



MEDIA STATEMENT

MINISTER SISULU ADDRESS THE MEDIA ON THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE DROUGHT

***“Water is everybody’s business and is a resource
without substitute”***

IMBIZO ROOM, PARLIAMENT

03 DECEMBER 2019

Ladies and gentlemen of the Press

Good afternoon

The prevailing drought conditions and water distribution uncertainty has necessitated that we convene this press briefing. I wish to express my greatest gratitude that you have made it here in the interest of communicating the dire situation and our strategic response to it.

Drought being a natural phenomenon is a normal recurrent feature of climate arising from deficiency in precipitation (rain & snow) over an extended period of time, usually a season or more.

1. South Africa and the Region in effect, is impacted negatively upon by the less than world average rainfall it receives. To a large extent this causes immeasurable strain on the delivery of water services to the populace, due to the less than reliable rainfall, not forgetting the impact of Climate Change resulting in abnormal climatic conditions.
2. The recent drought, the worst for many decades, has also not helped the situation as we can see the very negative impact on the country's



economy, especially on the agricultural sector, affecting food security and exports.

3. As the water and sanitation sector, we need to look at new ways of providing the services that we are responsible for.
4. Recent drought that devastated most parts of the country has highlighted the need for a more elaborate facility that can be applied to consistently guide management of water supply and mitigation against risks due to drought. This is also to facilitate equitable water supply under normal conditions, while mitigating vulnerability by improving preparedness to cope with drought conditions.
5. We have to be cognisant of the fact that no economy or community can thrive without good, toxic-free, reliable and secure water services, which is the bedrock of any livelihood. It is for this reason we have always maintained that water should be everyone's business.
6. South Africa remains a water scarce and a water wasting country; water availability endangered by among other factors, insufficient water infrastructure maintenance and investment, recurrent droughts driven by climatic variation, inequities in access to water and sanitation, deteriorating water quality, and a very short supply and availability of skilled water engineers, scientists, hydrologists, geo-hydrologists and resource economist, etc. Therefore, a social impact that seeks to build a critical mass of skills in the water sector will have to be facilitated.
7. Drought is not purely a physical phenomenon that can be defined by the weather but result when demands for water exceed the availability of water. It can also be caused by a change in water quality as that



decreases the supply of useable water. There are different types of drought that can happen, i.e. **Meteorological, Agricultural, Hydrological and Socio-Economical**. While it is not necessary to delve deep into the causal effects of each type of drought, it should be abundantly clear that it places a strain on both human life and economic value chain.

8. The recent drought, since 2014, that devastated most parts of the country has highlighted the need for a more elaborate facility that can be applied to consistently guide management of water supply and mitigation against risks due to drought.
9. This is also to facilitate equitable water supply under normal conditions, while mitigating vulnerability by improving preparedness to cope with drought conditions. However, the best way to mitigate our vulnerability is to save and preserve the little available resource that we have.
10. The major question we have to answer is: in case of any form of drought, what do we do?
11. All of us as water users and the public at large need to evaluate our performance and, as important, adjust our own behaviour and mentality towards water.
12. Some of the tools we need to look at include: revitalising the Blue-, Green- and No-Drop monitoring programmes, ensuring regular reporting on the performance of individual municipalities in their delivery of safe water and sanitation services as well as on their reduction of losses in their water supply systems; encourage municipalities that have set targets to restrict their water use and to publicise their results on a



monthly basis. This will help to make water users more conscious of the supply challenges that we face, how they can contribute and whether we are being successful.

13. We cannot afford to ignore the impact of climate change, of growing populations and changing economic activities; all these make the planning of our long term water management more difficult. The Master Plan that we launched last week serves as the plan to ensure the security of water supply in the country.

14. We have to continue to undertake hydrological monitoring (this will improve the resilience and sustainability of available sources in the face of increasing climate variability and change); refurbish and expand the network of gauging stations on which this activity depends; re-establish and expand the routine monitoring of water resource water quality (ensuring that this information is maintained in publicly accessible information management systems).

15. We can all attest to the fact that the effects of drought are always felt in a number of factors including: Hunger, Famine, Thirst, Disease, Wildfires, Social conflict, War, Migration or Relocation.

16. Unlike the relatively finite water resource of SA, usage is still growing, thus the expectation is that this means strain, especially during drought likely to intensify on the resource.

THIS IS WHAT WE WILL DO:

- Implement Drought Operating rules



- Institute Borehole Drilling and/or rehabilitation
- Water tankering from available sources
- Rainwater & Fog Harvesting
- Protection and use of springs
- Cloud seeding
- Evaporation suppression
- Desalination of brackish groundwater or sea water and
- Effluent treatment and re-use, etc.

