

HIGHLIGHTS

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES
GROUNDWATER DISCUSSIONS

INFO SHARING ON POLICIES
BBL SESSION ON MISCONDUCT

SERVICES FOR DWS STAFF
NEW WELLNESS PSP

CAMPAIGN/EVENT

NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY:
09 AUGUST 2015

DID YOU KNOW?

Prior to 1994, women's representation in the South African Parliament was a mere 2,7%. Following the first democratic elections it stood at 27,7%, and after the 2009 national elections it reached 42%.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"You cannot open a book without learning something."

– K'ung fu-tzu (Chinese teacher, editor, politician and philosopher of the Spring and Autumn period of Chinese history).

COUNTRIES UNITE ON GROUNDWATER PROTECTION



Attendees of the Groundwater discussions meeting among SA, Namibia and Botswana which was held recently at Birchwood Hotel

South Africa, Namibia and Botswana through their respective water champion representatives had a deliberation on groundwater protection at Birchwood Hotel, from 28-31 July 2015.

The meeting was coordinated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). These three countries have ground water belts running across their international borders. One of the objectives of the engagement was to create awareness on trans-boundary aquifers.

Since small rural communities in the aquifer belts depend highly on groundwater, it was agreed that such water sources should be protected and rehabilitated. The countries also looked closely at water diplomacy. It was agreed, based on evidence of lessons learned from other trans-boundary aquifers in Africa that these water sources may also be a basis of conflict.

The focus was on two projects named Stampriet Trans-boundary Aquifer

System (STAS) and Ramotswa Trans-boundary Aquifer Project (RAMOTSWA). The STAS stretches from Central Namibia into Western Botswana and South Africa's Northern Cape Province, and lies within the Orange River Basin. RAMOTSWA on the other hand lies in the Limpopo River Basin and is already water stressed as the Gaborone Dam is almost empty.

The challenges faced by both trans-boundary aquifer projects are almost similar. The STAS has lost 60% of clean potable water due to leaking boreholes and illegal water abstractions. Another challenge is the alien invasive species called Prosopis, which takes large quantities of groundwater and limits the grazing space for local farmers.

In the RAMOTSWA project, the area of its operation is severely water stressed. There is even a proposal to consider re-using wastewater for irrigation. Parts of this trans-boundary aquifer have experienced groundwater pollution. This pollution is mainly of organic

nitrates which are suspected to be from pit latrines near the water table. Another source of pollution at RAMOTSWA is wastewater.

Challenges identified in RAMOTSWA include the climate change and lack of groundwater management at municipal level. Many of its boreholes are running dry due to mismanagement.

With regard to the STAS, it was recommended that there be development and implementation of policies and legislation to guide control measures for Prosopis and other alien invasive species.

It was recommended that there should be knowledge sharing and transfer of ownership to the communities of all installed facilities once these projects are running fully. This will make responsibilities and willingness to assist when natural disasters strike not to lie with the government only but everyone concerned.

Zwakele Thabede