



## INTERNET ARTICLE

### Deputy Minister David Mahlobo lauds contribution from various countries to South Africa's democracy, and the water and sanitation sector

07 December 2024

Water and Sanitation Deputy Minister, David Mahlobo has acknowledged partnerships with the international communities with regards to their contribution in the South African water sector, which guaranteed a sustainable and equitable supply of water to all South Africans.

Deputy Minister Mahlobo delivered a keynote address at a session with Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Charge D'Affaires in South Africa, on "celebrating 30 years of sustainable partnership, strengthening partnerships with international partners, and forging a shared future", hosted by the Department of Water and Sanitation in Centurion, Tshwane on 06 December 2024.

Countries that were represented were China, Japan, Cuba, Egypt, the Kingdom of Eswatini and the Kingdom of Lesotho, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Botswana, Senegal, Kingdom of the Netherlands, Kingdom of Sweden, Kingdom of Denmark, and Finland.

Deputy Minister Mahlobo acknowledged the support given by the international community to the South Africa to achieve the democracy it enjoys today, as well as the contribution and partnership in the country's water and sanitation sector since the dawn of democracy 30 years ago.

"All of the countries here today played a big part in various degrees to assist South Africa in our struggle for democracy. Your unwavering support did not go unnoticed, and your partnership continued to ensure that South Africa provide equitable and sustainable water supply, and a dignified sanitation to all its citizens. We therefore would like to thank you for the notable contributions you have made," said Deputy Minister Mahlobo.

Deputy Minister Mahlobo encouraged partnerships between South Africa and the countries to continue to grow in order to ensure water security in the SADC region and in the rest of the continent.

"When you engage with us here as a Department of Water and Sanitation, we should strive to maintain our partnership and forge ahead for the next 30 years, also taking into account the advances we have made. As our partners, do not be polite with us, but engage with us if there are matters of policy that makes it difficult for your participation. You need to raise matters that you don't understand because we are an open-minded water sector," said Deputy Minister Mahlobo.

South Africa continues to enjoy transboundary partnerships on shared water resources with neighboring in the SADC Region,

To this extent, South Africa and the Lesotho are currently implementing the R42 billion Phase Two of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project which include the construction of the new Polihali Dam

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and associated infrastructure to provide additional water to Gauteng and parts of the Free State, Mpumalanga, North West, and Northern Cape provinces.

South Africa and Zimbabwe have signed an agreement for the transfer of treated water from Beitbridge Water Treatment Works in the Republic of Zimbabwe to Musina Town in the Republic of South Africa. The transfer of treated water is a medium-term solution to address water supply challenges in the area. The two countries have signed an agreement for the transfer of treated water from Beitbridge Water Treatment Works in the Republic of Zimbabwe to Musina Town in the Republic of South Africa. The transfer of treated water is a medium-term solution to address water supply challenges in the area.

Another partnership includes the mobilisation of resources between South Africa and Namibia for the feasibility study of the Noordoewer/Vioolsdrif Dam.

South Africa and Netherlands governments have undertaken to forge more cooperation opportunities in the water and sanitation sector in efforts to strength the existing relations between the two states. Both the countries have signed a Blue Deal agreement which aims to support water management by exchanging knowledge and experiences, assisting the national, regional and local organisations and cooperate with key stakeholders.

As part of diversifying the water mix, Deputy Minister Mahlobo highlighted that government was increasingly making use of groundwater as one of the viable options to augment the current available water and increase supply.

“We are looking at using groundwater which remains untapped. Although it has also been threatened by climate change and the levels of evaporation, we are looking at utilising it more. We are looking forward to enhancing our technological partnership around groundwater and its high level of treatment. We should use groundwater optimally because it is not of inferior quality, but it is also a source of water,” said the Deputy Minister said.

All of the Ambassadors made their inputs and have assured South Africa of their continued partnership in the water sector. The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in South Africa and the Eritrean Ambassador to South Africa, Mr Salih Omar Abdu said the partnerships have guaranteed water security and has ensured access to clean water by most of the countries in the continent.

“As we deliberate on the partnership with South Africa, it is important to adapt into new perspective on the role that water plays in our regional and international agendas, Water is not only a resource to be consumed, but it is also a catalyst in the economic growth, for social equality and for the environmental sustainability in the region”, said Mr Abdu.

**END**

**Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation.**

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