



INTERNET ARTICLE

Minister Sisulu receives training facility to help reduce water losses in the country

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In continuous efforts to reduce water losses countrywide, Minister Lindiwe Sisulu received a multi-million-rand training facility from Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of South Africa, H.E. Maruyama Norio on World Water Day, 22 March 2021.

Situated at the Infrastructure Branch Training Centre (IBTC) in Roodeplaat, the Training Yard on Non-Revenue Water Management was funded by the Japanese Government, through the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA).

The Training Yard covers the basics of training artisans to deal with water losses in communities. The designs of the training yard were conducted by the DWS engineers with technical support from JICA.

The training of artisans comes against the background of growing concerns about the huge amounts of water losses which are estimated at R9 billion a year. Speaking during the official hand over of the facility, Minister Sisulu said water was under extreme threat as a result of growing population, increasing demands of agriculture and industry and the worsening impacts of Climate Change.

“The Department and South African Local Government Association (SALGA) are faced with a similar challenge regarding the state of Non-Revenue Water in South Africa. The Municipalities do not have the capacity and opportunity to train their officials on Non-Revenue Water and the country does not have a specific functional facility available to offer training on Non-Revenue Water,” said Minister Sisulu.

She added that it was clear that the Japanese model of non-revenue water management would be helpful to reduce the amount of water that is being lost in South Africa.

Ambassador Maruyama said the objective of his government’s assistance in South Africa’s water sector was to give support for skills development of local municipalities who are faced with challenges of water losses.

He said the Japanese assistance was willing and committed to help municipalities to improve their performance in water services and to address challenges of economic reforms at grass root level.

Ambassador Maruyama described the training centre as “more than a skills development project we provide to the municipalities. It’s a skills development that enables economic reform.”

The hand over was also attended by Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Deputy Minister David Mahlobo, President of SALGA and Polokwane Local Municipality Mayor, Cllr Thembi Nkadimeng, and the MMC for Infrastructure in Tshwane, Councillor Phillip Nel.

Minister Dlamini-Zuma said her Department was part of a process to establish a non-revenue structure which she hoped would bear fruit. She attributed the problem of water scarcity to the effects of Climate Change, water leakages and infrastructure vandalism as some of the key challenges to water scarcity in South Africa.



She called for the revival of the culture of payment for services which she said would contribute towards the improvement of water supply.

Meanwhile, Minister Sisulu used the occasion to commemorate World Water Day which seeks to raise awareness on the importance of water conservation across the globe.

“Today being World Water Day, it is a time for us as a Department to reflect about the services which we provide to communities across the country,” she said.

She admitted that much as the Department was committed to enhance the provision of clean water and adequate sanitation facilities, she said the lack of access to water was very personal to women, especially in rural areas.

“Women are responsible for carrying water for their families to survive. They often have to stand in long queues to wait for water and walked long distances to collect the precious resource. As a sector, this is a direct challenge to all to change and strengthen the systems towards water use efficiency,” Minister Sisulu said.

She emphasized that access to water and sanitation is recognized by the United Nations as human rights, reflecting the fundamental nature of these basics in every person’s life. She said that the lack of access to safe, sufficient and affordable water, sanitation and hygiene facilities has a devastating effect on the health, dignity and prosperity of billions of people, and has significant consequences for the realization of other human rights.

“We have all noticed the importance of ensuring water access and availability to our people during this period of the COVID-19 Pandemic,” Minister Sisulu said.

She concluded by reiterating the Department’s commitment to ensuring water supply for all as well as decent sanitation facilities.

Lebogang Maseko