

Sisulu unveils master plan to tackle water woes

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Water and sanitation minister Lindiwe Sisulu unveiled an R898bn “master plan” on Thursday to deal with the impact of drought and provide water security for SA.

The 23-point national water and sanitation master plan, she said, would open doors for research and creation of technologies to help find other water supplies.

Speaking at the launch in Pretoria, Sisulu said the plan would cost about R898bn over the next 10 years.

As some officials had allegedly defrauded her department of large sums of money meant for

water projects, Sisulu admitted that her ministry was not in the National Treasury’s good books but said they hoped to secure about R565bn from the Treasury over the next decade.

The remaining R333bn the department hoped to raise through investments and via the private sector.

Sisulu expressed confidence that the plan, which at this point focused on water and not sanitation, would be beneficial for areas such as Hammanskraal and parts of the Eastern Cape which have endured serious water challenges.

She said among their plans was to implement technology with Rand Water that would

The new normal has become drought

help predict dry spells before they happened. The technology they were looking into also involved extracting water from sources other than boreholes and dams.

Public works is working alongside her department on the project.

“The new normal has become drought,” said public works minister Patricia de Lille.

“Climate change brings about great uncertainty. It is the greatest problem facing the world,” she said, adding that bold but simple and effective solutions were required.

“We can only save water while we still have water,” she added.

She said the country had reached a point where it could not just rely on rain to fill dams and needed to explore alternatives such as finding and preserving underground water supplies.

“What we are planning to do in the next five years, as far as infrastructure is concerned, is to focus on water and sanitation infrastructure projects and we will prioritise the rollout and provision of water infrastructure to ensure availability of clean water to all South Africans,” said De Lille.

These projects included the completion of waste water treatment works and bulk storage infrastructure.