



MEDIA STATEMENT

DWS Deputy Minister Tshwete leads delegation at the Portfolio Committee presentation

18 October 2017

The Deputy Minister of the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), Mrs. Pamela Tshwete, together with the Acting Director-General of the department, Mr. Sifiso Mkhize, today 18 October 2017, led the department's delegation to make further inputs to the Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation in Parliaments.

Due to the amount of interaction that was envisaged not being able to be dealt with on the day, the Deputy Director-General for the National Water resources Infrastructure Branch presented on the matters that were outstanding or needed further clarity. These matters included but were not restricted to:

- Lack of capacity and required skills to operate and maintain the infrastructure (Technical, Financial and project and Programme management)
- Most municipalities don't have revenue strategies to deal with cost recovery issues in order to efficiently maintain and operate the infrastructure
- Ring-fencing of the water services function within the equitable share
- Inability to raise co-funding which result in incomplete projects
- Leadership instability within the municipal environment
- Lack of intergraded planning within the water sector
- Grant dependency
- Misuse of grant for unintended purpose
- Lack of reporting by municipalities
- Misalignment of financial years between National and Local impacting on planning and implementation
- A roll over of R919 million during the 2014/15 financial year to implement 41 RBIG multi-year projects which was declined, impacting on the implementation of projects under construction which had to be delayed due to payment of accruals using the 2015/16 budget allocation, and the completion timeline of projects under construction had to be revised.



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The presentation included the issue of required capital to deal with backlogs and at the same time ensure the continuation of current projects. The matter of the debilitating drought and the kinds of interventions that the department had to make impacted on delivery of projects in planning or under construction.

The important intervention of the Richards Bay Desalination Plant was an example cited where there needed to be a way of ensuring that there is commonality of purpose between political declarations and executive realities.

The Portfolio Committee suggested that for issues like ensuring the continued life of interventions like boreholes, the DWS might have to look at the possibility of acquiring requisite geo-hydrological expertise. This would ensure that correct and sustainable decisions can be made which will in truth speak to making the lives of the people better over an extended period.

It was also important for the department to emphasise the need for proper verification to be undertaken prior to payments being made. Although this will ensure payments will be made for the correct work done, there is another side to the coin that whilst such care is taken, it might have the converse effect of funds not being spent in the financial year as intended. This will need a fine balancing act.

The members of the Portfolio Committee continue to take a keen interest in the work of the department and today they were no different in terms of the robust discussions that were held.

END

Issued by the Department of Water and Sanitation

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