



Inkomati Flows

25th Edition

A weekly newsletter from the office of the CEO

Briefing from Sun City 1

Like we did at Stockholm, we felt it necessary to take an opportunity to pen down some experiences and lessons learnt in the WISA conference as it unfolds down at Sun City, the North West Province, South Africa. This "Briefing from Sun City" will be issued today and tomorrow only. This is due to the fact that Wednesday will be missed in order to provide space to visit the Dutch Embassy in Pretoria in preparation of the June visit.

This day, the 19th May 2008, the first day of the Biennial Conference and Exhibition of WISA themed "The confluence of the Water Industry" running from 18-22 opened with a short address from the outgoing President of WISA Prof Fred Otieno. He put emphasis on the role of the institution in get the water sector together talking about all the water issues. He further appreciated the fact that stakeholders supported him during his term of office. He has served his term and the Deputy President will take over from the end of this conference.

Background

It is important to understand who WISA is. "The Water Institute of Southern Africa (WISA) was formed in 1987 when the Southern African branch of the Institute of Water Pollution Control was disbanded. In the beginning of 2000 it was incorporated as a company under Section 21 of the Companies Act of 1973 as an association not for gain", from WISA background.

"The objectives of the Institute are the promotion of, and application of scientific and engineering knowledge and management skills in the planning, design, construction, operation, maintenance, investigation, research and education in connection with the natural and controlled water cycle. This will include, but will not be limited to, the application of scientific, engineering and management skills to all or any hydrology, water resources, river management and flood alleviation, recreation, water supply and distribution, sewerage, sewage and industrial waste treatment, disposal and water pollution control. The activities of the Institute shall be directed to the furtherance of such activities."

Input by the Minister

This was followed by the address by the Honorable Minister Lindiwe Hendricks. In her speech she emphasized the fact the world respects South African Water policy and South Africa is a point of reference in this respect. She stated that though we are highly respected, we have not moved fast in the establishment of water management institutions.

She identified the following challenges:

1. Huge infrastructure backlog and dilapidation
2. Poor drinking water quality
3. Poor water resource quality
4. Rapid urbanization putting pressure on the resources in urban areas.
5. Climate change.
6. Redressing the imbalances of the past.

Input by Chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee

The next critical input came from the parliament itself. Mrs. Connie September, the Chairperson of the Water and Forestry Portfolio Committee had this to say:

“Changes in the National Water Act are necessary. Part of it is to create synergy in the act. We need to look at why some parts of this world-acclaimed Act have not been implemented.

The challenges we see when visiting the Provinces are people drinking water with animals”.

She further took note of the fact that we have many institutions in the water sector. She emphasized that IWRM requires the involvement of all the levels of government, the water users themselves and the community structures interested in water resource management. In her presentation, it became clear that she fully supports devolution of water resource management to the lower level thus giving parliamentary assurance of support to CMA establishment.

She identified areas of stakeholder involvement to be in:

- a) Planning
- b) Service delivery

She lastly, advocated for the establishment of grievance solving mechanisms at a local level which will see local people empowered on matters of water resource management.

CM&E

If there was any moment of brilliant presentation skill display, it came out during the presentation of the compliance, monitoring and enforcement Division of DWAF. The presentation was done by the head of the water scorpions. He indicated that lack of compliance results in robbing those who deserve water allocation their due share, the outbreaks of diseases kill people and only at that time there is a response and the culture of ignoring directives increase. Their approach from the Division is “zero tolerance to non-compliance.” These problems of non-compliance come from both abstraction and discharge sides. Even though, Forestry as well causes their own problems through expansion of their panted land without permission.

There was an interesting emphasis put on a working relationship inclusive of the police, the Crime Intelligence, the NDPP, the Asset Forfeiture Unit, the Scorpions, the Department of Environment, Agriculture, NIA etc. It crated a picture of how this will be done devolved to the ICMA. To my pleasure, he mentioned that they are looking at devolving functions to the ICMA. This will require honest assessment of our capability and capacity as is today. We will need a dedicated and passion team to lead this if we were to match these guys.

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IWRM implementation

The day closed with a presentation from Derrick Weston on IWRM and Rodger Short on the DANIDA projects. It was indeed feeling great when Derrick indicated the progress made in the establishment of the CMAs.

Rodger closed it when he said they are coming down to Inkomati to implement their projects in August this year.

What a fruitful day!

NB: There are numerous topics and those commented on here are those chosen by the author only.