



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION, DR SEAN PHILLIPS,
AT THE NATIONAL WORKSHOP: TOWARDS LOCAL WATER
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

BIRCHWOOD CONFERENCE CENTRE, BOKSBURG

11 FEBRUARY 2022

Programme Director

The Honourable Deputy Ministers, Mr David Mahlobo and Ms Dikeledi Magadzi

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

Senior Government Officials,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is my great honour to welcome you to the National Workshop: Towards Local Water Resource Management here in Boksburg. I would like to extend a special welcome to both our Deputy Ministers Magadzi and Mahlobo, who will be speaking to us during the course of the Workshop.

We are very grateful to all the Chairpersons and CEOs of various entities and all stakeholders for your participation during the nine Ministerial Provincial Working Sessions that happened over the last few months.

At the State of the Nation Address by President Cyril Ramaphosa last night the President said "Water is the country's most precious natural resource. It is vital to life, to development and to economic growth. That is why we have prioritised institutional reforms in this area to ensure future water security, investment in water resources and maintenance of existing assets. We have embarked on the process of institutional reform in capacitating the Department of Water and Sanitation and reviewing water boards in as far as their mandates are concerned and ensuring that they serve municipalities in terms of the District Development Model. Legislation has been prepared for the establishment of the National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency and will be published for public comment within the next month".

There can never be a greater emphasis than that regarding the centrality of this precious resource that we are jointly responsible for.

As you know, the water institutional landscape has been undergoing change for the past 20 years. We are left with no choice but to work together to implement the requisite change and to deliver water to our people, transform the water sector and grow the economy.

This workshop provides an opportunity to engage with and identify possible interventions on issues raised by stakeholders. Section 27 of the Constitution requires government to take reasonable legislative and other measures within its available resources to achieve the progressive realization of the right to water. This means that government at national and provincial levels, has a duty to intervene where the lack of provision of municipal water and sanitation services is resulting in people's dignity not being respected and protected. The easiest example in this regard relates to examples such as the current situation with sewage spillages into people's houses in the Vaal, or even where there is no supply of potable water in the far-flung areas of the country.

As the Department and sector partners, we have to find solutions together. We cannot and dare not be satisfied with our work until water and sanitation services are duly delivered.

The speakers in the programme are uniquely placed to debate these challenges and highlight key solutions to the same challenges. It will be especially interesting will be to learn the priorities and developments from the water users such as agriculture, mining, and industry.

The workshop's theme is: **"To develop a common vision on the transformation, regulation and implementation of water resource management in partnership with stakeholders"**. I therefore urge all of us to put our collective shoulder to the wheel and engage positively and robustly, with the ideal is to drive to the ultimate goal, that of a sector that is intent on delivering equitably on its mandate.

Let us also keep in mind that the outcome of today's workshop will be part of the content for the upcoming National Water and Sanitation Summit on 18 and 19 February.

I wish you well and hope you enjoy the deliberations today.

I thank you