



## INTERNET ARTICLE

### **Drought-stricken winter rainfall areas to experience worse impacts as summer sets in-DWS's drought committee told**

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The winter rainfall areas are facing a grim future as the country moves deeper into the summer months.

This emerged during the Department of Water and Sanitation's Drought Steering Committee Workshop that is currently underway at department's Roodeplaat Training Centre outside Pretoria.

The two-day workshop, which takes place from 02-03 November 2017, aims to map out a way to get a sense of the impact, prepare for the drought and to mitigate its effects especially as they are still being felt in the Western Cape.

Outlining the purpose of the workshop, Mr Fikile Guma, who is the DWS's Chief Director: Water Information Management said the committee was initially established to ensure the awareness and effective coordination by the department in addressing the challenges of the drought.

Mr Guma said the vision behind the existence of the committee was to provide centralised data and information locus that could be used to test the efficiency and efficacy of the drought intervention plans.

"The main reason for the existence of the committee is to enable the charting of progress in the implementation of drought mitigation measures and the reinforcement of support for drought mitigation interventions," Mr Guma said.

Asking thought-provoking questions which the attendees should find answers to during the two-day workshop included what is it the department was going to change in the way in which it did things to improve management of the drought, as well in the ability to improve the ability in accounting for the use of funds and the impact of drought mitigation.

Not least amongst some these questions was whether or not the committee was still relevant or a different structure needed to be established.

One of the presenters, Dr Dennis Dlamini, who is attached to Chief Directorate: Water Information Management presented a bleak picture of the winter rainfall regions which are already going through an extreme drought. This is so because the winter rainfall season is ended but the rainfall received in September was lower than



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in the previous seasons. The drought will likely intensify due to the predicted high temperatures which will increase evaporative loss in already low volumes of water in rivers and in storage during summer. The drought situation in the western part of the country will get worse before it gets better.

He said contrary to the situation expected in the winter rainfall regions, summer rainfall areas can expect normal to above normal rainfall; hence, drought is expected to continue abating in most summer rainfall regions.

Dr Dlamini cautioned: “Above normal maximum temperatures in the South and West coasts are expected to worsen the prevailing drought through high evaporation.”

He added that above normal (hotter) daily temperatures were predicted for North West, Gauteng, Limpopo and large parts of the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and Free State during the early summer. Cooler maximum temperatures are predicted in most parts of the summer rainfall regions during mid-to late summer.

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