

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 effect of drought and provide water security.

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

Speaking at the launch in Pretoria on Thursday, Sisulu said the blueprint would cost

about R898bn to implement over the next 10 years.

Sisulu admitted that her ministry was not in the National Treasury’s good books because some officials had allegedly defrauded the department of large sums of money meant for water projects.

She nevertheless hoped to secure funding of about R565bn from the Treasury over the next decade.

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

Sisulu expressed confidence that the plan, which initially focused on water and not sanitation, would be beneficial to areas such as Hammanskraal and parts of the Eastern Cape, which had endured serious water challenges.

She said the department planned to implement technology with Rand Water that would help predict dry spells before they happened.

It was also exploring technology to extract water from sources other than boreholes and dams.

The department of public works is working alongside the water department.

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

“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.”

De Lille said SA had reached a point where it could not 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 roll-out and provision of water infrastructure to ensure availability of clean water to all South Africans,” she said.

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