



MINISTRY
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, WATER AND SANITATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**ADDRESS BY LN SISULU, MP, AT THE LAUNCH OF UMSHWATI REGIONAL BULK WATER
SCHEME, 22 NOVEMBER 2020**

Premier, Mr Sihle Zikalala

Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation, Mr David Mahlobo,

Inkosi uMthuli,

MEC of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr Sipho Hlomuka,

MEC of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs and MEC Champion of
Umgungundlovu District Municipality, Mr Ravi Pillay,

District Mayors of Umgungundlovu and Ilembe District Municipalities, Cllr Thobekile
Maphumulo and Cllr Sduduzo Gumede,

Mayor of uMshwathi Local Municipality, Cllr Mandla Zondi,

Councillors,

Chairperson of Umgeni Water, Mr Magasela Mzobe

Members of the public

Early this morning on my way to uMshwathi Local Municipality I passed part of this area, Empolweni along the R33 towards Greytown. I then remembered a story once shared with me that a couple of years ago this area was just a farm with no houses and infrastructure. A few years down the line the entire landscape of uMshwathi has changed as well as the entire Umgungundlovu District Municipality. We all can see for ourselves what our people have done for themselves brick by brick. Some of the houses here would fetch a couple of millions if they were to be moved to Umhlanga, Ballito or Kloof.

I am relaying this story because my portfolio includes human settlements. Over the years it has become clearer that people tend to look much better after the houses they have built for themselves. Perhaps the time has come to look at ways of assisting our people to build for themselves. The majority of the people here would prefer a serviced stand as opposed to a top structure BNG house.

Premier, I am raising this because I am in awe over what we have achieved in providing bulk water to our people over the past few years. Notwithstanding the backlog and challenges, we have so much to celebrate.

Before the dawn of democracy, the majority of our people were robbed of an opportunity to have access to safe drinking water. Yes, we still have communities whose lives are yet to be changed for the better but a lot has been done.

Over the years there has been concerted effort to have a road map that guides the implementation of water supply solutions in the entire province of KwaZulu-Natal. As a result, the Cabinet of this Province gave us a mandate together with Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) to develop a Universal Access Plan for the entire province. Funded by Umgeni Water, this exercise was broken down into 2 phases, with phase 1 looking at bulk infrastructure and raw water sources, and phase 2 looking at secondary bulk that will also inform the reticulation network.

Over and above the uMshwathi Regional Bulk Water Supply Scheme we are launching today, which is being implemented by Umgeni Water, the Department of Water and Sanitation is funding various other regional bulk water supply projects to better the lives of people of KwaZulu-Natal. These projects are funded through the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant (RBIG) and they span across the 7 District Municipalities namely, Zululand, King Cetshwayo, iLembe District, uThukela, uMgungundlovu and Harry Gwala.

The status of our bulk water supply projects in the aforementioned Districts is as follows:

- In Zululand District Municipality we are funding the Nongoma Bulk Water Supply and Mandlakazi Bulk Water Supply Projects. The two projects will service close to 200 000 households.
- In King Cetshwayo we are funding Greater Mthonjaneni Bulk Water Supply and Middeldrift Bulk Water Supply Projects and will provide over 40 000 households with assured supply of potable water.
- In Ilembe we are providing funding for the construction of Ngcebo Bulk Water Supply and Maphumulo Bulk Water Supply Projects. These two projects are expected to service over 700 000 households within Maphumulo and KwaDukuza Local Municipalities.
- In Umzinyathi we are involved in the construction of Greytown Bulk Water Supply Project for 27 824 households in the Umvoti Local Municipality.
- In Uthukela we have funded the Driefontein Bulk Water Supply Project expected to service over 200 000 households
- Here in Umgungundlovu District, over and above the project we are launching today we are also involved in the construction of the Greater Mpofana Bulk Water Supply Project for over 30 000 households within the Mpofana Local Municipality.
- In Harry Gwala we are funding the construction of the Greater Bulwer Water Supply Project which will benefit over 23 000 households.

All of these projects stated above which are expected to benefit over 1 million people will mean nothing if the intended beneficiaries do not have water coming out of their taps. Our job is to provide the bulk water to the municipalities who then provide to the taps. We have completed a number of bulk water projects in other provinces but still people do not have access to water. I implore the KwaZulu-Natal Cabinet to ensure that these gaps are closed. As we work on the bulk water supply, local government must at the same time work on the reticulation infrastructure. Abantu bakithi bafuna amanzi. Masibambisane njengorhulumente ukuqinisekisa ukuthi amanzi ayaphumi kwizimpompi zasemakhaya abo.

