

**Minister Hendricks gives keynote address  
at World AIDS Day 2008 Water Sector Event  
Media release by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry  
28 November 2008**

The Department of Water Affairs and Forest in collaboration with Water Sector partners commemorated this year's World AIDS Day at an event at Leratong Hospice, Atteridgeville Township, Gauteng Province on 28 November 2008. Minister Lindiwe Hendricks gave the key note address at the celebration.

Minister Hendricks was joined at the event by water sector partners representing the Department of Provincial and Local Government, South African Local Government Association, Department of Health, Embassies of Ireland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Canada and civil society and community members.

Under this year's theme for World AIDS Days – Lead, Empower, Deliver, the event highlighted the relationship between water and sanitation and the HIV and AIDS epidemic. On the one hand, lack of access to water and sanitation can worsen the impacts of HIV and AIDS and on the other hand, HIV and AIDS can hinder water and sanitation service delivery. Access to clean water and sanitation are thus crucial elements in the battle against the spread of HIV and AIDS, the struggle to extend the life and well-being of people living with HIV and AIDS and efforts to reduce the debilitating impacts of poverty on a large proportion of the South African society

Ms Hendricks highlighted the role of the water sector in:

- providing leadership in water and sanitation delivery that will improve the lives of people living with HIV and AIDS;
- empowering water and sanitation service delivery agents as well as individuals and communities to respond to AIDS; and
- in supporting delivery of HIV prevention, treatment, care and support through adequate water and sanitation services and HIV and AIDS education and support.

In support of the fight against HIV and AIDS, the Water Sector Leadership Group has committed to mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in the water sector. According to Ngaka Machete, manager responsible for HIV and AIDS mainstreaming in the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, the Department's response involves a three-pronged approach of internal mainstreaming, external mainstreaming and policy review and updates.

The World AIDS Day event was a successful opportunity to highlight the efforts of the water sector and to continue to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS as a development challenge for all of South Africa.

**Enquiries:**

Ngaka Machete/ Linda Page  
Project Manager/ Media Liaison  
Dept Water Affairs and Forestry  
Cell: 0829084364/ 083 460 4482  
Tel: (012) 336 8880/ 8250