



INTERNET ARTICLE

2022 DWS DISABILITY CONFERENCE CALLS ON FULL RECOGNITION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

13 December 2022

The National Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) celebrated its disability rights awareness month on the 8-9 December 2022 in Pretoria. Under this year's theme, **"Empowering Persons with Disabilities through resourceful, sustainable and safe environments"**

The disability rights awareness month promotes an understanding of disability issues and advocates for dignity, rights, and wellbeing of persons with disabilities. It also highlights the significance of integrating persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic, and cultural life.

Issues of disability is not taken seriously in the country and that is why delegates from different regions in the department unreservedly converged and unpacked disability issues during the two-day conference.

Different speakers reiterated the importance of active participation of people with disability in the workplace and emphasized that abilities, skills, and talents cannot be overshadowed by their impairments. They have also pledged that people with disabilities will continue to play a positive role toward the development of this country.

Employees and supervisors were encouraged to take time to learn more about the different conditions of people with disabilities, and to discourage stereotypical behaviours of classifying people with disabilities as being helpless or unable to make their own decisions.

It was emphasized that education and awareness about different impairments should be continuously conducted to ensure that there is an equal understanding towards people with disabilities, including to recognise safer and healthy environments.

Disability disclosure to an employer is a personal choice, however it was encouraged that employees with a disability should disclose to Human Resource Management, so that the employer is able to provide necessary assistive mechanism and support.



Representing people with disabilities, Mr Pakwe Seseng shared his excitement about the conference and encouraged delegates not to despair but to pursue their human rights in the workplace, as it is a constitutional right.

He further said that active participation especially on educating and creating awareness about the disability enabled more understanding and acceptance towards people with disability. He said that because of continued awareness and education, a new toilet facility is currently being installed in his office to accommodate people with disability.

With the slogan of the day **“nothing about us without us”** delegates elected its new DWS disability Forum Committee which was widely accepted by the conference.

With vigor and determination, a newly elected chairperson, Ms Priscilla Tlhagala expressed her gratitude towards her new responsibility and pointed out that she will continue carrying the torch towards shaping and fulfilling the disability Forum.

She said she will work on advancing the objectives of Employment Equity, skills development, transport, special needs equipment and support, internal communication and conducive environment. Quoting Mahatma Gandhi **“Be the change that you wish to see in the world”**, she exclaimed after her thank you speech.

The newly elected Disability Forum Committee were elected as follows:

Chairperson – Priscilla Tlhagala

Deputy Chairperson – Pakwe Seseng

Secretary – Pule Lenong

Deputy Secretary – Celeste Fanos

The Committee will be supported by additional members from the regions.

Katlego Bolokang