



MEDIA STATEMENT

South Africa has enough water in storage to sustain it through the dry winter

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South Africa currently has 23 809,2 cubic metres of water in storage, at the moment enough to sustain it through the coming dry winter season, according to a weekly report of the Department of Water and Sanitation.

However, the department warns consumers to use water sparingly as the country may run dry if the precious resource is used negligently. For the past two weeks the country has maintained stable dam levels at 73,7%, a 6,2% drop compared to the same period last year, the report indicated.

South Africa has entered a hydrological cycle that ushered in the cold and dry winter in the hinterland; while the Western Cape has started its expected wet winter season that hopefully endowed with persistent heavy rains. For the moment, however, the province has its average dam levels at 33,7%.

At 96,8%, Gauteng has the highest dam levels in the country although it has dropped by 6% compared to the same period last year when dams had reached their full capacity of 100,4%. Free State and Northern Cape dam levels were recorded at 88,4% and 81,6% respectively, while Mpumalanga retained a stable 74,2%

Although vast parts of the Eastern Cape received heavy rains in the past two weeks, the regions of Gamtoos Valley and Makhanda remained a source of concern as they are almost dry of potable water. In Makhanda residents rely on tankered water for basic use as the local river is left with the lowest levels. The average levels in the province have dropped fractionally to 62,4% this week.

Ten days ago the holiday town of Port St John's was visited by heavy floods that destroyed part of the infrastructure and displaced hundreds of local residents. Nqweba Dam which is supplied by the Sundays River in Nelson Mandela Bay, is virtually empty at 1,5%

KwaZulu-Natal, which was also hit by heavy storms that resulted in flash floods on the outskirts of Durban, retained a mere 65,2% of provincial dam levels. Hydrologists attributed this to vast amounts of rain water flowing to the sea. The province's Premier, Willies Mchunu, estimated the structural damage from the floods at R660 million, with 51 residents having died as a result.

The report stated that Northern Cape recorded a dam level increase of 5% although there is a 10% drop compared to the same period last year. The Boegoeberg Dam which is supplied by the Orange River, recorded a whopping 116,4% level, an increase of 8% from last week.

The Free State has become an antithesis of the weather, with one part of the province drenched in heavy rains whilst another has been afflicted by the drought. Farmers who have lost stock and crops as a result of the drought have appealed for government's intervention by declaring the region as a disaster area.





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The same situation prevailing in the North West has forced the towns of Mahikeng, Zeerust and Lichtenburg to rely on tankered water for survival.

In Limpopo, the Nandoni Dam in Vhembe District continued to maintain its capacity levels, despite the absence of rain in the past two weeks. Other dams that maintained 100% capacity are Magoebaskloof, Hans Merensky in Phalaborwa and Tonteldoos. Tzaneen Dam however, is at its lowest level due to a wall that is being renovated. This is a temporary measure that affects citrus farmers and consumers that use water for drinking, cooking and washing.

End

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