

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY CLR MODIEGI KEKANA ON  
BEHALF OF THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR DURING THE  
DISTRICT WATER WEEK CELEBRATION HELD ON 24<sup>TH</sup>  
MARCH 2011 AT REGOLEGILE SPORTS GROUND,  
THABAZIMBI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

**Programme Director,**

**The Mayor of Thabazimbi Local Municipality Cde Naledi Matlou,**

**Councillors present,**

**District Manager of the Department of Water Affairs Mr D. Mphahlele,**

**Senior Management of the Department of the Department of Water  
Affairs,**

**Officials from government and municipalities,**

**Members of the community,**

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

**GOOD MORNING!!! THOBELA!**

It is a great pleasure to be given this opportunity to address you during this event on behalf of the Executive Mayor, who could not be with us because of other commitments. We are meeting here two days after we celebrated the Human Rights Day. For the resting spirits of those who died on that fateful day we must be able to double our effort to make sure that we really practice human rights amongst all our people as enshrined in the Constitution.

The theme for this year`s celebration of the Water Week is. “ **Water for Cities- Responding to the Urban Challenge**”. Water is a necessity for human life, for nature and our environment. Without it no living organism can have life. And the need to save water cannot be compromised.

Programme Director, every year the Department of Water Affairs celebrates National Water Week in our country during the month of March which also features the World Water Day. This year`s South African Water Week celebrations coincide with South Africa hosting the United Nations (UN) World Water Week celebrations held in Cape Town on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2011. The primary objective of this campaign is to raise awareness among South Africans about the role of water in social and economic development including the need to get citizens to change their attitude towards water usage.

Programme Director, we are once again reminded of the responsibility that comes with living in one of the 30 driest countries in the world. Instead of looking to government for answers, many citizens should be questioning their daily behaviour in the usage of water. The bad news is that South Africa is facing water crisis. Given the developments that are taking place in our country, the usage of water by each one of us becomes very crucial. The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) considers South Africa to be a water-scarce country because of the low levels of rainfall most of the country receives.

Programme Director, it is already estimated that 8 million South Africans currently have no access to potable water. And environmentalists have warned that if conservation efforts to maintain current water sources are not increased, the country may run out of water altogether by 2030. Before you throw your arms into the air and say, “ here we go , another crisis”, consider the fact that there are many ways to make a difference.

Programme Director, our democratic government has embarked on water and sanitation programs which aim to make measureable and sustainable improvements in water supply, sanitation, hygiene and the overall environment in the communities we serve. It has further strengthened the capacities of relevant national, provincial, district and community stakeholders to perform their role in community water and sanitation service delivery

management. We need to raise awareness of the responsibility of the South Africans in contributing towards long term sustainability of our water resources by curbing water wastage.

Programme Director, Waterberg District is a rural municipality and scarce water resources. Intervention is being made through the partnership with the Department of Water Affairs. Last year the Waterberg District Municipality visited Bojanala Platinum District Municipality in North-West Province to share information about water provision in the district. There are plans in place for a water pipeline from Crocodile Water Reticulation System to Mokolo dam in Lephalale. The process of raising Mokolo dam is on course and this will be able to provide water in the district.

Programme Director, we have a number of wetlands which serve as water resource in the district. Wetlands perform essential functions such as the enhancement of water quality, erosion control, water storage and maintenance of biodiversity. Wetlands provide many essential goods and services. They also provide food, plant, water, medicinal and livelihood resources to rural communities, and play an important role in tourism, subsistence farming, grazing and environmental education and awareness.

Programme Director, wetlands are very important in water-scarce countries such as South Africa, yet about 50% of South Africa`s wetlands have been destroyed or converted. The serious loss of wetlands is caused by many factors such as building of dams, incorrect burning of forests, the use of wetlands for waste disposal, the abstraction of water and the drainage of wetlands for agricultural cultivation. Therefore careful consideration should be given to the continued destruction of wetlands.

Programme Director, South Africa is a developing country and most of our rural communities depend heavily on wetlands for cultivation, grazing and water as I said before. Given their importance for their livelihood of communities living adjacent to wetlands, teaching communities the right farming methods and rehabilitation should be considered to be of extreme importance. As we celebrate here today we must also remember those who do not have clean water to drink and cook. It is upon each of us to play a role in the conservation and demand management of water.

Programme Director, as South Africans we should start in our communities to influence better use of water. The continuous pollution of rivers and streams as well as growing future demands for water calls all South Africans to re-assess their attitude to our vital water resources. The provision of access to water, particularly in rural areas is about their lives beyond simple survival.

Ladies and gentlemen, in conclusion, it has become apparent that our government funding alone cannot suffice to finance the necessary investment in the provision of water. We call upon the private sector to play a meaningful role in this regard. The Local Government elections on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May is a relevant platform for us to go and vote in order to give our democratic government a fresh mandate for municipalities to enhance and improve service delivery to all our people. And together we can do more to make a better life for all our people.

**KE A LEBOGA.... I THANK YOU...**