



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

ADDRESS BY MINISTER NOMVULA MOKONYANE, MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION AT THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE DESALINATION PLANT IN RICHARDS BAY, CITY OF MHLATHUZE MUNICIPALITY, KWAZULU-NATAL.

12 MAY 2017

SPEAKER'S NOTES:

INTRODUCTION:

- The National Development Plan (NDP) has called for a fundamental reshaping of South Africa in transforming all the vestiges of apartheid in all manifestations.
- It states that by 2030, the state should have made meaningful progress in reviving rural areas, and in creating more functionally integrated, balanced and vibrant urban settlements
- In so doing, South Africa can begin to reverse the legacies of the spatial injustices of the past, as well as to halt the perpetuation of urban sprawl and poorly integrated development. And in addition, also deal with the challenges of the un-served communities.
- The water sector is critical for government's transformation and development objectives. Providing safe and accessible water supply and sanitation services profoundly affects poor people's daily lives.

- Water is life and has a catalytic cross-cutting impact on socio-economic development as well as peace and stability. Sanitation is dignity. Thus, water is enshrined as a basic human right in our Constitution.

BACKGROUND:

- Due to the sustained drought conditions experience the KZN the Provincial Cabinet issued a drought disaster declaration in December 2014.
- The uMhlathuze Municipal Area and surrounding rural areas were supplied with potable water from Lake Mzingazi, Lake Cubhu, Nseleni River (Nsezi Lake) and Mhlathuze River.
- It is also of importance to note that as a result of the drought, all of the natural sources levels were low and not suitable for use.
- The Goedertrouw Dam which is the main supply to Richards bay level dropped to a dangerously low level of 16% at August 2016.
- Severe Water restrictions at level 4 were implemented in the Mhlathuze Water Supply System supplying the City of Mhlathuze and areas of Uthungulu District Municipality.
- Through the emergency Water transfer scheme which was activated in July 2014 Water was then pumped from the Thukela River into the Goedertrouw Dam to ensure the dam does not fail.
- The Department of Water and Sanitation together with the affected municipality focused on changing the water mix with greater emphasis on water harvesting, re-use of return flows, utilizing ground water by drilling of boreholes.

- The Umhlathuze Joint Operations Centre was set up to manage the drought conditions with all relevant stakeholders including the municipality, NGO's, business, agriculture.
- It was against this backdrop of the aforementioned challenges that the department deemed it necessary to provide a short term intervention.
- And this was done by the introduction of the 10 *Megalitre/day* desalination plant in order to augment the domestic water supply and avoid further hardship experience by the communities in and around Richards bay.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RICHARDS BAY DESALINATION PLANT:

- The Goedertrouw Dam is currently at $\pm 30.2\%$ capacity (as of 11 April 2017) and has not picked significantly after the rainy season. The region has been declared a disaster with level 4 water restrictions in place.
- Other alternatives to give equivalent capacities of 10ML/day and more (i.e. boreholes) in coastal areas have been proven not to be feasible due to poor geological and hydrological condition.
- Richards Bay is seen as a powerhouse of Zululand. There are several international companies operating in the area and are reliant on a secure supply of water for their production.
- These companies employ the vast majority of workers in the region. Should the area run out of water, in all likelihood these companies will close, leaving the area with a serious unemployment situation which will affect the national GDP.

Details of the Scope of Work

- Supply and install a 10ML/day desalination plant for Richards Bay.
- The desalination plant to be made up of a series of packaged 1ML/day Desalination plants giving a total of 10ML/day.
- Connecting plant to the water reticulation in Richards as an additional source of water.

Beneficiaries of the Desalination Plant

- The whole town of Richards bay and surrounding communities are to directly benefit from the sea water treated by the Richards Bay Plant.
- The direct beneficiaries include:
 - Mandlazini community,
 - Nseleni
 - Khoza
 - Mzingazi
 - Mbonambi Rural water supply scheme.
- The water reservoirs in the region have greatly improved since the operation of the desalination plant adding water security and reliability.
- The reservoirs include:
 - Mapolwane
 - Khoza
 - Nseleni
 - Mandlazini
 - Meerensee
 - Brackenhams

These reservoirs have moved from an average of 55% to 90%.

- Indirect beneficiaries include business and agriculture and other communities who benefit from the remaining Goedertrouw Dam water source as the desalination plant is generating a saving of 10ML/day from the dam.
- Security of water has improved due to improved storage levels and it is anticipated that the community livelihood will improve due to portable water directly in areas of stay.
- Business confidence and job security has improved due to reliable water supply and the implementation of water crisis projects in the region. A positive investor outlook has increased in Richards Bay.
- Water restrictions will remain at Level 4, which means that rather than throttling (Restricting) water from the source we are giving power to the communities to conserve water at level 4.
- This gives a more balanced water control as throttling from source disadvantage far end communities.

Launching of the Desalination Plant

- We are delighted to announce that the desalination plant is now 100% complete and functional. In fact, the plant started to produce water on the 14 November 2016 and a total of 10ML/day production was commissioned by 25 January 2017.
- Overall progress 100% with expenditure to date at R301million. Project implementation achieved ahead of time with a time saving of two months.

The Thukela Goedertrouw Transfer Scheme

- As part of the augmentation of water resource in the area we are implementing the Thukela Goedertrouw Transfer Scheme.
- This project, whose construction started in April 2017, aims to add 210ML/day in Richards Bay by November 2017

CLOSING REMARKS:

- Generally, the water crisis projects in Richards Bay are progressing well and the erstwhile delay of the Thukela Goedertrouw Transfer Scheme have been attended to.
- It is also apt to reiterate that government implement infrastructure on behalf of and for the benefit of communities and it is equally incumbent upon the communities, themselves, to safe-guard and protect same from vandalism and any form of criminality.
- The entity charged with the responsibility of managing this infrastructure has an obligation to ensure that the infrastructure does not reach a state of disrepair due to lack of proper budgeting and funding of the Operations and Maintenance programs.
- Most importantly, there is dire need for coordination of infrastructure investments in targeted spaces across spheres, sectors and with stakeholders; and
- Government across the various spheres should strive to overcome persistent backlogs and inequities in service delivery through improved intergovernmental planning and budgeting processes.

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