



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Enquiries: R Mathye
Telephone: 072 263 0745
Reference: 6/2/2/6

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 2327

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(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 23)

2327. Ms S A Buthelezi (IFP) to ask the Minister of Water and Sanitation:

Considering that his department recently announced that the residents of the cholera-affected Hammanskraal can expect clean, drinkable water from taps only by March next year, and noting that the issue of a lack of clean, drinkable water is not new, nor is it happening only in Hammanskraal, what steps has his department taken to date in other areas that are facing a similar problem in order to prevent the specified issue from spreading?

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MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION

Raw water is drawn from rivers and dams and treated in Water Treatment Works by either water boards or municipalities before it is supplied to households. The treated water is required by law to meet drinking water standards set by the South African Bureau of Standards in South African National Standard (SANS) 241. Municipalities and water boards are also required to conduct regular tests on the treated water to ensure that it complies with the standard.

After the water has been utilised by households, it goes through the sewer system to municipal Waste Water Treatment Works. The Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) processes the sewage and effluent is discharged into the rivers. The effluent from WWTW is also required to meet minimum standards, set by the Department of Water and Sanitation.

In terms of SANS241 and the norms and standards issued by DWS under the Water Services Act, when the tests carried out by a municipality indicate that the water supplied poses a health risk, the municipality must inform its consumers that the quality of the water that it supplies poses a health risk. It is important to note that cholera is not only spread through polluted water. Outbreaks of cholera are caused either by people ingesting sewage-polluted water, or by faecal-oral means; through poor hygiene, eating contaminated food, or by coming into

contact with the faeces of an infected person. Sewage pollution of rivers can also result in cholera bacteria entering the rivers via the faeces of an infected person or people.

In terms of the National Water Act, the Department issues compliance Notices and Directives to municipalities that are not compliant with norms and standards, instructing them to remedy the non-compliance. Where the Notices and Directives are not acted upon, the Department institutes legal action against the municipalities.


The Department is also supporting and intervening in many municipalities across the country with grant funding to address infrastructure deficits and improve water and sanitation services. The Department, collaborating with Water Boards is also assisting the municipalities with technical expertise and management support.

The Department is in the process of strengthening its role as the regulator of water services. This includes developing more comprehensive and more stringent norms and standards for water service and standardising its regulatory processes so that it is more consistent with its regulatory actions.


To conclude, the results of the 2023 Watch Reports also indicate that legislative reforms may be required to ensure that water service providers are professionally managed, capable, efficient and financially viable institutions. The Department is in the process of consulting with water sector stakeholders regarding such reforms.

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DRAFT REPLY: RECOMMENDED/ NOT RECOMMENDED/ AMENDED


DR SEAN PHILLIPS
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
DATE: 11/7/23

DRAFT REPLY: APPROVED/ NOT APPROVED/ AMENDED


MR SENZO MCHUNU, MP
MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION
DATE: 21/07/23