



INTERNET ARTICLE

Deputy Minister Mahlobo reinforces stance on Polluter Pays Principle and calls for harsh actions to be taken against perpetrators

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The Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation, Mr David Mahlobo, has sent a stern warning against water polluters and those who continue to vandalise water infrastructure across the country to face the full might of the law should these transgressions persist.

Deputy Minister Mahlobo was speaking at the Presidential Partnership Dialogue, which was held on Wednesday, 17 April 2024 by the National Business Initiative (NBI) in conjunction with the Ministry of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) in Sandton, Johannesburg.

Speaking on a panel discussion themed: “**Collectively driving implementation to achieve results**,” Deputy Minister Mahlobo did not mince his words when expressing the challenges that the pollution of water sources has placed on the water quality and security of the country.

“One of the biggest challenges that we have in the water sector is the pollution of water sources, not only does this impact the sector, but it has a significant bearing on the environment and the economy as well,” he said.

“In as much as we are calling out and holding municipalities accountable for non-compliance of the discharge of effluent to rivers, which often leads to increased risk of waterborne diseases such as cholera, algal blooms and invasive alien species growth, we are not shy to do the same with the private sector” he added.

“There are private companies that are at the centre of water pollution, much as we are singling out municipalities at the moment. We know who they are, and we are enforcing compliance and accountability. Having said this, I must add that we are implementing the Polluter Pays Principle (PPP), specifically within the waste discharge system,” he said.

The PPP is a way of requiring the pollution transgressors to pay for the costs of cleaning up or remedying the pollution effects and/or avoiding pollution in the future.

Deputy Minister Mahlobo added that the Department of Water and Sanitation, working together with law enforcement agencies, will not hesitate to act harshly against those who pollute and vandalise water infrastructure in many parts of the country.

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Presidential Partnership Dialogue was themed: **“Co-creating a Functional and Effective Society: Public and Private Sectors Collaborating to Strengthen Local Government,”** and was centred around co-creating a functional and efficient society, and how the public and private sectors can collaborate to strengthen local government.

Speaking on the water sector partnerships, Deputy Minister Mahlobo highlighted that the Department of Water and Sanitation has put in place public private collaboration agreements with industries such as the mines, these include the Vaal Gamagara Bulk Water Scheme in the Northern Cape where the Mines have invested billions), for joint funding of infrastructure projects which will simultaneously provide bulk water to industry and reticulated water to communities.

Another example of such collaborations with the mining sector is the agreement reached with Lebalelo Water Users Association (obo Mining Houses) on an implementation model called the Olifants Management Model (OMM) for a water services project within the Limpopo Province. Funding Support has been received from the Infrastructure Fund and Mining houses on a 50%-50% funding model.

Deputy Minister Mahlobo further extended appreciation to Deputy President Paul Mashatile, who is appointed to lead a task team established to address water challenges in the country, and said that the Ministry and officials of the Department are readily available to work alongside the task team at any given point.

Lebogang Maseko

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