



INTERNET ARTICLE

DWS to strengthen the back to basics approach to tackle challenges it faces

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The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), in pursuit of solutions aimed at addressing challenges, will continue to work in close concert with the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) and National Treasury to enhance and strengthen the Back to Basics Programme.

To this end, according to Minister Nomvula Mokonyane, clear benchmarks of acceptable performance have been set in an effort to ensure that all municipalities perform their basic responsibilities consistently and without fail.

Minister Mokonyane noted these sentiments when she was addressing community members of Limpopo Province at the Karibu Leisure Resort during the Limpopo Water and Sanitation Summit in the Mopani District on Thursday, 9 July 2015. Minister Mokonyane added that the challenges that needed to be addressed as a collective speak to what is aptly called the “bread and butter issues” that confront our people. It cannot be right for a Ma-Dlamini or Kokwana Ndou to continue to battle the elements to satisfy the basic needs of any human being. These needs are access to a safe and sustainable water supply as well as dignified sanitation.

“It cannot be correct that instead of returning home to study and prepare for the next day’s lessons our learners must take precious time out of their days to draw water from unreliable water sources or to ensure better ablution facilities for themselves and their families, some of whom are child-headed. We need active participation of our people in the water sector to ensure that water-issues such as water conservation and water demand management programmes, water awareness education and vandalism of infrastructure get taken up as societal issues,” noted the Minister.

Minister Mokonyane revealed that Limpopo is home to more than 5 Million people and DWS, as the custodian of water resources in the country, “we are mandated by the constitution and the National Water Act to ensure that the citizens of South Africa, including Limpopo, have access to water and decent sanitation.”



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The right to water as a basic service is a constitutional right. Yet, ownership of access to water continues to perpetuate inequality and poverty in the whole world, including in Limpopo. “However, we need to ensure that through summits such as the one today we should be able to open up this protected space so as to ensure that water as a natural resource is available and shared by all,” explained the Minister.

She explained that while citizens celebrate sixty years of the Freedom Charter, which states that the People Shall Govern, “I wish to reassure the people of Limpopo that the department will continue to employ coordinated and interrelated approaches at all times to ensure that all the people, rich and poor, black and white, as well as urban and rural are provided with water and sanitation services they deserve,” she added.

South Africa is a water scarce country with 40% less than the annual world average rainfall; to be among the 30 driest countries internationally. “Our average annual rainfall is less, compared to the world’s average. Surface water resources are stressed due to current developments taking place in the province, available water is less than water required and that means we have a water deficit. Taking the above situation into consideration, we cannot sit back and lament, but have to think hard as to how we can use innovative ways to mitigate the challenges at hand. We call upon the community to adhere to their respective Water Service Authorities’ (WSA) water restrictions as they are meant to save and conserve water for future generations, “the Minister added.

She concluded that all the projects that the department will be supporting will have to be assessed for their readiness for implementation, expected output and effectiveness. Project monitoring and evaluation systems will have to be put in place to ensure that there is value in every Rand spent. The success of this approach will be based on the development of a Water and Sanitation Plan for the whole province based on what each District Municipality shall have developed. These plans must be accounted for, bankable as well as indicate the capacity for implementation. The Summit needed to begin asking the hard questions; for an example, how does infrastructure pay for itself? Why, is it that the municipalities seem not to be able to deal with the Operations and Maintenance related matters of infrastructure?

The department is also aware of growing developments in the northern parts of Limpopo Province, in particular the area known as the “Limpopo Valley”. These developments will increase trade, increase investments, create jobs, improve the social structures and affect administration.

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