



INTERNET ARTICLE

27 August 2020

Deputy Minister Mahlobo calls for African partnerships to develop water and sanitation on the continent

Deputy Minister David Mahlobo has called for partnerships on the African Continent to develop a water and sanitation flagship programme in order to improve the delivery of services to citizens.

Deputy Minister Mahlobo was speaking during a virtual address convened by the Water Research Commission (WRC) at the BioAfrica Convention yesterday, 26 August 2020.

He said that the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic had caught many countries across the globe unprepared on how to respond to the pandemic, saying that this has led to an “untold human tragedy.”

In his keynote address titled: **“Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and COVID-19: Africa’s response to COVID-19 and Beyond,”** Deputy Minister Mahlobo said it was time African leaders stood as a unit in order to convene solutions that would work best for Africans.

“Now more than ever, we need to elevate the African water agenda. We also need to raise the value of inter-African cooperation and partnerships in responding to the water and sanitation challenges,” said Deputy Minister Mahlobo.

He added that South Africa calls for partnerships to develop a water and sanitation flagship programme that could be initiated during its AU chair-ship.

“We are proud that South Africa continues to play a key and active role within the African Continent in advancing and contributing to the water agenda,” he said.

Within SADC, South Africa is active in advancing the Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) approach, as well as working within the various SADC structures which requires engagement with other sectors that have a bearing on what we do in the sector.

Deputy Minister Mahlobo further emphasized that the role of youth and women remain critical in building a capable water sector in Africa, thus strengthening water entrepreneurship amongst the youth and women.

He further expressed that increased innovations in technology present opportunities for water utilities to integrate smart technologies in existing infrastructure.





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“This will help to minimize cost, while maximising the selection of the most suitable solutions that can be easily adapted to local conditions, also assisting with adaptation,” he said.

In conclusion, Deputy Minister Mahlobo commended African Scientists in taking a proactive stance in the fight against COVID-19 across the continent by sharing information, clinical testing and trying to find innovative ways to apply African knowledge to the pandemic.

“Countries should continue sharing best practices on innovative ideas and research in order to strengthen the coordinated response to global disasters and pandemics such as COVID-19,” he concluded.

Lebogang Maseko

