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INTERNET ARTICLE

Centrality of water in biodiversity

23 May 2018

The Mpumalanga Provincial Office of the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) in partnership with the South African National Biodiversity Institute, Inkomati-Usuthu Catchment Management Agency, South African National Parks, Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, South African Weather Services and the City of Mbombela celebrated the International Biodiversity Day on 22 May 2018 with learners from around the City of Mbombela under the theme *“Life in water”*.

The learners from the participating schools competed with well researched presentations on the centrality of water in biodiversity. The presentations focused on rivers as a source of life through the provision of clean water, the dependence of the food chain on water, biodiversity and ecological restoration.

The learners also promised to continue being agents of change and water ambassadors to ensure that the water courses are always kept clean for the striving of biodiversity. Water contamination and pollution is one of the major challenges faced in most communities, especially as a result irresponsible human actions and behavior. The learners and the audience pledged to be change agents in their communities and protect the watercourses to ensure reliable supply of clean and healthy water for the community and the environment and contribute to biodiversity management.

Ms Esther Mahiya from the winning John Mdluli Primary School stated that she was happy that her learners won the awareness competition even though they did not have much time to prepare. “It was not that difficult to prepare even though it was short notice as the importance of water is one of the key issues in our school. Winning this awareness event will encourage other learners in the school to be committed ambassadors for water conservation, water safety and biodiversity in the community”, she said.

Mr Themba Khoza from DWS reminded the audience that we live in a dry and water scarce country and encouraged them to be water ambassadors and spread the message of water conservation. He also created awareness on the canal safety and urged the audience to take



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extra caution around canals and other watercourses to prevent the loss of precious life. The learners were also requested to report any forms of vandalism around canals and water infrastructure.

The stakeholders committed to work together as a team to encourage the communities to protect the watercourses and the environment in order to preserve the biodiversity and ensure sustainable water supply for the current and future generations.

Themba Khoza