



INTERNET ARTICLE

Deputy Minister Mahlobo applauds Gauteng Premier for tackling water challenges head on

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Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation, David Mahlobo, has applauded Gauteng Premier Panyaza Lesufi's bold step to try and tackle water challenges in his province head on. Mahlobo was speaking at the Gauteng Councillors' Imbizo held at Birchwood Hotel in Boksburg, east of Johannesburg on Friday 13 September 2024.

The gathering addressed the pressing issues of water security in the province's municipalities, caused mainly by constant population growth which has negatively impacted on infrastructure and water supply management issues within the province's municipalities.

In his remarks, Deputy Minister Mahlobo highlighted the pivotal role that water plays in social transformation and economic development. He said that a neglect of water infrastructure and the management of water supply not only hinder progress but also poses significant water security threat to the province.

Mahlobo further emphasised that Gauteng province has faced ongoing water supply challenges due to increased water demand by the residents.

"Alarmingly, there is no municipality within the province that has achieved a consistent 100% or 99% water supply to its citizens without disruptions. We cannot allow the situation to continue because water will become an impediment to social transformation and economic growth, and can also become a security threat within the province", he stated.

Mahlobo stressed the necessity of a collective mindset shift regarding water management and its conservation within the province. He pointed out that the behaviour exhibited by most domestic and institutional water users reflects a concerning lack of awareness about the sustenance of water as a finite and vital resource.

"Most of the councillors are here because of their executive mayors. Do not let the decision makers to deter your goal of ensuring service delivery in your communities. I hope that when you conclude your sessions in this Imbizo, you will have a different attitude towards matters of water supply and you will handle water and sanitation issues differently," emphasised Mahlobo.

The Imbizo served not only as a platform for sharing concerns but also as a springboard for actionable solutions. Mahlobo has identified several key strategies, which includes loss of water due to infrastructure decay, to address the water challenges facing Gauteng. He also highlighted fixing sewer spillages and ensuring that sewage systems are operating efficiently as crucial to ensure sustainable water availability and its management.

Mahlobo's approach not only addresses immediate concerns but also lays the groundwork for sustainable long-term water management practices.

SOUTH AFRICA IS A WATER-SCARCE COUNTRY





"Residents and municipalities must adopt a practice that promotes responsible water consumption, which can help alleviate pressures on the existing water supply. Moreover, technology should be integrated to monitor and safeguard water infrastructure, and this can enhance management efforts and prevent future crisis", said Mahlobo.

During the Imbizo, municipality councillors from various municipalities voiced their concerns regarding water and sanitation issues. Councillor Mariana Kruger from Ward 12 in Midvaal local municipality praised Rand Water for their substantial contributions toward improving water supply.

Kruger noted the importance of collaboration between local government and water entities. "We must maintain an open communication and contact with our counterparts to ensure effective water supply and sanitation services", she said. This sentiment resonates with Mahlobo's call for better coordination among municipalities to resolve the ongoing water challenges faced by Gauteng.

Mahlobo said councillors are in a unique position to engage with their communities and to raise awareness about water conservation, and advocate for necessary infrastructure changes. The Deputy Minister's call for a change in relationship dynamics surrounding water management can empower local leaders to take initiatives that prioritize water security for their residents.

Mahlobo's acknowledgement of Gauteng Premier Panyaza Lesufi's efforts signals a united front in addressing one of the province's most critical challenges of water management. By focusing on collaborative solutions, promoting responsible consumption, and enhancing communication among municipalities, Gauteng can take significant strides toward achieving water security.

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