



MINISTRY
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, WATER AND SANITATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
DRAFT
REMARKS BY MINISTER, LN SISULU, AT A MEDIA BRIEFING ON THE WORK
OF THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, WATER AND SANITATION
RAND WATER HEAD OFFICE, GLENVISTA
13 MAY 2020

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning

1. Since my appointment in the portfolio of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation in May 2019, I have relentlessly focused on re-engineering and prioritizing ways of improving the efficient functioning of the Department of Water and Sanitation.
2. During my Budget Vote address of 16 July 2019, a commitment was made to clean up the Department of Water and Sanitation and to bring stabilization to all nine Water Boards that work directly with municipalities by supplying bulk raw water.
3. Among the interventions was to establish a Stabilisation Committee that would provide advisory services to me and also assist the Director-General with professional capacity on various disciplines.
4. The Committee expedited investigations on matters related to maladministration, fraud and corruption, misconduct and improvement on findings of the Auditor General.
5. The Committee is also charged with the responsibility to analyse, develop and advise on the introduction of policies, systems and to contribute to the stabilization and efficient functioning of the entire Department.

6. Since the establishment of this Committee in November 2019, there has been commendable progress under the stewardship of the Acting DG, Mr Mbulelo Tshangana.
7. Despite a huge backlog on investigation matters, labour relations matters - which includes allegations of maladministration, fraud, corruption and misconduct – progress has been made regarding investigation in matters related to the irregular expenditure the Department recorded in the past financial years.
8. Following these measures being put in place, advances were made to tackle fraud and corruption within the Department as a result of various forensic investigations conducted by the Directorate of Forensic Investigations in the Chief Directorate of Internal Audit.
9. During the period of 01 April 2012 to 31 September 2019, a total number of 249 reported cases were investigated. 139 of the cases were found to be true and were referred for disciplinary action while 110 of them were found to be untrue.
10. Of the 139 disciplinary cases, the following outcomes were achieved:
 - 86 officials were found guilty
 - 14 officials were not found guilty
 - 24 officials resigned
 - One official was reinstated following an arbitration award, and
 - The charges regarding one official were withdrawn on instruction of the Presiding Officer as the official was previously employed under the Water Act and currently employed under Public Service Act.
11. These disciplinary actions also resulted in the following sanctions being handed down:
 - 13 dismissals;

- One demotion;
 - 11 three months suspensions without pay;
 - Six two months suspensions without pay including final written warnings
12. The Department has also referred 18 cases to the Law Enforcement Agencies such as the South African Police Services (SAPS) and the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (The Hawks) for investigation and possible prosecution. Civil recovery processes through the Courts were also initiated, in an effort to recover all the funds that have been lost through fraud and corruption.
13. The Department has further also prioritized 151 Irregular Expenditure investigations and 13 Forensic Investigations within the next six months aimed for completion within twelve months time.
14. The potential recoveries are estimated at R18.2 million based on claims instituted through civil proceedings and the Asset Forfeiture Unit. All these efforts are focused at restoring stability, efficient functioning of the Department and improving staff morale.
15. In addition, there are on-going investigations related to irregular expenditure, mismanagement and governance issues at the Amatola Water Board in the Eastern Cape, as well as Lepelle Northern Water Board in Limpopo Province. The SIU is also seized with its own investigations into Lepelle NWB.
16. The CEO of Amatola is currently on precautionary suspension to allow the investigations to continue.
17. The investigations are aimed at ensuring that the Department of Water and Sanitation, and the entities under the Ministry's jurisdiction, deliver on the services of the people of South Africa. Apart from the outcomes of the Forensic reports, other charges are also being formulated in terms of the Public Service Regulations in line with Forensic Reports.

18. Despite these achievements, there are still challenges currently faced by the Department to complete matters of fraud, corruption, and misconduct. The following are the challenges:

- Inadequate capacity considering the number of reported matters to be investigated
- Ability to recover losses based on insufficient available information.

19. However, the Department has so far made considerable strides in prioritizing and dealing with these high level cases. There are ongoing investigations on these internal investigations.

20. National Treasury have also been canvassed and are assisting a team of eminent persons to fast track investigations and to ultimately clean up the Department of Water and Sanitation, as it was committed by me during my Budget Vote Speech of 16 July 2019.

