

**SPEECH BY MR RONNIE KASRILS, MP, MINISTER OF WATER
AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY AT THE LAUNCH OF THE DWAF /
UNILEVER WASH PARTNERSHIP – MOREKOLODI PRIMARY
SCHOOL, MMAKAU ON THURSDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2003**

Honourable Mayor, Councillor Raymond Motsepe (Madibeng LM)

Mr Doug Baillie (CEO Unilever),

Mr Andrew Matube (Executive Director of ARMgold representing

Patrice Motsepe),

Chief Motsepe

Councillors

Sr Myra, (Principal of Morekolodi Primary School),

Educators,

Officials

Members of the Press,

Learners,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When I come to a community like Mmakau, just 40 kilometres out of Pretoria, and I see our people still struggling with water problems, then I am reminded that there is no time to dwell on our successes.

Yes, we are a government of delivery. Yes, as a department we have brought safe, clean water to over 9 million people. But, every mother, every child and every person that remains without a basic water supply and without adequate sanitation is one person too many. Every person that is not empowered with hygiene information to safeguard their health, is one person too many.

As a government we have made a commitment. We will deliver basic, life-sustaining services to all our people. We will ensure that these services are effective, efficient, accountable and most of all *affordable*. This commitment is because we know that fighting poverty is our most important task.

We are working to ensure that our people do not struggle, day to day, just to survive. That we have put in place basic needs, such as water

and sanitation. That we improve the quality of peoples daily lives and we give them the opportunity to develop productive livelihoods.

Our focus on delivery has expanded and improved. We know that it is not good enough to deliver taps and toilets if the water stops flowing and the toilets stop working. And so, we emphasise *sustainability*. We work to ensure that we deliver services that are *viable*. Services that use appropriate resources and technologies for an area, services that can be maintained, services that are well managed in terms of cost recovery and in terms of their impact on the environment.

To deliver sustainable basic services, such as water, sanitation and hygiene to all our people means that planning and implementation must occur at community level. For this reason we have empowered local government and municipalities with the necessary resources to ensure that all our people receive basic services. Where infrastructure already exists, their responsibility is to ensure *immediate* delivery. Free basic water is an example of this.

Of course, we do not assume that the task is easy or that all our people can be serviced overnight. There are always obstacles and complications. There is much hard work that remains. But when we come together, when we work in partnership, as government as business and as communities, then nothing is impossible. Next year we will celebrate 10 years of democracy. As we do so we must remind ourselves and rededicate ourselves to our national vision – *we will build a better life for all our people.*

Mmakau and this school are a wonderful example of how our people come together and work together. Yes, there are problems. The sisters of this school have written to me about their water problems. I am concerned that these problems have yet to be resolved. But the solution is here. We have put the policies, resources, grants and responsibilities in place. Together, our task is to find the problems that are obstructing a safe water supply for all of you and determine how rapidly these *will* be resolved.

In spite of these problems, your school and your community are a shining example of how our people are helping themselves. Our

WASH campaign is about delivering safe water, adequate sanitation and hygiene education to all our people.

In your school you have borehole water, which is not always available and is not always safe. This is a problem, which must be resolved. But you have not sat back waiting for assistance. I see pit latrines for when water is not available. I hear that learners are being taught about handwashing and its vital importance in preventing diarrhoea and other illnesses. I know that you boil water when necessary to make it safe to use. These are the things we wish to teach all of our people. *These are the lessons of WASH.* These are the things that will safeguard our communities as we work to bring them services.

And when we have delivered basic water and sanitation services, we will continue to work – to improve these services. This is our plan – to provide for basic needs first and then steadily climb the ladder of development.

Today I am proud to share this stage with Mr Doug Baillie. As a government we have always maintained that we will build this country

in partnership with all our people. Business can, and is, playing a vital role as a partner in development.

Unilever has been the first to step forward and join us in building the WASH Campaign. Today, I wish to thank them and commend them. As we progress and build our nation – we will ask the question of all – what have you done to help our people? And I am sure that being part of this vital handwashing campaign will be *just one* of Unilever's answers.

Our key WASH message is that proper handwashing at critical times plays a major role in reducing diseases – especially diarrhoea. Proper handwashing requires soap and water. And while Unilever promotes its own soap brands they will place an *equal emphasis* on promoting handwashing at important times. And on *reaching all our people* with this critical message. This is the essence of such a public-private partnership. We all win – government, business and most importantly our people and communities.

Our WASH partnership with Unilever has already started to expand and improve delivery of the crucial handwashing message. Through Unilever's Omo Mailbag radio, through their traders in outlying areas, through their schools sampling campaign, through their posters and stickers and through their Vaseline Clean Five TV Series (broadcast on Tube and Yo-TV), we have already started to bring information about the benefits of proper handwashing with soap and water to all our people.

Unilever will also join us on our community roadshows, our rural information campaign and other WASH activities.

So today we launch and celebrate a partnership that will advance the WASH Campaign. And today I call on you – the educators and learners – to also join this partnership. Take the message of the benefits of handwashing with soap and water, *especially after going to the toilet*, into your homes and communities. It is an important message. *A message that can save many lives.*

Together, we can help bring health, dignity and development to all our people and all our communities.