



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

Irrigation Boards taken to task about lack of transformation

20 June 2017

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) today presented progress on the transformation of Irrigation Boards before Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation.

Historically, Irrigation Boards were established to support farming among poor, white farmers before democracy. The department has since initiated reforms in the functions of irrigation boards that now ensure that it supports water resources management in the country. Functions currently include the prevention of unlawful abstraction or storage of public water, amongst others.

Currently, there are 278 Irrigation Boards across the country and only 99 of these boards have met the transformation requirements as set out in the Water Act. The core of these transformation requirements include amongst others, access to water for the previously disadvantaged communities and representation in gender, race, youth and people with disabilities.

To ensure the rapid transformation of irrigation boards in line with the Constitution of South Africa, the National Water Act and the National Development Plan, the department today presented its interventions which include water allocation reform, compulsory licensing and water user authorisation.

The department is already strengthening inter-sectoral planning between Land, Water and the Agricultural sectors to effectively address transformation objectives. It is also developing a pro-active design of a land-water strategy that will support accelerated agrarian reform and integrated funding models for previously disadvantaged individuals.

The Department is also undertaking a legislative review that will see the repeal of the Water Act as part of its interventions to speed up transformation in the sector.

End

Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation

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