

Masibambane III Official Launch

17 March, 2008

For immediate release

The third phase of the Department of Water Affairs & Forestry's Masibambane programme was officially launched today on the first day of National Water Week 2008. At the launch, held during the 3rd National Water Summit at Gallagher Estate, Midrand, Minister Lindiwe Hendricks (Water Affairs & Forestry) and European Union Ambassador Lodewijk Briët jointly announced an EU support package of some €107 million (R1.25 billion) for the period 2007-2012.

The EU has been a firm supporter of Masibambane since its inception in 2001, and has to date provided funding in the region of €135 Million. Masibambane is a partnership between DWAF, the Department of Provincial and Local Government (dplg), the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), the EU and its member states, the Swiss Government and Irish Aid.

In addition to donor funding, South Africa will commit a total of R69 billion of its own resources to Masibambane III. The Programme has become known for its achievements in institutional support and fostering strong water sector collaboration in order to take South Africa beyond the provision of basic services and move forward under the overarching theme of 'water for growth and development'.

Said Minister Hendricks, "It is essential in a water scarce country such as South Africa that we make the best shared use of our limited resources to ensure the sustainable growth and economic development to which the country aspires. We are extremely grateful for both the financial and institutional support of our donors, especially the EU which has been a part of this programme since the outset."

Amb Briët adds, "The EU is proud to be a supporter of this ground breaking initiative. Masibambane is pioneering best practices not only in the water sector but is setting an example for so many other sector programmes where strong sector leadership can make an enormous difference to the lives of those most in need of support."

Masibambane III's focus going forward is firmly 'Water for growth and development' and on further developing the water sector, ensuring that water resource management and the provision of water services meet both social and economic priorities over the next five years in order to achieve Government's targeted 6% annual growth rate.

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