



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

DWS Minister Nkwinti paid a first visit to the Hartbeespoort Dam

15 June 2018

Hartbeespoort: The Minister of Water and Sanitation Mr Gugile Nkwinti, this morning arrived at the Northern Operations Office of the DWS situated at the Hartbeespoort Dam.

The purpose of Minister's visit was to receive an on-site briefing on operations around the dam, one of the DWS' critical infrastructures within the North West Province. The visit was also attended by the Speaker of Madibeng Local Municipality, the MMC for Economic Development, CEO and one member of the Magalies Water Board.

The briefing centred mainly around issues of water quality and land matters which have become a source of discontent within the community and affecting tourism which is critical for the economic activity within the area

Minister Nkwinti remarked on the necessity of the visit by saying: "The issue of the state of the dam is raised mainly at the Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation, as well as through the media. As a member of the Presidential Infrastructure Co-coordinating Commission (PICC) I also receive lots of reports on old infrastructure and particularly dams; Harties being one of those that are mainly referred to, especially the pollution in the water. This visit is meant to listen to the officials working with and on the dam, and also see the conditions for myself."

The presentation that was prepared detailed the life of the dam from inception and all matters that affect the dam, population growth, old and ageing infrastructure, complex socio-economic conditions in township settlements such as failing infrastructure, as well as land matters. These are by no means all that affect the dam and its performance as a source of the resource and therefore the need to protect it.

The Hartbeespoort Dam is strategic as it receives the inflow from both the City of Johannesburg and City of Tshwane. It also forms part of the Mokolo-Crocodile Project that is still under conceptualization. It is a source for the Brits Water treatment Works that is crucial for Madibeng Local Municipality.

Magalies water Board Member Mr Vilakazi made a point that the dam has become inaccessible for the community close by due to high fees being charged by the supposed owners of recreational facilities.

Ms anet Muir responded to the work the DWS is doing where access must be married to issues of safety including safety of the safety officials around the dams. Mr Chadwick Lobakeng, CD of DWS NW office made an input with regards to the pollution and reducing the nutrients and the algae itself, which activities have the potential for job creation. This is by re-establishing the original natural food chain within the catchment and the river, ultimately reducing the cost of treatment.

What also came out of the presentations is that there is a need for the infrastructure in municipalities upstream of the Dam that need to be ensured that they comply with the licence conditions. It is hoped that working together with the three Gauteng Metros is essential in this regard. There is a possibility that the review of these licences will assist in ensuring that such



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compliance through sufficiently treated effluent together with properly operating wastewater treatment works will reduce treatment costs for the Madibeng Local Municipality.

MMC Maimane made the point that Minister's visit is most welcome and that it will enhance the cooperation between the DWS and the Municipality. He said, "The issue of access to the dam also has racial undertones that cannot be afforded. There is also some information that the Municipality received about the possibility of a land claim that might impact on the dam and its use. We would like to see you more Minister so that we can move together.

In closing Minister Nkwinti said: "we have to ensure that there is one government programme that includes all three spheres of government. We want to formalize a provincial joint Tactical centre. Priorities must be determined at a local level. SALGA must also play a part as it is central to local government activities.

"As long as the conditions in the communities around the water sources do not change, there will continue to be difficulties that go on forever. Upstream must be properly identified as to where the pollution emanates from. The technical team must inform the politicians accordingly.

"Officials of the DWS underestimate themselves. This is something that I am discovering as I go around the country and engaging with officials. There needs to be a change in attitude of the officials and release themselves. We must also get rid of the silo mentality as dictated by red tape. This is a systemic challenge that can only be changed by officials themselves. As a Minister I need to be informed by the technical training that officials have undergone.

"This meeting must happen quarterly and must be hosted by the Municipality to enhance working together. I also want solutions, including the change of social conditions upstream".

END

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