



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

DWS today presented on its 2017/18 Quarter 4 performance at the Portfolio Committee

12 September 2018

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) today presented on its 2017/18 performance at the Portfolio Committee. The DWS delegation was led by the Acting Director-General, Ms. Deborah Mochotlhi whilst the Portfolio Committee was as usual led by the Chairperson, Hon. Lulu Johnson.

In response to the issues raised by the members of the Portfolio Committee, there was emphasis on the Blue and Green Drop Reports, which were explained as regulatory tools. It was also important to understand that these are but some of the regulatory tools used by the department which culminate in a State of Water annual report. This report is used for planning leading to the required consistency in outcomes.

The discussion at the meeting indicated that the Blue and Green Drop Reports need serious attention and should be released consistently. It was also explained that the reports were based on performance/compliance. Due to financial constraints there was a decision to conduct these reports for partial compliance instead of full compliance of municipalities. Metros were in the main found to be performing better. Beyond that the DWS supported less capable municipalities to lift their performances.

The Committee raised interest in relation to the approved establishment of nine instead of nineteen catchment management areas (CMAs). A previous idea of having one CMA has been reviewed and ultimately seven were seen to be needed.

The DWS was encouraged to further look into and ensure the necessary transformation of the irrigation boards and Water Use Authorities. The department indicated that there is a roadmap available in this regard, that it is important that irrigation boards must be more representative, and ultimately exist in the interest of the catchment.

The matter of the three pieces of legislation regulating the work of the department was raised, i.e. the National Water Act, the Water Services Act, and the Water Research Commission legislation. The DWS indicated that there was evolution towards one law.

Acid Mine Drainage as indicated by mine water pollution from the coal mines in Mpumalanga remain a grave concern. The DWS works strongly to maintain the balance of protecting the environment and raising jobs availability for economic activities. The water use licensing regime has to be resilient, with particular care not to negatively impact the environment, doing this jointly with the Departments of Mineral Resources and Environmental Affairs.

The matter around water quality is also imbedded in Chapter 8 of the Master Plan, with particular emphasis on the restoration of ecological infrastructure and dysfunctional wastewater treatment works.



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On the Master Plan, Chapter 12 also looks at the financial requirements across the sector. This includes the need for R33 billion per annum, notwithstanding what the private sector can avail.

The committee members also raised the issue of the impact of the drought on the economy, especially considering the STATSSA as reported recently.

In terms of water security, it is important to know that SA is an arid country, therefore with a reliance on dams. There is a need to undergo intricate operations analysis to indicate what restrictions can be needed from time to time.

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project issue was also raised especially with regards the Polihali Dam. It was reported that procurement is being sorted out, and that the BaSotho and RSA residents are meant to benefit first from the project.

The matter of Climate Change was addressed by indicating that a strategy is in place focusing on adaptation.

End

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