



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE

Securing South Africa's water

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In a move to secure South Africa's water, Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation (DWS), Mrs Pamela Tshwete, recently launched the South African regional chapter of the International Water Security Network.

This International Water Security Network project brings together the University of the West of England, Monash South Africa and the University of Arizona to investigate issues around water security.

Under the themes of 'Risks and vulnerabilities' and 'Innovation and adaptive capacity', the project will investigate urban water security, trans-boundary water security, and improving water quality security.

"This five-year collaborative initiative will complement our strategies as a country and the work we have been doing as part of water provision in the different spheres of government," Tshwete said at the launch.

"We take note of the fact that South Africa has been selected to be amongst the first countries targeted for this programme. Our participation in this programme will also improve participation, collaboration and cooperation in other international platforms where we are involved in relation to water security, sourcing, control and provisioning to all our communities. At the end of a five-year term I strongly believe as a country we would have turned the corner in terms of raising awareness on the importance of water, focusing specifically on areas of study in water management, provision of new technology for water supply – and in dealing with our challenges, generally," she said.

According to Tshwete, the programme will also assist in skills development through ushering future leaders and individuals qualified in teaching and researching on water management services. "Such a dual programme will provide the country with the requisite capabilities to manage water resources and systems."

Tshwete believes the regional launch has come at an opportune time which she describes as "a time when in our country the water technology that has been in use in some areas for more than hundred years is beginning to fail us."

South Africa's water resources have been under increasing pressure and water shortages have been the source of several service delivery protests over the past years. The launch coincides with the South African government's efforts to intensify the roll-out of water infrastructure and a period when new technology is required to rehabilitate and replace the old water infrastructure.

"As the department, we are very happy to see so many universities collaborating and consolidating efforts as part of their academic programmes to reach out to communities and provide services we could not provide as government. Thank you so much for taking time in pursuing this effort," Tshwete emphasised.



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She pointed out that the conducted research work has introduced a number of game changers in the water sector. However, there are still many challenges.

According to Tshwete, since its recent establishment, DWS has followed a process of consultation with all water entities, municipalities and provinces. This was done in an attempt to address the sustainability of equitable water availability for all communities, as well as review and explore solutions for an equitable water plan that will service all communities.

During these consultative sessions, Tshwete said her department picked up more challenges in the water and sanitation system. These include: limited water resources; poor management of existing water resources; limitation in the implementation of cost recovery; ageing infrastructure; poor electricity supply; unauthorised connections; and vandalism of water infrastructure.

Other challenges include lack of personnel with technical skills, lack of professional service providers, and high water losses due to water leaks.

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