



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

DWS hosts the Integrated Water Quality Symposium

31 May 2017

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) is today hosting a symposium on one of the critical business aspects of the department, aptly titled “Integrated Water Quality Symposium”, whose theme is: Taking Innovation Into Practice.

The objectives of the symposium are: to create awareness of the Integrated Water Quality Management (IWQM), share innovative experiences that can support IWQM, and to enable discussions about aspects that require coordination towards strengthening approaches to IWQM.

Part of the expected outcomes for the symposium include a need to institutionalise water quality in the sector, as well as a need for water quality management to be on the agenda of all departments, i.e. government broadly. It is also important for IWQM to be people-centric.

IWQM has trans-boundary imperatives as South Africa shares some of its water courses with neighbouring countries. Partnerships are also important in ensuring IWQM as water users are diverse. Water as a critical driver to all socio-economic development therefore requires administrative fairness and implementability of IWQM. It is imperative to look at IWQM as a developmental issue.

The IWQM is also a determining factor towards the “polluter pays principle” with implications for all polluters. The DWS hopes that this process will give impetus towards an informed public. The IWQM information has to be publicly available, ensuring that knowledge must be shared.

It is important to note that good water quality is fundamental to food and energy security, economic growth, human health, healthy ecosystems, job creation and positive cost of doing business, to name but a few.

IWQM is negatively impacted upon by examples such as uncontrolled discharges from abandoned mines and mine dumps, as well as non-compliance to water use license prescripts. The most predominant constituents of the negative impact include but are not restricted to nutrients, salts, microbial contamination and urban runoff and litter. There are further challenges of lack of coordination and alignment of efforts meant to reduce these negative impacts.

The symposium and other activities married to it are meant to look at the revision of the current DWS WQM policies commenced in 2015.

Out of this process part of the expected legislative implications will include but are not restricted to the categorisation of polluting industries, based on risk, as well as the creation of a pollution register.

END



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