



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

Minister Mokonyane briefs media on outcomes of Water and Sanitation MinMEC

24 January 2017

- Today we held our first MinMEC on water and sanitation. Given the challenges that we face in the areas of water and sanitation, we felt it necessary to coordinate a formalised and coherent approach that will allow ourselves as the national government and provinces to better manage the water resources of the country, roll-out water and sanitation services and improve our planning and financial management.
- In 2009, the Government of South Africa adopted the outcomes based approach to improve the way it plans and manages work to realise the society it has always envisioned and that the NDP aspires to by 2030.
- Government committed to doing things differently and underscored the importance of improved coordination across all spheres of government in a quest to improve the delivery of service and guarantee the reliability of the service we provide.
- The meeting we held today was a first in what will be regular engagements amongst ourselves as national government and provinces to ensure we regularly interface on water and sanitation delivery challenges, plans, policy-matters and priorities arising out of incidences of drought and other national water security concerns and threats.

Sanitation

- Today we have received presentations on the National Sanitation Policy which was adopted by cabinet in 2016.
- As you may be aware, as a country we were amongst the nations of the world that achieved the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on sanitation and with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this policy aims to propel us towards the realisation of universal access to sanitation as outlined in the National Development Plan (NDP).



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- The meeting placed emphasis on a number of factors that require the attention of us as government. Amongst those we have agreed to have an integrated implementation plan by June 2017.
- In line with the policy, there is commitment to promote the following:
 1. Sanitation services Norms and Standards.
 2. Innovative sanitation solutions to reduce reliance on water borne sanitation systems.
 3. The importance of proper health and hygiene practices and public education.
 4. Promotion of investment opportunities in sanitation linked with new industries and skills development (in line with engagements at World Economic Forum 2017).
 5. Joint - planning covering all three spheres of government for public infrastructure supported by strict regulation and compliance enforcement.

Drought

- The meeting also received an update on the drought and we wish to state emphatically that we are still faced with a dire situation as a country and remain drought stricken. Moreover we are a water scarce country.
- We appreciate that there has been some good rains that have had a slight impact on our water reserves and brought about some hope towards a recovery **but** we again emphasise that we are still firmly in a drought and have not recovered significantly to relax the restrictions to water use that we have implemented in a number of provinces.
- Currently, our average dam levels across the country are at 58, 9% up by 2, 1%. This is of the 211 dams we monitor as a department. The provincial figures stand as follows:
 1. Eastern Cape - 58,6%
 2. Free State - 54%
 3. Gauteng - 87,1%
 4. Kwazulu-Natal - 43,6%
 5. Limpopo - 57,5%
 6. Mpumalanga - 64,9%
 7. North West - 67,5%
 8. Western Cape - 41,4%



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- We are witnessing slight increases in eight of the nine provinces, as earlier stated, this does not translate to any indication of a recovery from the drought currently. We only anticipate a full recovery in about three years time.
- There are still serious and dire water challenges in several towns in KwaZulu-Natal (Greytown, Vryheid, Ugu areas), Eastern Cape (Butterworth) and other provinces that are running on very low and close to non-existent water supplies. We are working on creating interventions and considering a number of solutions such as desalination plants for our coastal towns similar to those we commissioned to save Richards Bay.
- Our message as the MinMEC is to encourage citizens to continue using water sparingly and responsibly and to adhere to the restrictions where they may be in place. As government we will continue with the interventions we have been implementing to support communities in need and to respond to leaks and water wastage timeously to minimise losses.
- Lastly, the MinMEC has been presented with the APP of the department to appreciate and gain insight into the high impact and priority infrastructure projects of the department over the Medium-Term Strategic Framework.
- The intention is to once again ensure that as we plan for regional bulk infrastructure, the provinces together with Municipalities also begin to plan for the reticulation and other linked and related infrastructure that shall benefit from our schemes and is reliant on them for development.

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