



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

Minister Mokonyane on Western Cape provincial drought declaration

22 May 2017

The Minister of Water and Sanitation, Ms. Nomvula Mokonyane, notes and supports the declaration by the Western Cape government of the province as a disaster area due to drought.

The current Western Cape drought event has been classified as severe and requiring of a coordinated inter-governmental approach to address the immediate needs of communities and industry whilst fast-tracking short, medium and long-term solutions to the water scarcity challenges facing the province.

"The Western Cape water situation is critical and we must urge all stakeholders to respond immediately and take corrective measures that will reduce water consumption and appreciate the new reality. The biggest change we need to see is a reduction in domestic consumption and an elimination of wastage" says Minister Mokonyane.

At the Water Indaba held last week, Minister Mokonyane committed to the continued support of the province by the department, working jointly with the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) and with the guidance of the department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, to help ease the effects of drought in the province and to lend support based on the experience accumulated over the last three years of drought interventions in other provinces.

The declaration by the Western Cape brings the number of provinces that have declared drought disasters over the last three years to eight (8). There have been significant improvements in dam levels in a number of the other provinces owing to good rains and as such, there has been a review of restrictions and other drought intervention measures initially implemented.

Minister Mokonyane has once again emphasized the need for local government to implement by-laws relating to water use management, immediately maintain and repair infrastructure to



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curb water leaks and related losses and to explore means to reuse and recycle water in an effort to curb consumer consumption.

"This declaration does not mean new money is available to implement infrastructure projects but allows for a reprioritization within the current provincial budget and that of municipalities to respond to the drought event and support interventions agreed to at the Indaba."

"We have identified the Table Mountain Group Aquifer, the Berg-River Voelvlei Dam augmentation scheme and the exploration of new technologies such as desalination, water reuse and rain water harvesting solutions to assist build a water secure future for the province and to mitigate the current effects of drought" said Minister Mokonyane.

Dam levels in the province are below 20.1% (as on 15 May 2017) with an unoptimistic weather outlook noting that the winter rainfall season may not yield enough rain to immediately improve the dire water situation of the province.

A team comprising officials from the Department of Water and Sanitation, the National Disaster Management Committee working with the province and local government has been actively engaged in ensuring that short to medium term solutions are fast-tracked to guarantee the water security of the province in the long-term. This team will continue with its work and update the relevant Minister's, Premier, provincial and local leaders.

On Thursday, 25 May 2017, the Minister will visit the Theewaterskloof Dam in Villiersdorp to assess first-hand the state of dams in the province and to receive a briefing prior the commencement of dredging at the dam, planned for 03 June 2017.

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