



INTERNET ARTICLE

DWS holds consultation to nurture youth skills for effective water and sanitation sector

06 December 2017`

The Department of Water and Sanitation's (DWS) passion to produce young people who are a class above the rest in the water sector was taken a step higher when it held a Consultation on Knowledge Coaching and Mentoring.

The Consultation, which brought together professional youths in the water sector, is taking place from 06 - 07 December 2017 at the Birchwood Hotel in Boksburg, Ekurhuleni.

A number of youths from diverse backgrounds such as from the DWS, Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA), Water Boards, CMAs, CSIR and others were in attendance.

Part of the aims of the Consultation is to impart information to the youths about issues in the sector regarding amongst others on how the Department has progressed in terms of achieving the goals of the National Development Plan, Chapter 15 of National Water Resource Strategy II, the New Growth Strategy and the National Infrastructure Plan.

Furthermore, the Consultation served to thrash out a number of challenges that are dogging professionals within the sector.

Welcoming the youths, DWS's Water Policy Acting Chief Director, Mr Tenda Rasikhanya, said the Consultation was held to provide space for the youth to engage in a variety of issues that were prevalent in the sector.

Mr Rasikhanya further encouraged the youths to not to hold back in raising thought provoking issues that would add to the building of the sector and to map out ways of how to nurture the sector.

He said: "As the youth you must take advantage of the opportunities that are available to you within the Department and the sector, especially those that are found at the Learning Academy and bursaries within the Department".

Mr Lesego Lekubu from the Department's Operation Support, made a presentation of the journey that the Department has travelled in achieving the strategic actions related to the National Water Resource Strategy Chapter 15.

Mr Lekubu said a lot of work has been done to achieve the strategic goals but also conceded that there were some areas which needed improvement, citing amongst others the few number of registered professional engineers and scientist countrywide which has a bearing on the water and sanitation sector.

He also mentioned the limited number of students from institutions of higher learning who understand the critical and scarce skills required by the sector, saying there needed to be intensified campaign around the dissemination of information regarding the critical and scarce skills that are currently needed by the country.



water & sanitation

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The Energy and Water Sector Education and Training Authority's (EWSETA) Ms Nora Hanke-Louw gave an informative presentation on the overview of current Water and Sanitation Sector Mentoring Programmes at different Departments and institutions.

Ms Hanke-Louw, who encouraged the youth to take an initiative in finding monitoring opportunities in the sector, mentioned voluntaries on the part of the mentee and pairing of experienced mentors as some of the key pillars of a successful mentorship programme.

She said for the mentorship programme to be successful it should be able to deal decisively with challenging assumptions, providing encouragement, supporting ideas and sharing experiences.

Presenting on Knowledge Management, Ms Nwabiso Fundzo, told the gathering that the Department is the water and sanitation sector leader and therefore needed to take the lead in the development of a Sector Knowledge Management Strategy.

She said in developing the strategy the Department took the cue from various legislative pieces such as the National Water Act, the Water Service Act and the Water Research Act.

“The NWRS is to give strategic direction to the sector in terms of implementing knowledge management, ensure that knowledge and information within the sector is identified, captured, stored, shared, transferred and reused and thereby creating a learning sector,” said Ms Fundzo.

The gathering came up with concrete suggestions on the implementation of the strategy, mentioning structured training and partnership with the private sector as some of the important areas.

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