



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR ORAL REPLY

QUESTION NO 379

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 29 AUGUST 2023
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 26)

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

What (a) factors has his department found to be the main reasons for the deterioration of the water and sanitation systems in the large metros since the award-winning days of the eThekweni Municipality in 2014 (details furnished) and (b) plans has he put in place to turn the declining situation around?

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MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION


(a) The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), has found the main reasons for the deterioration of the water and sanitation systems are:

- Infrastructure is in a poor condition, caused by a lack of maintenance, which is in turn caused by non-prioritization of budgets for maintenance and operations as well as poor billing and revenue collection, which are in turn caused by poor leadership and management.
- Non-adherence to standard operating processes for drinking water treatment and wastewater treatment, caused by municipalities failing to hire the necessary staff with the correct skills and qualifications as well as poor management in the municipalities. These factors are as important as infrastructure condition, if not more important, as contributors to poor performance.


- DWS, the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) and Department of Human Settlements (DHS) allocate approximately R20 billion per annum in water and sanitation infrastructure grants to municipalities, but often this money must be used to repeatedly repair and refurbish infrastructure which has deteriorated rapidly due to a lack of maintenance by municipalities.
 - Vandalism and metal theft are an increasing cause of infrastructure failure, but this is partly a result of inadequate security being provided by the municipalities.
- (b) The DWS released its Green Drop report in 2022, which indicated that the performance of many municipal wastewater treatment systems has deteriorated. The report identified 334 wastewater systems in a critical state of performance, in 90 municipalities. Blue Drop assessments are also being conducted by the DWS to all Water Services Authorities to measure all aspects contributing to a sustainable Water Services Business, and provision of safe water to the citizens of South Africa. The Blue Drop report is due to be released at the end of September 2023. Beyond producing the Blue and Green monitoring reports, DWS is engaged in several initiatives aimed at addressing the problem of pollution of rivers by municipal wastewater treatment works in the following ways:
- Firstly, the Minister has agreed on action plans to address infrastructural deficiencies in many of the worst performing municipalities, and DWS is assisting municipalities with funding from the Water Services Infrastructure Grant and Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant to address these deficiencies.
 - Secondly, DWS is taking regulatory action in terms of the National Water Act, including issuing non-compliance notices, directives, taking civil action, and as a last resort, laying criminal charges against polluting municipalities.
 - Thirdly, DWS is drafting amendments to the Water Services Act to strengthen its role as the regulator of municipal water and sanitation services and to enable the Minister to intervene effectively when there is non-compliance with directives to stop pollution.

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DRAFT REPLY: RECOMMENDED/ ~~NOT RECOMMENDED~~/ AMENDED


DR SEAN PHILLIPS
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
 DATE: 04/09/23

DRAFT REPLY: APPROVED/ NOT APPROVED/ AMENDED


MR SENZO MCHUNU, MP
MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION
 DATE: 8/9/23