

**WELCOMING ADDRESS OF THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR CLR
MONDLI GUNGUBELE AT THE NATIONAL WATER SUMMIT
HELD AT THE BIRCHWOOD HOTEL AND O.R. TAMBO
CONFERENCE CENTRE - 1 AUGUST 2014**

Programme Directors

Water Affairs Minister – Honourable Nomvula Mokonyane

MPs and MPLS

Honourable Members of the Portfolio Committee

Councillors

Chairpersons and CEOs of Water Entities

Distinguished guests

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me take this opportunity to welcome you to the Ekurhuleni Aerotropolis. You have come to the home of over 200 water bodies making us the best place to discuss issues around the security of water supply and other water related matters.

Before I go any further, today we welcome **Women's Month**. August occupies a special significance in the consciousness of our nation. It is that time of the year when we give more prominence than any other months to the resilience, courageousness and steadfastness of women. More importantly it is a time to acknowledge the tenacity and celebrate the noble causes of women in politics, society and the economy. Let us go through this month together appreciating women for the critical role they play around the globe.

Programme Director

As a footnote, capitalizing on our uniqueness when it comes to water bodies, the City of Ekurhuleni has put plans in place to turn this region into the preferred destination for water sport, investment opportunities and hospitality in general. Thus far we have already commenced with a programme called the **Beautification of Lakes and Dams**. Through this programme we have already revamped Germiston Lake into a world class recreational facility and work is underway to upgrade the rest of our water bodies.

There is a need for a paradigm shift in the way water management is viewed. All stakeholders must acknowledge the undisputed central role that water resources play in development planning. The National Development Plan (**NDP**) and the National Water Resources Strategy are quite emphatic about the central role of water in planning, the need for efficient use and the conservation of water resources.

The delivery of water and sanitation remains a challenge that requires innovative ways to deal with. Such interventions must look at among others skills shortage, aging infrastructure, ever increasing service demands and financial inadequacy. Our communities are increasingly becoming sensitive to the quality of water we render and therefore it is imperative for this summit to address challenges of this nature.

As the City of Ekurhuleni, water resource management will remain fundamental to all our developmental initiatives and plans. After all we are aware that the World Economic Forum has recognized water security as a primary risk to the global economy. As a city that has decided to up the ante in terms of improving our economic base by aggressively attracting investors, we cannot sit back and allow this situation to prevail.

Therefore we rely heavily on you the experts to assist us mitigate this threat.

On our part as a metro, we have developed a 10-year water demand management program that seeks to reduce the Non-Revenue Water to 20%. The reduction of Non-Revenue Water will enhance the security of water supply to our residents by unlocking additional water resources for developmental use. It will also make the cost of our water more affordable.

Programme Director

In terms of preserving water, we are undertaking various projects. Some of the major projects that we are busy with include water leak repairs to indigent properties (7300 repaired in 2013/14), water pressure management, replacement of leaking water meters (30 606 replaced in 2013/14), and replacing old water pipes to mitigate pipe bursts which result in thousands of litres of water being wasted. Just in the previous financial year which ended in June, we replaced 208km of old water pipes.

To safe guard the security of water supply to our communities, the City of Ekurhuleni has since conducted feasibility studies for rainwater harvesting and will be embarking on a detailed study that will culminate in the development of by-laws and operating guidelines. In addition, the City is developing a treated effluent re-use plan to make use of sewage effluent from its waste water plants. This will unlock additional water resources.

The time is now to accelerate our efforts to broaden quality and sustainable water service delivery to our people – as per the national vision contained in the NDP.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Mine was not to deliver a speech here today but just a welcome. However, I thought a few words on this burning issue would be appropriate.

It is my sincere wish that during the course of **The National Water Summit**, you will find groundbreaking solutions around broadening access to water, research, the state of the country's

water resources and any other relevant matter. I wish you fruitful deliberations.

I thank you