



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

Weekend rains fill up Gauteng dams

24 October 2018

Gauteng dams are currently the fullest in the country following heavy rains that fell in most parts of the province last weekend. A weekly report by the Department of Water and Sanitation indicates that dams recorded a whopping 98% level, a 12% increase from the same period last year.

The country's dam levels were recorded at an average 73,2%, a 10% improvement from the same period in 2017 when most parts of South Africa were recovering from a severe drought. A total 10 dams across the country registered their levels at 100% and more during last weekend's downpours.

Vaal Dam, which straddles across Free State, Mpumalanga and Northern Cape boasts an average 85%, is likely to increase its levels if more rain comes down in the next few weeks. The dam supplies water to Gauteng to oil the wheels of South Africa's economic hub. The dam, with a capacity of 2 603 cubic metres, has the advantage of receiving water through the Lesotho Highlands Water Scheme.

Hot on the heels of Gauteng is Free State and Northern Cape who recorded 85,6% and 81,8% respectively during last week's intermittent rains.

At a workshop to review the department's readiness for the summer rains, hydrologists estimated that the coming festive season will receive less than normal rains because of a weak El Nino. A strong El Nino phenomenon accounts for a wet season that is often accompanied by floods in affected areas.

As the wet season draws to a close in Western Cape, dam levels remain stable at 73,4%, a double figure improvement from levels in the same period in 2017. Chief among the performing dams are Misverstand, 104,7%; Eikenhof, 100,4%; Berg River, 99,2%; Voelvie, 96,8%; Steenbras, 88,9% and Steenbrasdam Upper at 81,2%.

Eastern Cape recorded an average 72,2% dam levels, bringing relief to the drought-stricken Gamtoos Valley in the western part of the province. Three months ago Kouga Dam was hovering around 6%, sparking fears that the region was fast approaching Day Zero, a hydrological term that is used to describe no drop of water. However, Nqweba Dam is by far the lowest in the province with 7,3%. Lang and Glen Melville dams boast the highest levels in the province with 98,3% and 98,2% respectively.

KwaZulu-Natal has 2 867 cubic metres in stored water, almost half its annual capacity of 4801,8 cubic metres. The province recorded 59,7% dam levels which is a fractional drop from its last week's 60%. The Umgeni System which comprises, Midmar Dam, Nagle, Albert Falls, Inanda and Hazelmere dams dropped slightly from 67,3% last week to 66,9% this week. However, the figure represents 10% improvement in the water levels of the system. Midmar Dam which is supplied by Umgeni River, recorded the highest levels at 95,4% this week.



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The Natal-Midlands system that comprises nine dams recorded an average 84,9% dam levels as opposed to the northern parts of the province that recorded 52,3% this week.

North West and Limpopo recorded combined 65,1% levels, a one percent drop from last week. Of these, Buffelspruit in Belabela recorded a whopping 100,2% and is threatening to reach higher levels if more rains are received in the area in the next few days.

Mpumalanga and Limpopo registered a joint 61,9% this week, a drop from 62,4% last week. Both provinvinces have 1 149,6 cubic metres water in their combined storage of 1 857 cubic metres capacity.

Even though most parts of the country look stable, the Department of Water and Sanitation would like to caution water users not to get carried away and use water sparingly.

End

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