



public works
& infrastructure

Department:
Public Works and Infrastructure
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MEDIA STATEMENT

Note to editors: The following remarks were made by Minister de Lille at the Water and Sanitation Master Plan launch by Minister Lindiwe Sisulu

Minister Lindiwe Sisulu

Government officials

Members of the media

Welcome to the launch of this very important plan for our country and a very precious resource that we must protect and conserve.

South Africa is a water scarce country and many parts of our country have already felt the serious impacts of climate change where we can now see that drought is the New Normal.

Droughts mean that we have to fundamentally change our relationship with water because water doesn't just simply come from a tap.

Climate change brings with it great uncertainty, drastic changes in our weather patterns leading to events such as droughts and wildfires.

It is the greatest problem facing the world today and can only be effectively tackled if we all do our part.

Climate change also means that we can no longer plan using old methodologies.

It requires bold changes and sometimes there are very simple changes we can all make in our everyday lives to conserve resources such as water.

We can no longer only rely on rain water to fill our dams, we have to save water and reuse water.

While there is a role for everyone to play, one of the most effective ways to adapt to climate change and water shortages is to use water sparingly because we can only save water while there is still water to be saved.

Building more dams alone won't solve the problems because we need rain to fall in those dams and our water scarcity is as a result of reduced annual average rainfall.

We have to tap into underground water, into our aquifers but we need to replenish it with treated waste water so that we don't deplete the resource.

Our country also has a lot of ageing infrastructure and my department will work closely with Minister Sisulu and her department to repair and maintain old infrastructure and to build new infrastructure.

In terms of water resource security, to ensure availability of reliable water resources in the country government will be investing in a number of water resource projects.

Some of the projects that are currently being implemented are Clainwilliam Dam (WC) and Lesotho Highland Water Project Phase 2.

Other projects such as, De Hoop (Limpopo), Mkhomazi: (KZN) Mokolo Crocodile Water Augmentation Project (MCWAP) Phase 2 (Limpopo) are in advanced stages of development.

In the next 5 years government will also focus on bulk water and sanitation infrastructure projects to prioritise roll-out and provision of water infrastructure to ensure availability of clean water to all South Africans.

This will include the completion of 20 Waste Water Treatment Works, 32 Water Treatment Works and 38 bulk storage infrastructure projects supported by over 1600 km of bulk pipeline to distribute water to municipal reticulations.

The Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Committee (PICC) will work together with the Department of Water and Sanitation to ensure integrated planning of the full water delivery system – dams, pipelines, treatment works and reticulation in the planning and implementation of water projects.

Already in the past month the PICC has visited over 77 projects implemented under the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant with an estimated values of over R20 billion and a potential impact of benefitting over 1, 5 million households.

The PICC will keep on monitoring/tracking this project and will work with the department to ensure that project delivery is achieved.

We must also use this an opportunity to retrofit and invest in water saving technology and devices to make our buildings – public and private sector buildings more water wise.

Because, not only will we save water, but we will also save money using aerators on taps, water tanks to harvest rainwater and grey water for irrigation because the time has long past where drinking water should be used for gardens.

We all have a role to play and we must work together.

We know that this was clear in the experience Cape Town had between 2016 and 2018.

Three years of below annual average rainfall led to Cape Town experiencing its worst drought in over 100 years.

If we all use water sparingly, we can navigate our way through this.

I thank you.

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