MEDIA STATEMENT

DWS to release water from Sterkfontein into the Vaal Dam to counter depleting levels

03 November 2016

The drought scourge continues to wreak havoc in most parts of the country and this phenomenon has caused dam levels across the country to deplete into lower and unprecedented levels.

The Vaal Dam, one of the 14 dams within the Vaal River System and supplies approximately 12 million people and industries, continues to dwindle week on week. It is currently sitting at 26.6%, which is its lowest level ever.

Due to the unrelenting drought and the current declining rate, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) plans to release water from its reserve, the Sterkfontein Dam into the Vaal Dam on Monday, 07 November 2016.

The plan is to release water before the Vaal Dam drops below 25%, and should there be sufficient rainfall on days before the release, the plan could be reconsidered.

The water will be released into the Nuwejaarspruit which joins the Wilge River on the outskirts of Harrismith flowing into the Vaal Dam. The release will be done in such a way as to avoid flooding.

Farmers adjacent to the river are requested to remove pumps, livestock and farming equipment during this period. Farmers are also requested not to abstract the water for agricultural purposes. Offenders will be prosecuted as strict compliance monitoring will be enforced.

Despite the recent rainfalls, the Department is urging communities to heed the call to use water sparingly. The public is called upon to use the water saving tips provided by municipalities which, amongst others, include turning off taps while washing your face, brushing your teeth or shaving and taking a five-minute shower a day instead of a bath.

ENDS
Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation

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