17. In the Long-term we will implement measures to enhance water security against drought, and these include:

- Water storage and transfer developments;
- Water infrastructure like dams and conveyance pipelines are developed to redistribute water over time and space.
- Review and promulgate restrictions within the legislation to restore and protect ecological infrastructure
- Developing & integrating other sources like groundwater, desalination, re-use, etc. with surface systems also enhances water security. As we all know that desalination remains an expensive form of water security and only the coastal provinces would be beneficiaries of desalination.
- Other long term measures to mitigate drought include monitoring systems, enabling policies, working maintenance logistics, as well as well-coordinated institutional arrangements, among others.

18. As mentioned from time to time and over the years, that South Africa still has higher water consumption per capita than world average, and yet we still continue to use water irresponsibly.



19. To balance requirements and supply, South Africa will need to reduce water demand, as well as increase supply for a growing population and economy in order to ensure water security by 2030, in line with the NDP.
- This will be done by encouraging behavioural change and ensuring that the public participates in government programmes to reduce use and preserve water.
 - Develop and implement water conservation and water demand strategies in all water use sectors.
 - This will be done through Public-Private Growth Initiative projects;
 - Reducing average domestic consumption to 175 litres per person per day).
20. Optimise the water mix which is currently strongly dominated by surface water: This will be done by increasing some groundwater use, re-use of effluent from waste water treatment plants, water reclamation, as well as desalination and treated acid mine drainage.
21. A very critical factor is that of Reducing Non-Revenue Water (NRW) and water losses in all Water Service Authorities to 15% below the business as usual.
22. The new normal will and must include the use of new technology in our very important agricultural sector. I am encouraged by the interest of this sector to find not just new ways of doing things but also to be participants in finding lasting solutions to the issues of water scarcity.
23. We must consider our use with our mind on the sustainability of our resources for our future generation. Our children and their children are depended on this generation to do right, use water sparingly and to be water wise, to assure and ensure water security for the future.



24. We will continue to be stringent in the application of the law and the prescripts of the water use licenses as issued across the board, because anything less will be tantamount to the dereliction of duty on our part. This will lead to a great social capital, where stakeholders and government are in a sound partnership in each and every community.

25. We will continue the critical joint efforts and cooperation with the departments of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform, COGTA, Finance, together with our entities the water boards, irrigation boards, MISA, SALGA, and so forth to ensure all round compliance and support to one another.

Looking at the individual provinces under stress:

- a) The Department assessed drought conditions in each province and came up with a number of short, medium and long term interventions. The Department also consider the level of ground water in each of the affected areas within a provinces;
- b) The interventions are grouped based on specific themes. Some of the interventions are already been implemented;
- c) In the Eastern Cape Province, there are dams that are below 10% of water and these dams have been categorized as critical. There are drought relief programmes that are being implemented in the Province;
- d) 3 Ml/d of water is transferred from east of Makhanda to the west of Makhanda to augment the 0.5ML of water from boreholes;
- e) The Free State Province has twenty dams and only one dam is in a critical state. Boreholes were drilled in the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality and 26 of these boreholes were equipped;
- f) In the KwaZulu-Natal Province, there is no dam that is in critical state but there are over 200 areas that have been affected by the drought conditions;



- g) In the Limpopo Province, there are five dams that are in critical state. The Olifants River Water Development Project will bring water from Flag Boshielo Dam to Mogalakwena;
- h) In the Mpumalanga Province, there are ten dams that are below 10% of water and these dams are categorised as dams in critical state;
- i) Most parts of the Northern Cape Province rely on ground water. The North West Province has twenty-eight dams and three of these dams are in critical state;
- j) In the Western Cape Province, there are about forty (40) areas affected by drought. Some dams in the Province are in critical state; and
- k) Provinces and municipalities should continue with their water conservation interventions.

If we take a closer inspection of the dire situation per province, we find the following:

EASTERN CAPE:

- The Premier of the Eastern Cape has declared the provincial state of drought per the provincial gazette no 4336 of 29 October 2019 (and the amount of R100 million pronounced)
- Dams:
 - There are 46 dams in Total in EC of which only 2 are 100% full.
 - As from the DWS Dam Level Report from 11 Nov 2019, 18 dams are between 50% & 100% and 26 Dams below 50%, with 8 in critical stage (<10%): Xilinx, Gcuwa, Bonkolo, Beervlei, Nqweba, Toleni, Kommandodrift, and Lake Arthur.
- Groundwater:
 - From the calculated available groundwater volume of 1,5 billion m³/a, according to WARMS 0,1 billion m³/a is Registered Use. Therefore, 1,4 billion m³/a is available for future development.



