

# MEDIA RELEASE



*Viva Water Pure and Clean Viva Forests Rich and Green*  
Department of Water Affairs and Forestry - Chief Directorate: Communication  
Services

## **MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF WATER AFFAIRS AND FORESTRY, MR RONNIE KASRILS**

**28 September 2001**

**Embargo: None**

Following my statement yesterday about the water crisis in Tafelsig, I today contacted Ms Belinda Walker, the Acting Mayoress of Cape Town, with a proposal to help resolve the crisis.

Specifically I proposed that we mandate the Centre for Conflict Resolution at the University of Cape Town to find short term solutions to the problem and to help to cool the temperature in the communities concerned. I regret to say that she rejected my proposal.

My proposal was not made to score cheap political points. On the contrary it was made because water supply is too important an issue to be used as a political football. It directly affects the poorest and most vulnerable in all our communities and our action as politicians must reflect this.

Basic water supply is a right guaranteed by the Constitution. While I have oversight responsibility as a national Minister, the actual provision of the service is a local government responsibility.

My concern is that neither Cape Town nor any other municipality in the country can afford to administer by force. Whether it is an ANC, IFP or DA controlled council, it cannot run water services at gun point. We cannot afford local water wars.

We must work patiently to create a situation where, through consultation and communication, we build a consensus in the community to support our administrations to improve their quality of life. Nowhere is this more important than in the vital area of water supply.

I understand that Cape Town's Municipality intends to continue the cut off campaign in other areas, including Khayelitsha. I believe it is important to avoid a repetition of the unfortunate incidents at Tafelsig.

For this reason, I still believe that a structured conflict resolution approach would be appropriate. The resources of my Department will be available to the Municipality should they change their mind.

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