

**Discussion with Municipalities on the Eradication of Bucket Sanitation Systems in
Formal Areas**
Introductory Remarks by Mrs LB Hendricks, Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry
Birchwood Executive Hotel and Conference Centre, Boksburg, Gauteng
13 July 2007

My Colleague, Honourable Minister Mufamadi
MECs: Local Government and Housing
Mayors and Councillors
Municipal Managers
Government officials and Sector partners
Programme Director
Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Introduction

I am pleased to be part of this special and important gathering here today. I am once again encouraged to be engaging with senior provincial and local government decision makers as well as senior officials from the sector departments and Service Delivery Facilitators in our drive to eradicate buckets from formal established areas.

The representatives of the Free State, Eastern Cape and North West present here today will recall our recent engagements where we held bucket eradication focused summits. These provinces were earmarked due to the magnitude of the backlog in their province, and the summits were based on the same objectives of this gathering here today.

2. Bucket Eradication Summits

The purpose of these special bucket eradication summits were not just to hold talk shows, but to strengthen intergovernmental relations as an enabler of integrated service delivery; and secondly as an opportunity for political leaders and senior government officials to commit ourselves to ensuring that the targets are met. Action plans were developed and are being implemented by the affected provinces. Much as my department have had long-standing good relations with municipalities, I have noted that these summits have opened doors and strengthened effective collaboration between municipalities, provincial governments and my regional offices. For example in the Eastern Cape, the Premier's Co-ordinating Forum, in collaboration with the DWAF Regional Manager has established an intervention Task Team responsible for ensuring co-ordinated support to municipalities.

And in the Free State, which constitutes the largest backlog, I am proud to announce that after the summit there now exists a much stronger relationship between the provincial, local governments and my regional office - I must commend the province, for "walking the talk" following the "*Pledge of Commitment*" that we signed during the bucket eradication summit held in October 2006. The MEC has played a remarkable role in giving strategic direction, leadership and is committed to make the programme a success. The province has launched a bucket eradication strategy and has an accelerated delivery plan specific to buckets and a bucket eradication communication strategy in place.

I have noted at the provincial summits the importance of participation by all spheres of government, and I am again pleased to see here today that MECs, Mayors, Councillors and relevant senior officials as well as other stakeholders are present, and are making water and sanitation services their business. We all have designated roles and specific powers in the value chain of water and sanitation services; and we are therefore accountable to deliver these services. What is important is for us to recognise how our different responsibilities in this sector can be brought together in an integrated way, so that we are able to make a meaningful impact in delivery of services. I believe that the water sector has made great strides in intergovernmental relations and we should be able to share our experiences with other sectors.

3. Achieving the Targets

Programme Director, this gathering could not have come at a better time as we are left with just five months to achieve the targets, and we need to move with speed; I see today as a national "summit" where we engage with all provinces and are able to share lessons, collectively discuss and agree on solutions for issues of a similar nature. In addition, I see reinforcement of earlier discussions held during the provincial bucket eradication summits as it is important that we do not re-invent the wheel today but move forward

on the basis of these earlier discussions. Today also affords us with an opportunity to review progress made, discuss the challenges and identify where interventions and support are required.

As we engage in discussions today we must appreciate the urgency required, and the need to embark on a “business **unusual**” approach. The President and Cabinet have strongly emphasised the need to achieve the targets, and deliver basic services to our people.

The latest figures that I have received are that there are about 109 000 household in established formal settlements still subjected to the bucket sanitation system. The Free State continues to retain the largest sum of buckets (74%), followed by the Eastern Cape (16%), whilst the remainder of the backlog is shared between the Northern Cape (6%), the North West (3%) and finally the Western Cape (1%). I am also informed that more than half of the backlog in the Free State is in the construction phase, whereas the entire backlog in the North West and Western Cape are in the Design/Tender phase. A national view indicates that 60% of buckets are in the construction phase, and 40% of buckets are in the design/tender phases. Clearly there is still a great deal of work to be done before the end of the year.

As there are other significant development projects underway such as the 2010 FIFA World Cup, housing delivery, as well as the other water and sanitation targets, we must appreciate the tremendous pressure and competition on the limited resources across the delivery chain.

In response to these and other challenges my department had deployed 21 engineers with technical expertise to support bucket eradication by municipalities. Since then a further 10 engineers have been deployed to the Free State municipalities as an extension to the seven already deployed under this support initiative. These engineers are a resource to support you and I therefore urge municipalities to maximise the use of these skills, as they are able to provide hands-on support in all phases of the project cycle. The contact person for this resource is Ms Tamie Mpotulo, the National Sanitation Programme Manager based at our national office in Pretoria.

