



## INTERNET ARTICLE

### Water Imbizo promises to accelerate the provision of water in uMkhanyakude District

18 May 2023

The Department of Water and Sanitation recently held a two-day Water Imbizo in the uMkhanyakude District Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal to provide progress reports on the implementation of bulk water projects and to outline plans on what is being done to avert severe water challenges.

The Water Imbizo was characterised by robust engagements where the Ministry of Water and Sanitation, as well as the district's leadership heard from members of the public who did not mince their words on the need to improve the provision of water in the area and surrounds.

One amongst the matters which came out strongly from the public was the employment of locals during bulk water projects implementation. The public urged the department to ensure that locals, especially the youth, are prioritised when employing people to work on projects which are meant to benefit their communities.

In his response, Deputy Minister David Mahlobo assured community members that there is a standing directive in the Department of Water and Sanitation to ensure that during implementation of projects, 30 percent is set aside to support small businesses and micro enterprises.

"The laws of this country are very clear in the support of small businesses as well the creation of job opportunities when work is being carried out in various projects implementation. That is why in the Department, Minister Senzo Mchunu has made that directive that we need to include unemployed women and the youth in all that we do," said Deputy Minister Mahlobo.

He also sternly warned against some business groups who do not want to do the work but demand 30 percent of remuneration when projects are being implemented.

"These groups often halt projects from being carried out and thus impacting negatively on government work. This is totally wrong and is met with the distaste with which it deserves. Government will not be threatened by unlawful criminals who want to have their way. There are clear guidelines as set out by the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA). Businesses have to be well organised and work collaboratively with local government in this regard," Deputy Minister Mahlobo emphasised.

The Deputy Minister called on residents to also play their part by protecting water infrastructure

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from vandalism, and report those responsible. He further said that the Department would not hesitate to act against people who brazenly vandalise the already ailing and vulnerable water infrastructure.

Meanwhile, Minister Mchunu shared plans of the refurbishment of the Mtubatuba Water Treatment Works which currently treats water at 13 mega litres per day and now will be refurbished to treat at least 20 mega litres per day.

“We have the Mtubatuba Water Supply Scheme which is supplied with water from the Mtubatuba water treatment plant. The water source is the Mfolozi river as well as from production boreholes. Potable water is pumped Northwards through a 600mm diameter steel rising main to the Mtuba Heights reservoirs,” said Minister Mchunu.

“This Water Imbizo is not for show, we are not here to just make empty promises and leave. We will come back and to assess the progress of projects, as we have been doing in many parts of the country,” Minister Senzo Mchunu concluded.

The Imbizo was supported by uMkhanyakude District Mayor, Cllr Sphile Mdaka, traditional leaders led by Inkosi Ntokozo Mkhwanazi as well as senior the Mhlathuze Water interim Board members.

**Lebogang Maseko**

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