



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Reference: 6/2/2/6

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR ORAL REPLY

QUESTION NO 672

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 07 NOVEMBER 2023
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 42)

★672. Mr N G Myburgh (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Sanitation:

Whether, given the rapid deterioration of waste water treatment facilities in most parts of the Republic, he will consider advising the President to declare a National State of Disaster on the specified facilities to facilitate their urgent revamp in order not only to avert the loss of life due to communicable diseases associated with sewage such as cholera, tetanus and Hepatitis A, but also to arrest the increasing damage to the environment and the growing pollution of dams, rivers, and waterways across the Republic; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, by what date is it envisaged that he will advise the President?

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MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) is not of the view that the President should declare a National State of Disaster based on the deterioration of waste water treatment facilities to facilitate an urgent revamp of sanitation infrastructure across the country. Municipalities are allocated funding in terms of the Division of Revenue Act, and various grants from national government which are all intended towards development of infrastructure that is the responsibility of municipalities, including water and sanitation infrastructure.

The DWS contribution to the local government sector for water and sanitation is in the form of R12 billion for the 2023/2024 financial year through the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant and the Water Services Infrastructure Grant from RBIG and WSIG; as well as technical advice and management support facilitated through the Department and the water boards.

In addition to the DWS grants, municipalities also receive national government transfers for water services as follows:

- R6.6 billion for the 2023/24 financial year allocated Municipal Infrastructure Grants from the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
- R2.6 billion for the 2023/24 financial year allocated to Metropolitan municipalities through the Urban Settlement Development Grants deployed by the Department of Human Settlements
- For the current financial year municipalities have also been allocated R40 billion through the Equitable Share for water and sanitation

Apart from these grants, the water sector has to be self-financing through revenues from the sale of water and services rendered to users. Water sector institutions must be financially viable and sustainable through implementation of user charges and sound revenue collection systems. A portion of these revenues should then be utilised for the ongoing operation and maintenance of sanitation infrastructure so that wastewater treatment plants and associated infrastructure do not fall into disrepair.

The current challenges with wastewater systems management are not only due to infrastructure backlogs but also the lack of maintenance of the systems by municipalities. The Department is of the view that the root cause of deterioration of wastewater treatment facilities is the poor performance of Water Service Providers at the municipal level. The Department is intending to address this through the Water Services Amendment Bill which will include provisions which will specify that:

- Water and sanitation services to only be provided by an entity (municipality or other entity) that has an operating license
- Minimum competency and minimum performance levels for water service providers linked to gazetted minimum norms and standards for water and sanitation services
- Municipalities must fulfill license conditions if they provide the service itself, or must contract with a licensed WSP

The is also intended to strengthen enforcement through the amendment of Section 63 to enable enforcement through directives (as is done in National Water Act).

The Water Services Amendment Bill has been approved by Cabinet for gazetting for public comments.

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


DR SEAN PHILLIPS
DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 10/11/23

DRAFT REPLY: APPROVED/ ~~NOT APPROVED~~/ ~~AMENDED~~


MR SENZO MCHUNU, MP
MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION

DATE: 17/11/23