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Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

Minister Mokonyane sends teams to assess and support Western Cape water security and drought response measures

07 March 2017

Cape Town: Minister of Water and Sanitation, Ms. Nomvula Mokonyane, today (07 March 2017) met with the Western Cape provincial Minister of Local Government, Environment and Development Planning, Mr. Anton Bredell along with representatives of the City of Cape Town, in an attempt to find short, medium and long-term solutions to the current drought and water challenges facing the Western Cape and the City of Cape Town in particular.

In January 2016, five municipalities in the Western Cape declared drought disasters and these have been followed by a '*local state of disaster due to drought conditions*' declaration by the City of Cape Town in line with section 55 of the Disaster Management Act (Act 57 of 2002).

Currently, the department of water and sanitation manages 42 dams within the province and as of today (07 March 2017), the provincial dam levels are at an average water storage level of 30,2% and dropping by between 1,4 - 1,6% weekly. Six of these dams supply the City of Cape Town, serving 3,2 million people and 14% of GDP.

In line with the serious threat to water security posed by the drought, the City of Cape Town is currently implementing level 3B water restrictions and similar restrictions are being applied across the province by various municipalities. These dictate a 20% restriction on domestic water use and 30% for agricultural users.

"The meeting agreed there was an immediate need to establish a Restrictions Management Committee convened by the province and inclusive of all three spheres of government to immediately create a centre of coordination on all restrictions and drought related matters."

"This will lead to a Joint Operations Centre (JOC) to ensure we save available water, improve management of the water supply systems, mobilize society to adhere to restrictions and



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collectively, we consider and approve augmentation projects that will assist to safe-guard water availability for the City of Cape Town and the province" said Minister Mokonyane.

Technical-Teams from national, provincial and local government will over the next seven (7) days meet to consider options for the approval of the Minister, her provincial counterparts and Mayors on augmentations projects and possible acceleration of key infrastructure projects such as Voelvlei Dam project currently undergoing an Environmental Impact Assessment process and the Table Mountain Group Aquifer project led by the City of Cape Town.

"Given the challenges the province faces, we must utilise and implement projects that provide access to a water mix that covers augmentation through surface water, supports ground water exploration, promotes the harvesting of rainwater and drastically decreases water losses through leaks, illegal connections and aged infrastructure. Those are the options we will consider in the next two weeks once the teams have concluded some of the preliminary work" added Minister Mokonyane.

"We need to reduce our depletion rate of dams to at least 1% per week as opposed to the current 1,6% per week if we are to safely navigate the water shortages and drought over the next winter and summer periods. To this end, collaboration with all stakeholders including the agricultural sector in the main is important." concluded Minister Mokonyane.

Through the provincial Minister of Local Government, Environment and Development Planning, engagements with the agricultural sector, as significant water users, will be undertaken to ensure that the responses to the current water challenges are inclusive of all water users in the province.

Once the Restrictions Management Committee commences its work, weekly updates on water use and savings across all municipalities affected will be provided publicly to ensure citizens and users remain consistently informed of the water situation within the province and City of Cape Town.

Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation

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