



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# MEDIA STATEMENT

## **Water use efficiency is key to the future of South Africa**

8 May 2018

Water use efficiency by all South Africans is central to the sustainability of water availability for domestic and industrial use, speakers said at a capacity building workshop in Pretoria on 8 May 2018.

The two-day workshop was organised jointly by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), Embassy of Denmark and the National Cleaner Production Centre to find solutions on efficient water management and its use by industries in the country.

Addressing delegates, the Director of Water Resource Planning in DWS, Patrick Mlilo, said South Africa is a water scarce country where 5,3 million houses (35%) still do not have access to reliable clean drinking water. However; despite the staggering figure, the per capita water use in South Africa is 2,75 and the department is trying to bring it down to 1,75 in line with the international requirement for countries that did not have sufficient water.

Mlilo painted a gloomy picture of the country's water situation caused among others by adverse climate change and the population explosion.

"As a country, we are moving expansionism to the mature phase of development", he said

He pointed to a host of factors that contributed to water reduction such as pollution from agriculture, mining, industry, energy and sanitation. The inefficient water management practices, lack of infrastructure maintenance that leads to unaccounted for water and weak governance also contribute to water scarcity.

"Water scarcity could deteriorate rapidly as the supply contracts and demand escalates due to growth, urbanization, inefficient use, degradation of wetlands, water losses and reduction in yield due to climate change," Mlilo said

The DWS Scientific Manager in Branch Water Services Regulation, Chief Directorate Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement, Namisha Muthraparsad, highlighted the main principles of equitable access and optimum use and protection of resources as the cornerstone of the National Water Act. Muthraparsad further elaborated on how the policy environment is influencing government outcomes in terms of behavior change towards water conservation and demand management, resource protection, improved water use from limited resources for improved socio-economics.

Muthraparsad provided an overview of the water use regulation framework, highlighting the issues considered in the authorisation and compliance monitoring and enforcement of water use in the country. She indicated that water use requires improvement in the country in order to further develop new industries for improvement of the economy.



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Other speakers included Dr Jo Burgess, Scientific Manager at the Water Research Commission, who said that pricing did not necessarily reduce water efficiency.

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