



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

Minister Mokonyane dismisses OUTA claims on Gauteng's water future

25 July 2017

The Minister of Water and Sanitation, Nomvula Mokonyane, has noted concerns relating to the water security of Gauteng and the threats of legal action made by the Organization Undoing Tax Abuse (OUTA) in an 'open' letter to the Minister issued on 19 July 2017.

OUTA has made requests for information relating to Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) and in its statements has threatened to bring legal action against the Minister making allegations of maladministration.

The Minister at once rejects with contempt the allegation that she has deliberately delayed the implementation of Phase 2 of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project and more-so that this was done in order to advantage certain preferred service providers.

The actions of OUTA are a rehash of old allegations for which no evidence or proof have been advanced to substantiate them. Some of the matters contained in the allegations were investigated by the former Public Protector and a ruling exonerating the Minister in this regard made.

"The review of the procurement policy for the development of Phase 2 of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project was necessitated by the need to ensure the meaningful economic participation of Basotho nationals and black-owned South African entities in the project. This was a transformation imperative of the governments of both, Lesotho and South Africa", said Minister Mokonyane.

The amended procurement policy was finalized and adopted by both South Africa and Lesotho in May 2016 giving way for the advertisement and appointment of service providers on the design contracts of the Polihali Dam and Tunnel.

Phase 2 of the LHWP is targeted for completion in early 2025 with storage of water in the new Polihali Dam commencing in 2024. Efforts are being made to mitigate delays necessitated by the amendments to the Procurement Policies and the several changes in government in Lesotho over the last 5 years.



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Minister Mokonyane wishes to assure citizens once more that government is doing all in its power to guarantee the water future of our country and of reference in this instance, Gauteng as the economic hub of the country.

"LHWP Phase 2 is but one of the several interventions aimed at securing the water future of Gauteng. The long-term solution to Acid Mine Drainage will begin to yield results in 2019/20 augmenting the current water supply in Gauteng significantly with treated Acid Mine Water. This is but another of the projects aimed at augmenting our water supply systems.

"The replacement of ageing infrastructure, early detection of leaks and repairs, the use of alternative water saving technologies by industry and the implementation of efficient demand management systems by local authorities are all necessary tools in ensuring that we guarantee the water future of our country.

"People and communities must also ensure that they use less water and curb wastage in order to build a sustainable water future. Our national average water use per person far exceeds that of individuals in other developed and developing nations", said Minister Mokonyane.

A response to OUTA will be forwarded on matters raised however, the allegation that the water future of Gauteng has been deliberately jeopardized is once again dismissed and assurance is provided that all efforts and plans are in place and are being implemented to guarantee a sustainable water future for South Africa.

END

Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation

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