I am glad that uMgungundlovu District Municipality has already implemented 3 of the 4 uMshwathi Secondary Bulk and Reticulation Water Supply projects. Phases 1,2 & 3A cover the areas of Albertfalls, Mpolweni, Nadi, Coolair, Efaye, Kwazibusele, Ntanzi, Mtulwa and Mt Elias. This pipeline network has 27km of bulk pipeline and 4 Reinforced Concrete Reservoirs. The bulk system will benefit a population of approximately 25000 households.

The Construction of Phase 1 commenced in March 2016 and was completed in December 2018, Phase 2 commenced in October 2018 and was completed in September 2020 while Phase 3A commenced in July 2018 and was completed in November 2019,

With regards to Phase 3B which covers the communities of Ekhamanzi and Nadi with a population of 7732 people, this phase is currently under construction since May 2019 and is expected to be completed early next year, 2021.

It is good news that uMgungundlovu on 20 November 2020 awarded reticulation upgrade projects which are Mpolweni and Greater Efaye. Other reticulation upgrade projects soon to be awarded are Thokozani and Swayimane Umbhava reticulation upgrades. All these projects combined will be worth more than R500 million funded jointly by my Department through Water Services Infrastructure Grant (WSIG) and COGTA through Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) implemented over a three-year period. Upon completion of these projects all households will have metered connections.

I have noted with interest that 30% of all projects executed and currently underway have been allocated to emerging contractors. It is my wish that we increase this allocation to 40% and ensure that women and youth are at the centre of economic empowerment.

Ndunankulu konke lokhu esikwenzayo njengoHulumeni kuzokwenza ukuthi kube namthuba emisebenzi abantu bakithi bakwazi ukuphakela imindeni yabo. Ngicela uma sikwenza konke lokhu siqinisekise ukuthi osomabhinizi bendawo nawo bayahlomula.

In our effort to ensure there is water security for eThekweni, ILembe, uMgungundlovu and Msunduzi Municipalities by 2030 we issued a directive to Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA) and Umgeni Water to fund and implement the Umkhomazi Water Project. I am told that at this stage no Municipal Councils have resolved to sign water user agreements. This is something my office will ensure that the affected Water Service Authorities (WSAs) sign these water user agreements before the end of 2020 so that the project can commence.

Among other directives we have issued to Umgeni Water this year is to fund and implement the Stephen Dlamini Project in Harry Gwala District. This project is expected to be completed by 2023 and will benefit over 113 000 people living in the area.

As we roll out these strategic projects, our work and resources will be in vain if, as a nation, we do not deal with the challenges facing the water sector. These include vandalization of our water infrastructure, non-revenue water as a result of leakages and illegal connections, poor infrastructure maintenance and protection of water sources. These challenges can not be resolved by government alone; we all have a role to play - from reporting a leaking tap or burst water pipeline to exposing those who destroy our infrastructure for ulterior motives.

Premier, the entire globe is going through tough economic times; as South Africans we are also not spared. Covid-19 has put unprecedented pressure on our limited resources to deliver on what is expected. This calls on all of us to do more with less.

The pandemic has placed an immediate and heightened importance on the water and sanitation sector to deliver services to our people.

The financial sustainability of our water boards is being endangered and four of the water boards are in dire stress due to liquidity and debt issues threatening their financial positions. Our water boards across the country are currently owed over R12 billion by municipalities. This means that water boards such as Umhlathuze and Umgeni which service some of the financially challenged municipalities may be financially affected. This has huge implications on their credit ratings as well as the borrowing capability of these entities to roll out strategic bulk water projects as listed earlier.

There must be a culture of payment for services received. As a responsible nation we must send a clear message that those households who are not indigent and are in a position to pay for services must pay municipalities for services rendered. Government departments must pay all the debts owed to municipalities and municipalities must pay the water boards for bulk water and services rendered.

In closing, I am informed that there is a human settlement project of about 2500 housing units that was delayed due to non-availability of sewer treatment infrastructure. I am happy that Umgeni Water working with uMgungundlovu completed the Trust-feed Waste Waterworks paving the way for the housing project to proceed.

I will be back soon to launch that project with MEC Nkonyeni. I am truly happy that we were able to be here today Premier, in recognition of this major progress made towards a better life for people of KwaZulu-Natal.

I thank you.