



Media Statement

Friday, August 25<sup>th</sup> 2023

To: All Media

**Water Security and Reliable Supply, Financial Sustainability of Water Boards and Catchment Agencies Come Under Sharp Focus During the 2023 World Water Week Held in Sweden**

Magalies Water delegation led by Deputy Chairperson of the Board Ms. Yvonne Matolong, formed part of the international delegates that were invited to participate in this year's edition of the Stockholm Water Week. The week-long conference which commenced from 20<sup>th</sup> August 2023, is a high-level meeting of regional, continental, and international organizations such as United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), and the African Development Bank Group (AfDBG) among many other organizations. The conference which was founded in 1991 by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), which is a non-profit organisation with vested interest water security, sustainability or reliable supply of water and access to sanitation services seeks to allow for role-players to share innovative ideas and best practices on how to solve some of the modern-day water security and supply challenges.

Magalies Water, participated in a number of high-level discussions, which cut across a number of sectors, such as health, environmental law, climate change, geo-politics, international relations, and the economy. These high-level discussions reflected on the key issues facing the sector continentally and globally, which include:

- Governance Practices – The role of Directors (Board), executives or management in water utilities and catchment agencies, and how their combined fiduciary responsibilities can remain fit for purpose, through legislative separation of powers and cooperation while achieving business targets and developmental regimes of clear trajectorial strategies for business growth.
- Business Management – Navigation of the effects of Covid-19, national, regional, and local economic downturn affecting sectoral growth and how to ensure that water utilities and catchment agencies as

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income generating businesses, become resilient, sustainable and future-proof for growth.

- Investment in technology – How key water sector role-players including research organizations, governments, and business sector partners and or funders which depend on reliable water supply and sanitation services can collaborate with water utilities and catchment agencies, through investment of funds, resources, and human capital in development of new technologies poised to minimize sectoral challenges, which compromise water security and reliable supply.
- Stakeholder engagement and Communication – Development of frequently revised models/framework for relationship building and management with government stakeholders across all levels (national, regional, and local), and private business partners in order to create economic spinoffs for the water and sanitation sector, through mutual beneficiation.
- Infrastructure Management and Operations – Balancing the expenditure, revenue collection and requirement for tariff management, and how water utilities and catchment agencies can preserve infrastructural performance and exploring new methodologies for capital infrastructure expenditure through loan/grant funding which does not affect the organizations’ future financial standing adversely.

Talking on the sidelines of the conference, the Board Deputy Chairperson said, given the level of discussions at this year’s meeting, it was evident that water security is a global challenge and not a South African nor an African problem only, she remarked “It was encouraging to see some of the solutions that different parts of the world are employing to address issues of how we use, value and manage water. Although the process is slow, it was pleasing to see the collective efforts by Africa under the auspices of the African Ministers’ Council on Water (AMCOW)” said Matolong.

Matolong’s key lessons from the conference rested on cooperation and how this is the vehicle necessary for solving some of the current challenges, she continued “the coming together of African countries under their respective ministries of water and sanitation can only accelerate the transformation needed to achieve Goal 6 of the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals on Water and Sanitation, the Africa Water Vision 2025, and the African Agenda 2063. This requires all of us to rally behind the call to raise the profile of water in our national system and accelerate actions towards achieving equitable water availability for all and safe sanitation” she concluded.

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