- Geophysical assessments to inform borehole location are required before drilling can take place.
- No. of Areas Affected:
 - Currently, a total of 44 towns and their surrounding communities have been reported by the Provincial DWS Office as drought affected.
 - All reported areas in EC have current interventions in place.
- DWS Grant Funding: Drought Relief
 - 2018-2019: R 571.4 million
 - 2019-2020: Existing projects listed for implementation - R 1.039 billion

FREE STATE:

- **Dams:**
 - There are 20 Dams in Total in FS of which none are 100% full.
 - As from the DWS Dam Level Report from 11 Nov 2019, 13 dams are between 50% & 100% and 7 Dams below 50%, with 1 dam (Fika Patso) in critical stage (<10%).
- Groundwater:
 - From the calculated available groundwater volume of 0,6 billion m³/a, according to WARMS 0,2 billion m³/a is Registered Use. Therefore, 0,4 billion m³/a is available for future development.
 - Geophysical assessments to inform borehole location are required before drilling can take place.
- No. of Areas Affected:
 - Currently, a total of 24 towns and their surrounding communities have been reported by the Provincial DWS Office as drought affected.
 - All reported areas in FS have current interventions in place.



- DWS Grant Funding: Drought Relief
 - 2018-2019: None allocated during this financial year
 - 2019-2020: Existing projects listed for implementation - R 494 000 million

KWAZULU-NATAL:

- KZN recently experienced high localised rains, mostly in coastal areas, which resulted in tragic loss of life.
- Dams:
 - There are 19 dams in total in KZN of which only 1 dam is 100% full.
 - As from the DWS Dam Level Report from 11 Nov 2019, 12 dams are between 50% & 100% and 6 dams below 50%, with 0 in critical stage (<10%).
- Groundwater:
 - From the calculated available groundwater volume of 1,4 billion m³/a, according to WARMS 0,1 billion m³/a is Registered Use. Therefore, 1,3 billion m³/a is available for future development.
 - Geophysical assessments to inform borehole location are required before drilling can take place.
- No. of Areas Affected:
 - Currently, a total of 256 towns and their surrounding communities have been reported by the Provincial DWS Office as drought affected.
 - All of the reported areas in KZN have current interventions in place, except in Durban to Mandeni & uThukela which have proposed interventions in place.
- DWS Grant Funding: Drought Relief:
 - 2018-2019: R 122 366 million



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- 2019-2020: Existing projects listed for implementation - R 370 000 million

LIMPOPO:

- Dams:
 - There are 28 Dams in Total in LP of which none of the dams are 100% full.
 - As from the DWS Dam Level Report from 11 Nov 2019, 14 Dams are between 50% & 100% and 14 Dams below 50%, with 5 in critical stage (<10%): Middle-Letaba, Glen Alpine, Modjadji, Tzaneen, and Doorndraai.
- Groundwater:
 - From the calculated available groundwater volume of 1,1 billion m³/a, according to WARMS 0,7 billion m³/a is Registered Use. Therefore, 0,4 billion m³/a is available for future development.
 - Geophysical assessments to inform borehole location are required before drilling can take place.
- No. of Areas Affected:
 - Currently, a total of 162 towns and their surrounding communities have been reported by the Provincial DWS Office as drought affected.
 - All of the reported areas in LP have current interventions in place.
- DWS Grant Funding: Drought Relief
 - 2018-2019: R 97 475 million
 - 2019-2020: Existing projects listed for implementation - R 506 600 million

MPUMALANGA:

- Dams:



- There are 22 dams in total in MP of which none of dams are 100% full.
 - As from the DWS Dam Level Report from 11 Nov 2019, 12 Dams are between 50% & 100% and 10 Dams below 50%, with 8 in critical stage (<10%): Rhenosterkop and Ohrigstad.
- Groundwater:
 - From the calculated available groundwater volume of 0,9 billion m³/a, according to WARMS 0,3 billion m³/a is Registered Use. Therefore, 0,6 billion m³/a is available for future development.
 - Geophysical assessments to inform borehole location are required before drilling can take place.
- No. of Areas Affected:
 - Currently, a total of 74 towns and their surrounding communities have been reported by the Provincial DWS Office as drought affected.
 - 24% of the reported areas in MP have current interventions in place. 76% have proposed interventions in place.
- DWS Grant Funding: Drought Relief
 - 2018-2019: R 56 800 million
 - 2019-2020: Existing projects listed for implementation - R 500 300 million

NORTHERN CAPE:

- Dams:
 - There are 6 Dams in Total in NC of which only 1 dam is 100% full.
 - As from the DWS Dam Level Report from 11 Nov 2019, 4 Dams are between 50% & 100% and 1 Dams below 50%, with 1 in critical stage (<10%): Leeubos.



