

Media release

To: All media

Issued by: The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry

Date: 12 March 2009

Water Affairs and Forestry Minister visit Limpopo Province

Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry Mrs. Lindiwe Hendricks has visited the cholera affected Limpopo Province where she commissioned a new packaged mobile water treatment plant worth three million rand for the community of Bothashoek village in the Tubatse Local municipality, as part an intervention to fight the cholera outbreak.

During the visit minister Hendricks led a delegation of provincial and local politicians including Councillor Magabe representing the Mayor of the Sekhukhune district Municipality, and the MEC for health, Seaparo Sekoati on a door to door health and hygiene education initiative where she handed out soap and bleach to residents. Minister Hendricks was also briefed by the Chief Executives of the Hospitals in the area who confirmed that there are very few new infections, down to about one per week, in the Sekhukhune district. They also confirmed that these infections were as a result of poor hygiene practices and not as a result of contaminated water.

Minister Hendricks told community members that cholera is a water borne disease that is spread through human contact. She also emphasized the positive role that good hygiene plays in preventing the spread of the disease.

At one of the homes in the Ga -Motodi village the delegation met two orphans of the Maphanga family whose mother died due to cholera in December. The minister undertook to ensure the two girls aged 18 and 23 were assisted by social development as they do not have a source of income or ID documents.

During a similar visit to Limpopo last month the Department of Water Affairs committed an additional 18 million rand to combat cholera- the money will be used to purchase five package water treatment plants in the province, the first of which was commissioned today.

The Minister also re-iterated that tap water in our country is safe to drink adding that the challenge is with water polluted by industries, households ageing municipal infrastructure and agriculture.

Cholera has claimed the lives of 59 people since the outbreak was first reported in November 2008 with a total of 12,324 cases recorded in South Africa. Limpopo has been worst affected reporting 5293 cases and 24 deaths.

The Department has been actively involved in efforts to contain the cholera outbreak, providing among other things clean drinking water by carting water with tankers to affected communities. Officials and technicians have also been despatched to assist municipalities that are facing challenges with regard to the operation and maintenance of their waste water treatment plants.

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