



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR ORAL REPLY

QUESTION NO 78

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 28 FEBRUARY 2023
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 5)

78. Mrs M R Mohlala (EFF) to ask the Minister of Water and Sanitation:

What were the reasons for (a) opening only 12 of the sluice gates of the Vaal Dam instead of the rest when the dam was overflowing and (b) the delay in opening the sluice gates from the onset when the rain was very heavy?

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MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION


- a) The Hydrology Unit within the Department monitors the runoff in rivers and inflows into the dam, which then informs the level of discharge required to bring the system in balance and minimises the flood peak. The hydrological information justified the gradual opening of sluice gates. Gate 1 was opened on 11 February and the opening of additional gates was done gradually until 12 gates were opened on 18 February 2023. The peak inflow was recorded at 3 025m³/s; therefore, it was determined that only 12 gates were required to achieve a discharge of about 2 400m³/s to offer some flood attenuation. Even though the option to open more gates was available, this was deemed not necessary.
- b) The primary purpose of the Integrated Vaal River System dams is for storage to ensure water security for the area served by the system. The outflow from the Vaal dam (within the design of the controlled spillway) is in response to measurable actual runoff in the river system and not weather predictions which cannot be volumetrically measured since this would place undue risk on water security. Flood attenuation is a secondary function, which is done within the risk parameters of the structural integrity of the dam wall.

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DRAFT REPLY: RECOMMENDED/ NOT RECOMMENDED/ AMENDED


DR SEAN PHILLIPS
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
DATE: 3/3/23

DRAFT REPLY: APPROVED/ NOT APPROVED/ AMENDED


MR SENZO MCHUNU, MP
MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION
DATE: 10/03/2023