



INTERNET ARTICLE

Looming water cuts the last resort as DWS aims to recover debt

30 November 2017

Municipalities owe a total of R10.7 billion to the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) for water supply, of which R 3.9 billion is owed to the Water Trading Entity (WTE) of DWS, and R6.8 billion is owed to various water boards.

This was the opening shot as Minister of the Department of Water and Sanitation, Ms Nomvula Mokonyane, was briefing members of the media on Monday, 27 November 2017 in Rosebank, Johannesburg.

The media briefing, which boasted a broad representation from various media houses aimed to provide clarity on the water cuts as minister stated that, “The Department and the Water Boards have, at various levels, sought to resolve the outstanding debt matter using various structures within the State.”

However; these efforts, including the Inter-Governmental Relations framework, have failed to yield the desired outcome and the Department has sought legal action to recover debt owed.

Minister Mokonyane said, “To date we have issued 59 summonses and have 6 judgments granted by the courts against the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality, OR Tambo District Municipality and the Phumelela, Dr Pixley ka Isaka Seme, Emfuleni, Nketoana Local Municipalities”.

Of the top 30 municipalities who have outstanding debt, Vhembe District Municipality is ranked the highest – with R 642 876 734 owed.

Mr Paul Nel, the Department’s Acting Chief Financial Officer said, “Although the Department is focusing on the top 30 municipalities, there is a total 186 municipalities that have been handed over for non-payment”.

Minister Mokonyane further added that, “If WTE had these resources, they would be able to refurbish the existing pipelines and do more drilling including the support of the Cape Town’s desalination plant without requesting for further funding”.

As her parting shot Minister, Mokonyane said: “We will never temper with the constitutional obligation of ensuring that everyone has access to water, hence we have also brought in



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extra support during the drought and are also assisting the Western Cape during the current dwindling dam levels which are resulting in severe drought.”

DWS will therefore terminate water supply to 30 municipalities should they fail to pay their outstanding debt by 8 December 2017.