Minister Sisulu launches Water Master Plan

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Minister Lindiwe Sisulu officially launched the National Water and Sanitation Master Plan that is aimed at ensuring water security for the country. The Master Plan was launched on 28 November 2019, at the CSIR Conventional Centre in Pretoria.

The National Water and Sanitation Master Plan outlines a series of urgent steps to be taken and implemented by all stakeholders in the water sector to address systemic and infrastructural challenges to secure continuous and uninterrupted supply of water for both community and business use.

Addressing scores of sector role players, Minister Sisulu expressed that the Master Plan also outlines immediate interventions that would be taken to respond to challenges faced by the sector. Namely, infrastructure investment and maintenance, capacity of municipalities, transformation in the sector, licensing of water use, capacity of the Department and its agencies, amongst others.

“We are faced with a backlog of challenges we need to address urgently if we are to achieve water security for all. We need to address our own insufficient investment in water infrastructure and inadequate management of the water sources we have,” Minister Sisulu said.

She added that: “The Master Plan introduces a number of measures to secure water for communities and economic development. It is a programme of action for the Water and Sanitation sector but remains largely a Plan for the country in addressing both Water and Sanitation.”

Also speaking during the launch was Public Works and Infrastructure Minister, Patricia de Lille, who stressed the need to maintain ageing infrastructure and prioritising the building of new infrastructure.

“We need to look at the water leaks all over the country so that we don’t waste the resource,” De Lille said.

She said government would invest in a number of water resource infrastructure projects, including, among others, the Lesotho Highland Water Project Phase two, De Hoop Dam in Limpopo and Clanwilliam Dam.
Some of the key strategic objectives of the Water and Sanitation Master Plan announced by Minister Sisulu are:

1. To structure the Department to make it fit for purpose, eliminate wastage and any loss due to corruption and mismanagement of resources.
2. To address the water and sanitation goals of the country as envisioned in the National Development Plan (NDP), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (in particular SDG6: “Ensure Water and Sanitation For All”) as well as the African Union Agenda 2063.
3. To support the President’s Economic Stimulus and Recovery Plan (ESRP) and gives priority to the ‘Five broad parts’.
4. It gives effect to initiatives and programmes announced in the State of the Nation Address 2019 (SONA), specifically, the Public-Private Growth Initiative (PPGI). The President highlighted that our new approach to infrastructure development is based on stronger partnerships between the public and private sectors, and with local communities. It includes a special package of financial and institutional measures to boost construction and prioritize water infrastructure, roads and student accommodation through a more efficient use of budgeted money.

The Plan has since been widely welcomed by role players in the sector and members of the public.

In a statement, Agri SA said it was encouraged by the launch of the Master Plan as it provides a framework from which the future of the country’s water and food security can be delivered.

Agri SA said it specifically encouraged by renewed efforts made by the Department to partner with other government departments and sector leaders in addressing issues pertaining to the degradation of infrastructure and water quality.

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