- Groundwater:
 - From the calculated available groundwater volume of 0,6 billion m³/a, according to WARMS 0,1 billion m³/a is Registered Use. Therefore, 0,5 billion m³/a is available for future development.
 - Geophysical assessments to inform borehole location are required before drilling can take place.
- No. of Areas Affected:
 - Currently, a total of 31 towns and their surrounding communities have been reported by the Provincial DWS Office as drought affected.
 - All of the reported areas in NC have current interventions in place.
- DWS Grant Funding: Drought Relief
 - 2018-2019: R 9 788 million
 - 2019-2020: Existing projects listed for implementation - R 90 100 million

NORTH WEST:

- Dams:
 - There are 28 Dams in Total in NW of which none of the dams are 100% full.
 - As from the Dam Level Report from 11 Nov 2019, 12 Dams are between 50% & 100% and 16 Dams below 50%, with 3 in critical stage (<10%): Klein-Maricopoort, Marico-Bosveld and Swartruggens.
- Groundwater:
 - From the calculated available groundwater volume of 0,7 billion m³/a, according to WARMS 0,5 billion m³/a is Registered Use. Therefore, 0,2 billion m³/a is available for future development.



- Geophysical assessments to inform borehole location are required before drilling can take place.
- No. of Areas Affected:
 - Currently, a total of 13 towns and their surrounding communities have been reported by the Provincial DWS Office as drought affected.
 - 45% of the reported areas in NW have current interventions in place. 55% have proposed interventions in place.
- DWS Grant Funding: Drought Relief
 - 2018-2019: R 309 649 million
 - 2019-2020: Existing projects listed for implementation - R 80 000 million.

WESTERN CAPE:

- Dams:
 - There are 43 dams in total in WC of which only 3 dams are 100% full.
 - As from the DWS Dam Level Report from 11 Nov 2019, 21 Dams are between 50% & 100% and 19 Dams below 50%, with 12 in critical stage (<10%): Klipberg, Poortjieskloof, Miertjieskraal, Leeugamka, Gamkapoort, Kammanassie, Oukloof, Hartebeestkuil, Prinsrivier, Stompdrift, Bellair and Calitzdorp.
- Groundwater:
 - From the calculated available groundwater volume of 0,7 billion m³/a, according to WARMS 0,5 billion m³/a is Registered Use. Therefore, 0,2 billion m³/a is available for future development.
 - Geophysical assessments to inform borehole location are required before drilling can take place.



- No. of Areas Affected:
 - Currently, a total of 40 towns and their surrounding communities have been reported by the Provincial DWS Office as drought affected.
 - 42% of the reported areas in LP have current interventions in place. 58% have proposed interventions in place.
- DWS Grant Funding: Drought Relief
 - 2018-2019: R 58 919 million
 - 2019-2020: Existing projects listed for implementation - R 114 500 million

In closing

We will use various technologies in combination with current strategies as we outlined in our Master Plan. We are working together with Rand Water and other specialist in providing new technologies that will help us in our quest to ensure the security of water supply. During the launch of the Master Plan at the CSIR in Pretoria, we saw various technologies, which we believe would play an important role in our drive to ensure that we provide uninterrupted water services to all. The launch of second phase of the Lesotho

However, when it comes to short term interventions, restriction rules have proven to work best as it responds by reducing depletion of strained sources. Quick water mix installation like groundwater and tankering are not best, as much as they are preferred by local municipal officials. This is because they are also affected by drought conditions. In KZN, for example, during the 2015 drought, it was reported that about 40% of the boreholes drilled dried within the first week or so after installation. In other cases, after purchasing the motorized tanks, it was soon realized that there was no source of water to fill the tanks.



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Water tariff policy for most municipalities is limited because it is rigid, such that it cannot be changed until the next financial year of the respective municipality. Monitoring and communication can be improved by being more regular. For example, the model by the South Africa Weather Services (SAWS) and Roads, where weather and traffic information, respectively, are regularly provided at the end of main news on TV and Radio can provide a good platform for awareness.

We should not escape the reality that South Africa remains a water scarce country. We need to accept that Climate change is a reality and it continues to create imbalances in our rainfall patterns and seasonal changes. And as an arid and semi-arid country Climate change continues to worsen our situation. We have the responsibility as a country to ensure that we preserve and use sparingly the little resources that we have.

We need to create a social compact between government, business and labour and all South Africans to protect this very important scarce resource and at the same time ensure that everyone has access adequate water supply and safe and dignified sanitation.

As we can all see there is a lot of work ahead of us.

Water is Life, Sanitation is Dignity

I thank you.