



Inkomati Flows

26th Edition

A weekly newsletter from the office of the CEO

Briefing from Sun City 2

All is well that ends well, so Shakespeare said. As said “in the Briefing from Sun City” yesterday, this will be the last edition of the newsletter as published from Sun City. Tonight, for the first time in the publication of our newsletter, we will have a forth page dedicated to the winners of the WISA awards as presented some minutes ago. It is an honour and a privilege indeed to finish the work here in the entertainment city of North West in such a high note.

The day opened with a presentation from the DDG Regions who stood in the stead of the DG of DWAF. She put emphasis on the critical programmes of DWAF in the context of business unusual. Like the Minister said yesterday, she picked up on matters of challenges like the water for growth and development, water demand management etc. She tried to answer their question as to whether we have a water crisis in the country. She assured delegates that the Department is ready and there is no crisis.

As the commissions had very interesting topics, considering the space we have, it will be wiser not to follow the vents of the day one by one. Attention will be paid to those events and discussions which will inform the ICMA of the current thinking and challenges on matters of water resource management.

National Infrastructure Agency

The National Infrastructure Agency’s role was presented by Mr. Moloji. The projects that the Agency is busy with are the berg Water Project in the Cape, the De Hoop dam in Limpopo aimed at providing water for mining, Eastern High Veld Vaal River pipeline for supplying Sasol and Eskom, Umgeni Scheme for the supply to eThekweni in KZN and Injaka dam in Bushbuckridge.

As we know, Injaka dam was long commissioned however there is no benefit derived from the scheme due to the fact that water services did not develop the requisite infrastructure to link the consumers to the source. This is resulting in more that five years of the dam completed and full whilst the community has no water. Just some two weeks ago, in a meeting attended in the Office of the Premier in Mpumalanga Province, it was

reported that the material used for the Injaka dam pipeline to the community is of poor quality and is failing under pressure as the water is released to the community. This means that there are millions of rand wasted and the water thirsty Bushbuckridge community has to exercise some patience before there could be a drop of water from a pipe.

Some other challenges facing the Agency range from water conservation and demand management culture development, maintenance of current infrastructure and infrastructure asset management. They are benchmarking the work of the branch with the New Zealand. A comparison of the two countries shows that S.A is leading in terms of infrastructure development and management.

Do we have a water crisis, an open debate?

Dr Simon Lushaba was the facilitator of the session. The panel was composed of Barry Jackson of DBSA, Anthony Tetan of CSIR, William Moraka of SALGA, Marike of Federation for Sustainable Environment and her colleague Koos Pretorius. Anthony opened the debate by impressing that we do not need to wait for the paradigm to shift, we must shift the. He argued that water is a flux, it moves in society etc but we treat it as a stock. Thinking of water as a stock means we have a crisis as 98% of water, according to the National Water Resource Strategy, is already allocated in the country. The problem of return flow, water quality, institutional instability, politicization of Boards, endless restructuring and losing of knowledge links in the network are the really challenges we are facing.

He suggested that the problems we face are not new. To attest to this there are recommended readings namely, 1960 Jordan Commission into Mine Water and the 1966 Commission on Water Matters which resulted in the establishment of the Water Research Commission. What strengthen S.A are the 6 science commissions which assist in the development of the economy. However, recently there has been poor funding of these institutions and this impact on the level of knowledge available.

Barry is of the view that we do not have a water crisis now but we are working on it. He envisages that the price of water will go up and we need to assist farmers with water conservation. On the positive, South Africa has a good regulatory framework but is poor in implementation.

One of the most important points raised by Barry was the issue of lack of emotional engagement by officials to their institutions. Detrimentially, this results in lack of passion and working just to meet the bare minimum. He further advised that the country should ensure that it does not play games with skilled people. This will result in brain-drain. Healthy institutions according to him are shown by:

- a) balance sheet
- b) revenue
- c) losses

- d) plans
- e) skills
- f) leadership
- g) leadership
- h) And more leadership

N.B the repeat is intentional. It is meant to put emphasis.)

William spoke about anticipated crisis where management deals with a crisis before hand. The flip side is a crisis change, where there is an external force directive the change and management has to follow from behind. Accountability to consumers was emphasized as it assists in meeting the demands of the consumer. Koos spoke more on pollution. This was based on the Witbank area as a point of reference. He asked whether we can mine and keep our waters clean.

The last speaker was Marike. Her presentation was base on the case of wonderfonteinspruit. Due to the closure of the mine and the subsequent decanting, the local water sources are contaminated by heavy metals like uranium, cobalt, zinc etc. about 50 tons of uranium is said to be dissolving in the water every year. This problem results in diseases like congenital malfunction.

She raised a concern that the polluter-pay principle is not being implemented resulting in continuous pollution of the water bodies.

The inputs that came from the audience covered various issues. The absence of the Department of Minerals and Energy was seen to be a problem due to the fact that the mines are the once that are polluting. This is seen to be detrimental to intergovernmental relations.

It was further alleged that about sixteen (16) mines in Mpumalanga are operating without a license.

Planning for the Visit to Holland

The net visit by the Governing Board of the ICMA will take place from the 6th to the 14th June 2008. The trip is aimed at giving the Board an opportunity to learn more from their Dutch counterparts on matters such as nature conservation, education as it relates to water resource management, initiating cooperation between municipalities in Holland and Nkomazi Municipality etc.

This visit will include the Executive Mayor, Councillor Mavuso of Nkomazi Municipality and Dr Thomas as part of the delegation outside the GB.

This trip will be followed by a CMS conference of 6 countries being South Africa, Holland, Surinam (in South America), Mozambique, Swaziland, Indonesia and Egypt. This conference will take place end of August this year.

In September the staff of the ICMA will visit Holland.

Awards

The following awards were presented under the theme excellence, pride and passion

Type of award	Winner
1. Portable water award	Faure Water Treatment Works
2. Wison Award	George Municipality
3. Isigidi Award	Jo'burg Water
4. Piet Vosloo Award	Sasol technologies
5. New Patrons	Bigen Africa
6. WISA Senior Fellow	Helgard Muller
7. WISA SAIWA	Sasol Technologies
8. Dr GG Cillier Award (For students)	RMC Albertus
9. WISA Wine Water Division Award	Allen Matimba
10. WISA CE Award	Sedibend Water
11. Foundation for Water Research (UK)	J. Poinapen

Other awards like the Best Poster Award are excluded.

We hope it will be an interesting read.