

**OPENING ADDRESS BY MEC OF COOPERATIVE
GOVERNANCE, HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND
TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS MR BASIKOPO MAKAMU AT THE
WATERBERG DISTRICT DIFFERENTIATED WATER AND
SANITATION PROVISION SUMMIT**

**WATERBERG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY COUNCIL
CHAMBER, MODIMOLLE**

WEDNESDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2025

“Water is Life, Sanitation is Dignity”

Programme Director,

Executive Mayor of Waterberg District Municipality,

Mayors of our local municipalities,

Municipal Managers and Technical Directors,

Representatives of Water Services Authorities (WSAs),

Officials from the Department of Cooperative Governance, Human
Settlements, and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA),

Representatives from the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA),

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great urgency and commitment that we gather here today for the Waterberg District Differentiated Water and Sanitation Provision Summit. Water is life, and access to adequate sanitation is a fundamental human right. However, for too many of our communities across Limpopo, these essential services remain a daily struggle. Our mission today is to strengthen our collective response and ensure that every citizen in our province has access to sustainable and reliable water and sanitation services.

Reflections on the Differentiated Approach

The Differentiated Approach to Water and Sanitation Provisioning is not just a strategy but a necessity. On 31 January 2025, we convened a consultative meeting where all 27 municipalities engaged with this framework. However, as was highlighted during that session, some municipalities indicated that they had not been adequately consulted, prompting a resolution to take this discussion back to the districts through the Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) structures.

As a result, special IGR meetings were convened in all five districts, allowing municipalities to validate and refine the data presented. Today, we reflect on the outcomes of these engagements, particularly in the Waterberg District, and map the way forward.

Key Insights from District IGR Meetings

From the district IGR reports, several critical issues have emerged that require our immediate attention:

1. Incomplete and Stalled Projects – Many municipalities have stalled water projects due to financial constraints, underperformance of service providers, contract disputes, and Eskom delays in energizing bulk water infrastructure.

2. Rising Numbers of Underserved and Unserved Settlements – The number of underserved and unserved communities has increased across multiple districts, with Waterberg alone reporting 46 such settlements.

3. High Non-Revenue Water Losses – In some municipalities, unaccounted-for water losses exceed 80%, often due to aged infrastructure, pipe bursts, and lack of proper metering systems.

4. Insufficient Maintenance and Infrastructure Investment – Several municipalities struggle with outdated or unimplemented operations and maintenance (O&M) plans due to under-budgeting and a reactive approach to repairs.

5. Lack of Actionable Plans – Some WSAs have failed to develop comprehensive action plans to address critical water and sanitation challenges, leading to ongoing service delivery failures.

Immediate Actions and the Way Forward

Colleagues, it is clear that we cannot continue business as usual. We must adopt a decisive and results-driven approach to address these challenges. In this regard, I urge all municipalities and WSAs to:

- Prioritize Completion of Stalled Projects – Municipalities must develop clear action plans to unblock stalled projects, engage relevant stakeholders, and secure necessary funding.

- Reduce Water Losses through Improved Infrastructure Management – It is unacceptable that we continue to lose significant volumes of water due to inefficiencies. DBSA's commitment to installing bulk meters is a step in the right direction, and all municipalities must invest in similar interventions.

- Enhance Maintenance and Revenue Collection Strategies – We must ensure that asset registers and maintenance plans are implemented effectively. Furthermore, municipalities must balance service provision with revenue generation to sustain operations.

- Improve Coordination and Consultation – The disputes raised by municipalities regarding underserved and unserved settlements highlight the need for continuous consultation and data verification. WSAs must work closely with local structures to ensure accurate planning.

- Leverage Partnerships for Sustainable Solutions – We welcome the pledges from mining houses like Anglo American and Northam Platinum to assist with bulk water pipeline repairs. Such collaborations should be actively pursued to accelerate infrastructure development.

Conclusion

Ladies and gentlemen, water and sanitation are not just about service delivery; they are about dignity, economic development, and social stability. Our citizens depend on us to ensure these basic rights are met, and failure to do so will only perpetuate inequality and hinder progress.

Let us use this summit as a catalyst for change. Let us commit to ensuring that every plan we formulate here today is implemented with urgency and accountability.

I thank you, and I look forward to productive deliberations.

Ke a leboga. I thank you.