

## **Speaking Notes for Cllr Ntando Khuzwayo of eThekweni Municipality**

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***The World Economic Forum lists the "water crisis" as the number one global risk.***

Through its National Development Plan (NDP), South Africa puts emphasis on the need to sharpen its innovative edge and continue contributing to global scientific and technological advancement. This requires greater investment in research and development, better use of existing resources, and quicker institutions that facilitate innovation and enhanced cooperation between public science and technology institutions and the private sector.

Given the scarcity of water in the country, the impacts of climate change and high magnitude of land degradation and environmental violations, the sector needs to strengthen its environmental education and awareness initiatives and content, especially to the benefit of poor and previously marginalized communities as declared by the country's Dept. of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME).

The country further declares, through its NDP that: "South Africa is not only a contributor to greenhouse gas emissions – it is also particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change on health, livelihoods, water and food, with a disproportionate impact on the poor, especially women and children. While adapting to these changes, industries and households

have to reduce their negative impact on the environment. This will require far-reaching changes to the way people live and work”.

Therefore, eThekweni Municipality is proud to co-host the Sharing and Caring for Water 2017 conference here in Durban. The event is co-hosted by the Global Participatory Water Management Network (GPWMN), The Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA), and the eThekweni Municipality. Indeed, if we take a close look at our splendid City Hall we will notice that the first meeting of WESSA took place here in Durban in 1883. This makes WESSA one of the oldest NGO’s in the world. As eThekweni we are proud to collaborate in a number of world-renowned projects with WESSA. These include Working for Ecosystems, Metropolitan Open Space Systems (MOSS), cutting edge water and sanitation projects, Eco-Schools and the United Nations University Regional Centre of Expertise. EThekweni has worked with WESSA on these projects for many years! The GPWMN is an international water management network supported by the United Nations and UNESCO. EThekweni is a member of the GPWMN and the conference is open to participating public representatives.

In the above context, eThekweni Municipality has experienced the problem the entire world has faced of migration of people from the rural areas to the City. This is due to the fact that the citizens hope for the better economic opportunities. However, our City has ensured that it provides water, sanitation and other services to where people reside. This is because we are the City that cares for our citizens. We provide

employment opportunities closer to the people. Despite facing limited financial resources but our City has changed dramatically the lives of the general public as they were never changed during the apartheid period.

As such, the principal objective of this conference – Sharing and Caring for Water 2017- is to explore pathways of participative governance relating to water in and for Africa and the manner in which this knowledge and experience can be shared with the world. The conference is thus particularly for countries that share the African life-experience, economically, developmentally and otherwise. In this way, this conference seeks to bring the Voice of Africa to the World Water Forum which will be held in Brazil in 2018.

The conference will explore challenges and successes in Sharing and Caring for Water, particularly the participatory experience of government and civil society, working together to manage the sharing of water and caring for water. The importance of involving other stakeholders such as the civil society organizations in governance cannot be overstated. These stakeholders have the ability of advising their governments of the new strategic route they have to follow. They are able to influence the governments' decision-making and policy-formulation processes which help in fast-tracking the change to their lives.

Therefore, the principal pathways of participative governance, which will be explored specifically during the conference workshop sessions, include:

- Sharing knowledge and education for sustainable water utilization and management; sharing new ideas around sustainable water utilization and management.
- Changing practices and caring for water; changing practices in sustainable water utilization and management with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a catalyst for change.

The World Water Forum, Brazil, 2018 presentation document The Voice from Africa will thus be developed through these conference proceedings. The conference Local Organizing Committee will appoint a presentation team charged with the task of collating the conference proceedings into a presentation document which will serve as the Africa presentation to the World Water Forum, Brazil, 2018.

We acknowledge that each and every one of us is intimately and inextricably part of this earth with its beauty and life-giving sources; that our lives on earth are both enriched and complicated by what we have contributed to its condition.

We say to one another: I cannot be without you, without you this South African community is an incomplete community, without one single person, without one single group, without the region or the continent, we are not the best that we can be.

I welcome everyone to Durban in the knowledge that we can convey the voices of Africa to the World through Sharing and Caring for Water 2017!

