



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

Minister Nkwinti addressed Technical stakeholder meeting on Mzimvubu Water Project

14 September 2018

Today, the Minister of Water and Sanitation, Mr. Gugile Nkwinti met with the Technical stakeholders in government at Calgary Museum and Conference Centre just outside East London to discuss progress on the Mzimvubu Water Project.

In his welcoming remarks, Minister Nkwinti mentioned that, yesterday, he met with the Director-General from National Treasury and they agreed that the Chinese Government can invest in the Mzimvubu Water Project but the agreement on the building of the dam because capable South African companies cannot be overlooked in the process of the actual building of the Project. As such, phase one of the project will be done solely by South African companies and is envisaged to commence on 14 January 2019. Furthermore, the Department will budget for the construction of the dam in the 2019/2020 financial year.

Mr. Trevor Balzer presented some of the benefits that will come from parts of the project such as the Ntabelanga Dam that will supply potable water to 539 100 people in Joe Gqabi, O.R Tambo and Alfred Nzo District Municipalities which could rise to 726 600 people by 2050. "Approximately, 2868 hectares of high potential land suitable for irrigated agriculture will benefit from the Project. The Lalini Dam hydropower plant could generate 23 Megawatts of base-load hydropower. An estimated 600 jobs will be created during catchment rehabilitation. About 6700 jobs will be created during construction", said Mr. Balzer, Deputy Director General: Strategic and Emergency projects in the department. Further, he indicated that the TCTA developed a project charter that needs to be revised because it was based on a slightly different funding model. "The project governance arrangements need to be discussed so that all stakeholders have a very clear understanding of the expectations", said Mr. Balzer. Consequently, he shared that the total estimated construction cost of the entire project is around R15 230 million as at 2017. The entire project includes the construction of advance infrastructure such as access roads, Lalini Dam and hydro-electric power, Ntabelanga Dam, Ntabelanga Water Treatment Works, Bulk Water Distribution System as well as associated buildings.



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The Eastern Cape Provincial Head of the Department of Water and Sanitation, Mrs. Portia Makhanya presented on some of the work that has been done behind the scenes on the Mzimvubu Water Project. “The project management office has been secured around Mthatha. The Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA) was appointed by the department to assist in sourcing more funding for the project”, Mrs. Makhanya said. Further, in her presentation she touched on the project governance structure. In addition, she spoke about some of the key issues to be addressed as the project progresses which include the relocation of households where the dam will be built, the funding model, procurement plan, etc.

“We must improve communication with communities. In other words, they must be briefed all the time about the Mzimvubu Water Project on both the progress and challenges, if any”, said Deputy Minister Pamela Tshwete.

“The Project has a socio-economic emphasis. It is also not a local scheme but rather a Regional scheme that will serve the three District Municipalities, i.e. Joe Gqabi, Alfred Nzo and OR Tambo. We hope that we will also deal with then systemic challenges bedeviling local government which include lack of Operations & Maintenance capacity. This will need close co-operation with COGTA.

“We have also approached the President with the intention of declaring all water and sanitation infrastructure as National Key Points. This will ensure all the necessary capacity will be availed for the optimal operations of water and sanitation infrastructure. We also have to address the issue of negative perceptions that emanate from a lack of understanding on the progress and challenges of any project underway”, said Minister Nkwinti in his closing remarks.

End

Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation

For more information contact: Mr. Sputnik Ratau (Departmental Spokesperson)
082 874 2942 / 012 336 6813 / rataus@dwa.gov.za

Mr. Thandile Ngcume (Communication Services)
082 659 1422 / 043 604 5418 / NgcumeT@dws.gov.za

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