

## Ten-year plan set to aid in drought crisis

By **Naledi Shange**

Water and sanitation minister Lindiwe Sisulu unveiled an R898bn “master plan” yesterday, 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 the 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.

Sisulu admitted that her ministry was not in good books with the National Treasury due to officials allegedly defrauding it of money meant for water projects. But she said they hoped to secure funding of 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 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. We can only save water while we still have water.”

She said the country had reached a point where it could not just rely on rain



to fill dams. “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.