21. I am intent on seeing this process through for the benefit of all DWS customers, in essence all South Africans.

22. This is what the 6th Administration is about: actual delivery of services to the people of South Africa.

UPDATE ON VAAL INTERVENTIONS

23. After many years of building module 6 I am delighted to announce that it's at 98% to be completed. Our engineers have informed us that by end of July 2020 module 6 will be finally completed. I will be returning with the members of the media to launch it. Module 6 is very critical as it will go a long way in the reduction of pollution into the Vaal River. The significance of this project is that Module 6 will add 50 mega litres of plant treatment capacity in Sebokeng Waste

Water Care Works. This brand new module need skilled operators and should be maintained accordingly.

24. To this end, working with Metsi-A-Lekoa we will train a number of War on Leaks graduates to assist in the management of this module. This will not only increase the skilled capacity of Metsi but also contribute to the reduction of unemployment in the Vaal area. I have instructed my Department to work closely with Metsi-A-Lekoa, to ensure that when the intervention by my Department ends; there will be both capability and capacity to ensure that we leave behind a well-oiled institution called Metsi-A-Lekoa. It is my main objective that Metsi becomes a response vehicle in managing sewer matters in the Vaal.

25. I would like to thank ERWAT for their contribution and efforts to stop the pollution into the Vaal River. ERWAT will be wrapping up their contracted work in June 2020. As from July 2020, the Department of Water and Sanitation will be assuming the overall management and implementation of the Vaal River System Project. I have already shared with stakeholders a number of work packages that the Department will be advertising next month. These work packages are valued at over R750 million. We encourage contractors from Vaal and surrounding areas to take advantage of these tenders. This will go a long way in improving the Vaal and Sedibeng District local economy post COVID-19. Labour intensive approaches are encouraged in these work packages in order to contribute to the reduction of the high unemployment rate in Emfuleni local municipal area.

26. To this effect, I would also like to thank the staff members of Metsi who have shared with me their frustrations and desires of seeing a once glorious institution return to its former glory. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Mayor of Sedibeng, the Mayor of Emfuleni and all councillors working with us on the intervention for their steadfast commitment in stopping the pollution from entering the Vaal River. Lastly I would like to extend my appreciation to all stakeholders for cooperatively working with my Department and offering

their unwavering support. Last but not least, I would like to recognize and acknowledge SAVE The VAAL NGO for their efforts in partnering with me and monitoring the work on the ground. Together indeed we can do more for South Africa.

HOW DO WE SUPPORT THE OPENING OF SCHOOLS?

27. The Water Command Centre has two projects.
28. The first project is what we have been executing over the past few weeks. This entails providing support to all community areas that do not have water. This includes hostels, taxi ranks, informal settlements, and rural areas.
29. The COVID-19 intervention has been rolling out in different communities over the last few weeks. The rollout of tanks and tankers has seen a number of communities benefiting with still a lot more to be done.
30. The next phase of the intervention will include assistance to schools that are currently lacking in water and sanitation services.
31. In this regard we will work with the Department of Basic Education around a total of 3 475 schools. The schools have been identified by the DBE and are spread across the country.
32. We have signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the DBE that will see us actively working together to ensure these services reach our community of learners who are also most vulnerable and our have reach all the identified schools before they open.

HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INTERVENTIONS

33. In our quest to curb the spread of COVID-19 as we continue with our programme of re-blocking our overcrowded informal settlements. This is in line with the Informal Settlements Upgrading Programme (UISP) which is one of our programmes and it forms part of the entire basket of housing and human settlements interventions available to Provinces and Metropolitan Municipalities. The ISUP covers upgrading In-Situ, partial upgrading and relocation and full relocation.
34. There are number of housing projects which have been completed across the country. We have asked Provinces that the qualifying beneficiaries including residents from the nearby informal settlements be moved into these completed housing units. This will assist in easing congestion in our settlements. We are engaging the Ministry of Energy to assist with solar power in areas where there is no electricity.
35. Last week we visited the tented settlements in Roodepoort. These are the people who are the victims of the evictions from the nearby farms. They live in deplorable conditions. In less than a month we are almost ready to move them into decent shelter which will enable them to practice social distancing. This is because we used Alternative Building Technology (ABT) which has proven to be faster as compared to brick and mortar.
36. We have already started building 1000 structures at Mamelodi hostels to ease congestion in the overcrowded units. We believe this intervention will assist the over 8000 residents of the Mamelodi hostels to practice social distancing.

I thank you.