



MEDIA STATEMENT

DWS female scientist secures Doctoral Scholarship in the Netherlands

20 August 2019

A female scientist at the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) has commemorated Women's Month in style by securing a Doctoral Scholarship to study at the International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC) at the University of Twente in the Netherlands.

Mbali Mahlayeye, a Remote Sensing Scientist will be jetting off to the Netherlands for the second time year in September. This comes just months after her return from the Netherlands where she participated in an information sharing programme organised by the Dutch Government to showcase the Dutch expertise on drinking water and waste water.

Mahlayeye holds a Geology (Hons) and Geo-informatics (MSc) Degrees from the University of Pretoria (UP). Her Doctoral Studies will focus on developing methods and algorithms that will aim at bridging the technological gaps that exist in the agricultural sector of acquiring information for decision-making using remote sensing.

"The subject matter of my PhD is very close to my heart as it will focus on food security, monitoring agricultural lands and crops using earth observations. When I received the acceptance letter from the University, I could not believe it. I had to pinch myself several times just to ascertain myself of the reality," said Mahlayeye.

She expressed that much as she is excited to pursue her studies overseas; she was going to miss her family in South Africa.

"I will be migrating to the Netherlands for four years and I understand that this will not be without challenges. But I am comforted by the love and support I am receiving from my family and friends," said Mahlayeye.

The 29-year-old joined the DWS four years ago as a graduate trainee and has since acquired the knowledge and expertise in the fields of geography, geosciences and related branches of science and engineering.

"My time with the Department has been an absolute learning curve. I was involved in projects that addressed drought, forestry and agricultural matters. I was also afforded an opportunity to interact with young minds from developing countries in the Netherlands in a Dutch Visitors Programme (DVP) on water and sanitation issues," she said.

Mahlayeye said her scholarship with the University of Twente comes at an opportune as South Africa commemorates Women's Month.

"I am a feminist at heart and I believe women deserve equal opportunities as men. This opportunity, more than anything, symbolizes how far we come as a women and what we are capable of achieving," said Mahlayeye.

End





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