



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### MEDIA STATEMENT

#### **The Department of Water and Sanitation celebrates Africa through water co-operation**

24 May 2018

The Department of Water and Sanitation today, Friday 24<sup>th</sup> May, joins millions of South Africans and Africans broadly, to celebrate Africa Day promoting peace and harmony across the continent and the world over. Africa Day marks the beginning of a quest for the unity of the continent and for the political and economic emancipation of its people, as well as co-operation among the African peoples.

South Africa has signed several bilateral agreements with Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries on shared water-courses that strengthen political ties with her neighbours. In addition, South Africa is a member of the African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW).

The purpose of these African bilateral relations, both with countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and those outside the region, is to strategically develop, promote and manage international resources between countries through bilateral co-operation instruments in line with relevant policy and legal prescripts. Bilateral co-operation within the continent is underpinned by the desire to advance the African agenda and to ensure sustainable development.

South Africa shares major river systems with six immediate neighbouring countries, namely Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, Namibia and Zimbabwe. In order to regulate the use of water from these rivers, a number of bilateral commissions and committees have been established between South Africa and her neighbours.

The current focus of Africa bilateral relations within the water sector relate to the implementation of existing strategic partnerships, especially with countries where co-operation agreements and tangible bilateral projects exist, particularly within SADC. The focus of bilateral relations further includes forging new strategic partnerships and relations with countries outside of SADC, including the Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) countries.

South Africa continues to actively promote and contribute to sustainable development, peace, security and democracy through good water governance in its shared basins. This is against this background that water security is one of the key security imperatives of the state.

The alignment of DWS activities to the country's foreign policy will continue to form the cornerstone of the guiding principles of the international co-operation within the water sector as led by International Water Support.

#### **Relations with Namibia**

Currently, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), together with the Department of International Relations and Co-operation (DIRCO), are installing 101 boreholes to the tune of R50 million in five regions of Namibia as part of South Africa's intervention in that country's



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drought relief programme. Rand Water has been appointed as an implementing agent to install the boreholes.

Rand Water was appointed as the implementing agent in Kunene (21 boreholes), Kavango (31 boreholes); Ohangwena (16 boreholes), Omaheke (11 boreholes) and Zambezi (25 boreholes).

This comes after the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the government of the Republic of South Africa and the Namibian government in June 2015 on the provision of financial assistance for the drought relief to Namibia in terms of the African Renaissance. The Namibian Drought Relief project is currently underway in the above mentioned regions.

The DWS offers technical support while DIRCO offers funding oversight. The Namibian Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF) opted to utilise the funding assistance by equipping diesel-driven mono pumps as well as solar driven electric pumps to the as many drilled boreholes as possible. The two countries have also set up the Violsdrift-Noordoewer Joint Irrigation Authority (JIA). The JIA is an irrigation scheme operating as an international institution on both the South African and Namibian sides of the Lower Orange River, which is an international border between the two countries.

### **Botswana**

Bilateral co-operation between the two countries has ensured that the Shared Watercourses of Marico, Crocodile West and Limpopo Rivers are managed optimally and promote economic development of the sub-region. South Africa and Botswana signed a Cross Border Water Supply (CBWS) agreement in 2008 to facilitate water supply across the border between the two countries. It also provides a framework for water supply arrangements between water supply authorities, water service providers and/or individual water users in both countries. In addition to the cross border supply, the two countries participate in the joint water quality and aquatic weeds project in the Upper Limpopo River Basin.

### **Lesotho**

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project II will ensure improved water security, economic upliftment due to improved availability of water, and job and income opportunities for consultants, contractors, as well as individual experts. The project serves as a model for bi-national water transfer schemes.

### **Swaziland**

The two countries engage on matters relating to the Komati and Maputo basins. The Lavumisa Water Supply Scheme supplies water from the Pongolapoort Dam in South Africa for irrigation in Swaziland. This is part of the compensation for an area of Swaziland inundated by the Pongolapoort Dam.

### **Relations with Zimbabwe**

Both countries have agreed to commission a study to access the potential of Zimbabwe's water resource basins that can be developed with a view of supplying South Africa with any access water from Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe recently completed water infrastructure which are critical options for the Zimbabwe to South Africa Water Transfer Project. Other sources of funding from entities such as the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) and the World Bank are being explored to expedite the planning and development process for the joint project.



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As a member of AMCOW, South Africa contributes and promotes regional co-operation, social and economic development, and poverty eradication in Africa through the adequate management of water resources and provision of water services. South Africa serves on the AMCOW Executive Committee (EXCO) and on its Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). AMCOW provides policy development leadership on water issues and challenges at a continental level, whilst serving as an advisory body to the African Union Heads of States and Governments.

ENDS

**Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation**

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**[www.dws.gov.za](http://www.dws.gov.za)**