

## **Media release**

**To: All Media**

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### **Water for Growth and Development Framework National Consultation Summit ends**

The two day Water For Growth and Development Framework Stakeholder Consultation Summit convened by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry ended at the Gallagher Estate in Midrand on Friday 27 March with the majority of delegates pledging support for the recommendations of the framework.

The summit led by the Director General in the Department, Ms Pam Yako, was held in order to identify the key challenges affecting the water sector with regard to the protection and conservation of water resources, to solicit input from the stakeholders on the details of the framework and to discuss and agree on solutions and joint actions to be embarked upon in dealing with these challenges.

The framework is an initiative of the Department that seeks to strike an appropriate balance between supply and demand driven approaches, taking into account the specific constraints pertaining to water. In addition its intention is to place water at the heart of all planning that takes place in the country so that any decisions that rely on the steady supply of water adequately factor in water availability. It further seeks to ensure that there is sustained investment in the water sector and to ensure that water management supports government social and economic growth targets.

Six sectors were represented at the Summit, namely Agriculture, Mining, Energy, Forestry, and Municipal Services. The agricultural sector was represented by both Agri-SA and NAFU; the mining sector represented by the Chamber of Mines; the energy sector by Eskom; Forestry SA represented the forestry sector and the municipal water sector was represented by both SAAWU and SALGA. The interests and concerns of the labour and civil society were represented by Cosatu and the South African Water Caucus respectively.

At the end of the two day deliberations each sector affirmed the recommendations that they thought were implementable. The municipalities

agreed that a 1% target for reduction in water losses per annum was achievable and that water use behaviors must change.

The mining sector said the WfGD framework agreed with the strengthening of the focus on acid mine drainage as a short term intervention and stronger self regulation by mines.

Agriculture recommended that in stressed catchments, water use efficiency must be applied to the best socio-economic use, that the WfGD should further engage with challenges faced in the Agriculture sector and the impacts of climate change on agriculture need to be factored into planning and decision-making.

In conclusion, delegates agreed that there needs to be further consultation with Provincial Stakeholders where all sectors within the provinces will again participate. In addition, it was concluded that the WfGD Framework should be revisited on the basis of further comments received, including those emerging from this summit.

DWAF director general Pam Yako hailed the summit as a success adding that she was pleased with the frank and open discussion that took place. She also said a clear message had emerged from delegates that the department needed to strengthen its regulatory role and gave her assurance that this will be done.

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Ends