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## **Media Statement by Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Patricia de Lille, MP**

### **Addressing blockages on Clanwilliam Dam project crucial to get the project back on track for the benefit of the surrounding communities and farmers.**

Today, as part of my oversight visits to various infrastructure projects, I visited the Clanwilliam Dam and Irrigation Scheme upgrade project in the Western Cape.

Over the past few weeks, I have been visiting various infrastructure projects across the country which were gazetted as Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs) on 24 July 2020 in line with the Infrastructure Development Act.

I have been conducting the oversight visits in line with my duties as Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) and Chairperson of the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission (PICC) Secretariat. I will be giving feedback on my oversight visit to the new Minister of Water and Sanitation, Senzo Mchunu.

The gazettement of infrastructure projects as SIPs sees the project following an expedited path with all three spheres of government and implementing agents working closer together to ensure successful implementation of projects.

The Clanwilliam Dam project forms part of the National Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) Water Resource Programme.

The SIPs form part of the Infrastructure Investment Plan which was approved by Cabinet on 27 May 2020 which also forms a central part of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP) which aims to rebuild the economy and assist in reviving sectors such as the construction sector.

Cabinet also approved the establishment of Infrastructure South Africa (ISA), headed by Dr Kgosientsho Ramokgopa as the administrative arm responsible for monitoring implementation of the SIPs and assist with expediting in addressing project blockages.

This has seen the working relationship with the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) grow stronger as teams work together to resolve the challenges on this project.

**Project scope:**

Clanwilliam Dam is part of the Olifants Doorn River Water Resources Project with the project value around R4billion.

Work on the dam has not yet started but other support infrastructure works have been completed such as the construction of roads.

This project is one of the biggest and long standing infrastructure projects in the country and the reason for my visit was to engage the teams on site to hear first-hand what the delays are and how we can work closer with them to deal with the delays and get the project following an expedited path.

The stakeholders in this project include the implementing department, DWS as well as the Lower Olifants River Water User Association, the Cederberg, Matzikama and West Coast municipalities, the Western Cape Government, SANRAL and ESKOM. The lead department for implementation is the National Department of Water and Sanitation.

According to the feasibility study, the dam was originally constructed in 1935 and the sandstone foundation is fractured and there has also been concrete deterioration over time. These aspects are compromising the safety of the foundations and the technical solutions being considered include the introduction of anchors on the existing concrete apron and deeper foundations to suitable bedrock.

Close to two decades ago, dam safety investigations identified the need for remedial work to the foundation of the existing dam. The identified remedial works provided an opportunity to further raise the dam wall, thereby improving dam capacity.

The project entails raising the dam wall by 13 metres while the feasibility study also found that the dam needs to be strengthened.

The raising of Clanwilliam Dam and improving the foundation of the dam is part of the first phase of the Olifants-Doorn River Water Resources Project (ODRWRP).

### **The objective of the project is to:**

- Increase the yield of the dam by about 70 Million cubic meters per annum to augment the water supplies to the Olifants River irrigation scheme situated in the north-western part of the Western Cape Province, as well as to assist in the development of resource-poor farmers.
- Remedial work will also improve the safety of the dam. This would involve major construction works.
- In succeeding the raising of the Clanwilliam dam, the second phase of the project involves the utilization of the additional yield of water in the following:
  - Supplying the ecological water requirements;
  - Giving existing water users a more assured supply;
  - Using the additional water for new irrigation purposes by emerging farmers; and
  - Providing for future growth of domestic and industrial water supply, taking water losses into account.

Today I also engaged some of the local farmers and farmer association representatives on the site about their farming and water needs and the benefit that this project will ultimately bring to them with additional dam capacity.

The Clanwilliam Dam project forms part of a larger programme of projects, known as the Olifants Doorn River Water Resources Project (ODRWRP).

The programme includes the realignment of the N7 national route. This work was completed by SANRAL in 2017.

Various other road related works have been completed and plans are in place for other road related works still to be completed by the Western Cape Department of Transport and Public Works.

The project also includes upgrading and expansion of the conveyance network downstream of Bulshoek Dam by the DWS.

The project implementation is at 12% completion which includes: site establishment including access roads, support infrastructure/upgrades to the N7, acquisition of land, design administration and project communication.

In the May 2021 budget vote of the Department of Water and Sanitation, the department emphasised the project as a priority project to be delivered and budgeted for.

It is well known that this longstanding project has seen too many delays and it is vital that we make up for lost time and work harder to ensure that this important water-security project gets back on track so that the region can start reaping the benefits.

The project has suffered massive delays due to various challenges. The following briefly highlights these challenges which continue to impact progress of the raising of the dam:

- ▲ Procurement of key suppliers and subcontractors
- Another important matter that needs to be addressed urgently is that the construction team has endured loss of skilled staff due to the delays on the project.

### **Empowerment and job creation**

The DWS has appointed the state-owned construction company to deliver the project. There are ample opportunities for the project to contribute to the empowerment and transformation in the built environment sector through the appointment of additional construction, project management and design team members and sub-contractors.

There are also good opportunities for skills development through on the job training, for newly graduated engineers, technicians and artisans.

There are currently 68 local labour appointments on the project. The total programme can possibly create over 10 500 job opportunities directly related to the capital projects.

The type of jobs created on the project thus far included unskilled, semi-skilled, technician and engineering opportunities.

### **Contribution to the economy and Economic Reconstructions and Recovery Plan**

In addition to the project objective, the ODRWRP programme seeks to support the farming community in the region, by enabling emerging farmers and also resourcing poor farmers through support by the irrigation scheme linked to the conveyancer system.

There is a direct link between this project and food security for the region. In the long term, the project will address the risk of the dam collapse which would be catastrophic for the region with a severe impact on South Africa's food security plan.

The programme also contributes to the focus on stabilising the water resource infrastructure and concurrently stimulating job creation during the construction phase and including the operations and maintenance phase.

Furthermore, the project, after completion, does provide for future accommodation of a hydro-power plant, thereby contributing towards the country's green energy production targets.

The raising of the Clanwilliam Dam wall is one of the government's largest investments in the Western Cape and it assumes economic opportunities for the community of the West Coast.

Infrastructure development is one of the most important investments we can make into our communities and economy as it is a key catalyst to revive the economy.

This type of infrastructure development is even more important in a water-scare region as it will upon completion, see an additional yield of water with over 70% to be allocated to emerging farmers of the West Coast.

This is a key infrastructure projects that is not only poised to create much-needed employment opportunities but also to skill young people. Together with ISA and all other stakeholders, we must pull all our resources together to make sure we get the necessary skills on this project to get implementation done right and faster.

## **ENDS**

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