JN Ndindwa High from the Eastern Cape – Prize is R1000

Music

The winner is Fapha Primary School from North West Province – Prize is R3000

2nd runner up is Mhlangezulu High School from KZN – Prize is R2000

3rd runner up is Letsego Primary from Gauteng – Prize is R1000

Poetry & Praise Singing

The winner is Sehloyi Primary School from Limpopo Province – Prize is R3000

2nd runner up Idyoki Primary School from the Eastern Cape – Prize is R2000

3rd runner up is Sol Plaatjie from North West - Prize is R1000

Poster

The winner is Idyoki Primary School from the Eastern Cape Province – Prize is R3000

2nd runner up is Khokhovela Primary School from Limpopo – Prize is R2000

3rd runner up is Sebonakaliso Combined School from Free State – Prize is R1000

Today we are here to honour the national winners of the Baswa le Meetse Awards 2003. We recognise them as the “Cream de la Crème”, the young water ambassadors from respective provinces, who will carry messages to the communities.

Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you national winners of the Baswa le Meetse Award 2003.