



DEPARTMENT OF WATER AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Press Release

Launch of the South African Chapter of Vision 21 on 21 November 2001

by

**Ronnie Kasrils, Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry and
Mr Gourisankar Gosh, Executive Director of the Water Supply and Sanitation
Collaborative Council**

"Last year's cholera outbreak in KwaZulu/Natal and other parts of the country was a wake-up call in terms of accelerating the provision of water, sanitation and health and hygiene education." These were the words of Minister Ronnie Kasrils during a parliamentary media briefing on 17 September 2001.

To illustrate its commitment to sanitation and water supply improvements to those without adequate access, the South African Government has joined forces with the international Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) to support the establishment of a South African Chapter of Vision 21, a shared vision for hygiene, sanitation and water supply. Vision 21 is an initiative to put an end to a global crisis in which one billion people lack safe drinking water and three billion have no adequate sanitation.

On November 21st, 2001, the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry together with Mr Gourisankar Ghosh, Executive Director of the WSSCC will launch this initiative at Gauteng. This launch will be followed by the opening of a 2-day conference on Appropriate Technologies for Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation at the same venue.

There is significant synergy between Vision 21 and the Water Supply and Sanitation Programme of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry. Vision 21 has target deadlines for water and sanitation delivery by the years 2015 and 2025 and South Africa is well on track to achieve these targets.

South Africa achieved the 2015 target with respect to water provision on 13 October this year when Mrs Mankosiphetha Ntuntuma in the village of Qhaka in the Eastern Cape became the 7 millionth recipient of water since 1994. This marked the achievement of a 50% reduction in the number of people without access to safe water since 1994.

By 2007-2008 the Department aims to have met the 2025 target of access to safe water by the entire population.

The Department aims to meet the aim of universal access to sanitation by 2011. In addition, the objectives in the recently approved White Paper on Household Sanitation are in line with the targets and principles of Vision 21. The focus of the Department is on community development and capacity building so that communities are able to help themselves. Community skills will be

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In terms of sanitation, health and hygiene, t

Deleted: . The Government of South Africa has committed itself to clearing the sanitation backlog within the next ten years. In order to achieve this, it has allocated a budget of R360 million per year for the next 10 years. The government's vision is one of improved health, dignity and quality of life for all South Africans through improved sanitation and hygiene.

developed in various areas, including toilet construction, operation and maintenance, project management, project administration and health and hygiene promotion.

The Appropriate Technology Conference that the Department will host after the launch of the South African Chapter of Vision 21 will discuss technical sanitation and water issues. Various evaluations over the past few years have pointed to the application of inappropriate technology in schemes which has affected their sustainability. This may be due to the fact that not all professionals involved in water supply and sanitation schemes in rural areas are abreast of the appropriate approaches. Matters for discussion at the conference will include policy developments, planning for sustainability, institutional capacity and other related topics. The Department envisages the conference as being a platform for information and experience sharing and constructive debate and discussion around appropriate technology issues.

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Both Vision 21 and the conference on Appropriate Technology represent significant opportunities for the Department and indeed the South African water sector as a whole to improve the delivery of sustainable water supply and sanitation services to the 18 million people that still lack access to adequate sanitation and the 7 million people that still lack a safe water supply in South Africa.

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Deleted: This joint initiative will contribute towards improving the quality of life of all South Africans through the improved delivery of sanitation and water supply services to the substantial numbers of people who remain unserved.¶