4. Challenges

Ladies and Gentlemen, during the provincial summits a number of challenges and areas of concerned were raised. If we are to achieve the targets then it is imperative that we deal with these challenges. I would briefly like to discuss some of these challenges as I feel they are relevant for today’s discussions.

Firstly, the issue of what is being targeted and the actual backlog of buckets in established formal settlements. It has been brought to my attention that housing delivery programmes and informal settlements have been earmarked though this programme. As much as buckets are not an acceptable service wherever they exists, we need to prioritise the qualifying buckets.

Secondly, procurement challenges have been raised as a bottleneck. Such challenges can be resolved locally but relies on the “business as unusual approach” referred to earlier. While I am not advocating flouting of procurement regulations we are all aware that improvements can be made to supply chain management policies within municipalities, and arrangements can be made to have additional or *ad hoc* sittings of council and tender committees. Such measures would pave the way for speedy implementation of the infrastructure programmes.

Thirdly, there is the challenge of by-in. We need to recognise that sanitation delivery constitutes both the physical Infrastructure delivery as well as social issues. To overcome this challenge we need to communicate; there needs to be constant communication amongst officials and politicians, political ownership by councillors, and communication with communities about the different technological options. One of the social issues that should not be ignored is health and hygiene education for communities. Environmental health officers need to be brought on board in all water services projects to ensure effectiveness and suitability of the services that we provide.

Fourthly, is the skills challenge, and I have spoke earlier about DWAF support but I believe and have stated in previous summits that the possibility should exist for secondments to take place between municipalities. Such a proposal requires a mind-shift and councils taking a view that we are not too proud to accept assistance from those that have been successful in eliminating the backlog so that we can ensure all of our people receive access to basic services.

Fifthly, the issue of finance is always raised as a key challenge. As I have mentioned in previous summits the solution is not always to just throw money at the problem and hope that we have toilets by the end of the year. If funds were the only problem I still doubt that any municipality would have sent back unspent Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) funding. When we do not spend existing MIG funds and do not have

effective and efficient financial management systems in place, then National Treasury will remain hesitant to allocate additional funds to such municipalities. Further, where shortfalls have been experienced MIG should not be seen as the only source of funding. We commend those municipalities that have explored other funding streams for example the Provincial Infrastructure Grant (PIG), municipal own funds, or loans from DBSA; I encourage those present here today to start looking at these options and I am sure there are lessons we can share on such matters. It might be necessary for us to have a session on why it is viable to use loan finance to provide the funding shortfall for these basic services – if we support the view that provision of water and sanitation is a prerequisite for and closely linked to sustainable economic growth then we will achieve a significant return on such loans, as they are an investment in our communities.

The last challenge I would like to raise is the demand for water borne sanitation systems and the rejection of technology options such as Ventilated Improved Pit-latrines (VIP). Communication and the use of appropriate communication methods become critical in addressing this challenge. Some municipalities present here today are faced with this challenge whilst others have control over the situation. We again hope to share lessons on appropriate technology options that could be effectively used; some might allow for upgrading from VIPs to water borne at a latter stage, others might be a French drain, or a urine diversion and composting of the waste. The Ukhahlamba District municipality in the Eastern Cape successfully installed an interim solution whilst bulk infrastructure is planned for the future to allow water borne systems. This has been effectively communicated with the beneficiaries. Any solution however must be based on clear feasibility studies to ensure its appropriateness and sustainability. My department is ready to assist with technical expertise around this matter and alternative technology options.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, in our quest to achieve the targets we must not lose sight of the other important objectives of Government, and ensure Local Economic Development and the creation of sustainable jobs for the unemployed; we must use these initiatives to create a better life for our people by targeting the poor, women, youth and the disabled.

I encourage you all to actively participate in this working session so that we can move towards more effective and efficient action plans. Let us all take note of the different roles we play in the delivery chain, identify the bottlenecks we are facing, and see how they can be resolved to make this programme a success.

Finally, I am pleased to hold hands with my colleague, the honourable Minister Mufamadi in our shared responsibility towards meeting these targets.

I thank you.

PROGRESS***Buckets Eradicated: Progress between February 2005 and June 2007***

PROVINCE	Buckets removed April '05 to March '06	Buckets removed April '06 to March '07	Buckets removed April '07 to June '07	Buckets removed April '05 to June '07	Buckets remaining as at End June '07
Eastern Cape	11,742	22,818	13,154	47,714	17425
Free State	16,685	27,698	8,831	53,214	80911
Gauteng	3,844	200	0	4,044	0
Mpumalanga	11,737	3,435	0	15,172	0
North West	8,220	11,731	670	20,621	3600
Northern Cape	8,221	5,024	1,149	14,394	6084
Western Cape	927	841	332	2,100	1073
Totals	61,376	71,747	24,136	157,259	109093