



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

Deputy Minister Tshwete addresses the future of the Water Sector in Bitou Municipality

24 May 2017

The Deputy Minister of the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) Ms Pamela Tshwete joined by the Executive Mayor of Bitou Municipality Councillor Peter Lobese, in the morning addressed students from the War on Leaks programme on their importance to the water sector in South Africa.

The programme, which was initiated by President Jacob Zuma in 2015 as a result of South Africa losing R7 billion due to water leaks, is a tripartite agreement that DWS has entered into with Rand Water as the implementing agent and EWSETA as the training authority.

The programme aims to curb the water losses and unaccounted water through training 15 000 water agents, plumbers and artisans over the course of three years.

In his welcoming address, Executive Mayor Lobese emphasised that the role of the students is more than they realised. He alluded to this by saying “You are more than just a water agent, you are a teacher, you are the solution to the problem, you are trained to fix the leakages and build the economy of South Africa.”

In addition to fixing leaks, the project places great emphasis on job creation, encourage the development of small, medium-sized and micro enterprises as well as speed up leak repair time through working with municipalities and communities to report and fix water leaks.

Deputy Minister Tshwete said we are calling on employers, particularly municipalities, to play a key role in this project and open their workplaces to these learners. The mutual benefit that can be gained by both learner and municipality/employer is unquestionable, especially given the amount of water we lose on an annual basis through water leaks.

Deputy Minister Tshwete also expressed her gratitude to the partners of the programme and calmed the fears of students. “We thank Rand Water and EWSETA for the good work that they are doing, we acknowledge the challenges associated with the stipend, the protective gear and equipment necessary to ensure that training takes place, we are resolving these challenges and want to ensure that the stipends are paid on time and all other resources needed are delivered on time.

The programme is currently in its second phase having recruited over 10 000 young people and will recruit the remaining 5 000 before the end of the financial year.

Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation

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