



INTERNET ARTICLE

Everyone deserves water and the journey it continues

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*The Deputy Minister (DM) of the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), Ms Pamela Tshwete participated in the Journey of Water 2015. The theme for this year's Journey of Water (JoW) is “**water doesn't come from the tap**”. She braved the cold and misty weather to participate. The first leg of the journey started at Highmoor in the Drakensburg on Monday, 11 May 2015.*

The Journey of Water (JoW) is an initiative by the World Wide Fund (WWF). Its aim is to create awareness on the importance of water. Only 8% of land in South Africa produces more than half of the country's rivers. The journey emphasizes how water goes from the source (catchment area) to the tap. It seeks to connect people with their sources of water as the economy is highly dependent on healthy sources of water and the landscapes that are alive.

The JoW also seeks to share information with the communities, mostly those near water sources. It seeks to change attitudes and thus create a knowledgeable society about issues of water. In return communities will take informed decisions and continue taking good care of the water sources and the environment in general.

During her note address, DM highlighted that all those who took part in the first leg on the journey are ambassadors. “Ambassadors are good information carriers and they have an active role to play in the struggle of water”, she said. She promoted working together with all stakeholders and urged everyone to take note of the upcoming DWS Budget Vote.

She pointed out the issue of informal settlements and the impact they have on water and sanitation services' distribution. “Migration from rural to urban areas in search for better opportunities is putting a strain on the environment thus limiting water distribution. We are looking back to rural communities and we want to bring more services to them. We are continuing with our boreholes allocation”, she said.

She condemned land invasion. She expressed the difficulty the department is facing in terms of budget for unplanned service delivery. She indicated that it is challenging to address issues of water and sanitation services with people who have invaded land. At the end everyone has to have access to such services but it is difficult if the land doesn't belong to that community legally.

Deputy Minister assured participants that skills transfer and the assistance by Cuban engineers in the water sector is going to bear fruit in no time. She also pointed out the relief societies enjoy especially with projects that impact on



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women directly. *“People who suffer most when there are water and sanitation services problems are women”, she said.*

Traditionally, women are responsible for the basic duties to look after families, and these include fetching water for household uses. That is part of the relief they need and this can be achieved by bringing water closer to their homes.

The influences of such campaigns as journey of Water help to bring more light to communities. It teaches people not to pollute rivers, to conserve water and to help those who are not yet aware of the importance of the resource to refrain from illegal actions, including illegal connections, vandalising and theft of infrastructure. People must take care of the infrastructure as it does not only belong to the department, but also to all who benefit from it.

“The Department of Water and Sanitation recognizes that fresh water, clean air, arable land, plants and animals have a limited life span. The nation must protect such resources for ongoing food security, human health and overall economic prosperity”, Deputy Minister concluded.

Zwakele Thabede