

BUDGET AND POLICY STATEMENT

THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION, VOTE 41

By Mr. David Mahlobo MP,

Deputy Minister for Water and Sanitation

VIRTUAL PLENARY NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES SITTING

04 JUNE 2021

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Hon. LN Sisulu, Minister of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation

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Leadership of various stakeholders in our sector and civil society

Esteemed Guests

Fellow South Africans

INTRODUCTION

1. Your Excellencies, Comrades and Friends, many citizens across the globe continue to perish, economies have stagnated whilst exposing inequalities existing amongst the nations due to the global pandemic. Madiba remains timeless when he said: “*Massive poverty and obscene inequality are such terrible scourges of our times — times in which the world boasts breathtaking advances in science, technology, industry and wealth accumulation — that they have to rank alongside slavery and apartheid as social evils.*” He further said “*As long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality exist in our world, none of us can truly rest.*” This pandemic has exposed the global community for its failure to have a collective action to overcome and eradicate the scourge of poverty, injustice and inequality.
2. The breathtaking scientific revolution and advancement has yielded the production of vaccines to prevent the spread of this pandemic. The downside is the behaviour of some nations with greed and power wherein they accumulated more vaccines than they needed and protectionism has reared its ugly head with respect to manufacturing. This vaccine apartheid is mostly felt by millions across in the poorest countries mainly in our continent.
3. We wish to commend HE President Ramaphosa as the African Champion appointed by the African Union Chairperson for his unwavering determination supported by India for achieving the waiver of Intellectual Property (IP) to allow Africa the opportunity to manufacture these vaccines. This call by our President has gained momentum wherein more than 100 countries including the United States of America and France are supporting Africa on this matter.

4. This virus continues to mutate and new strains are emerging. The only way to stop the spread is through our behaviour as individuals and collectively will be a determinant. Let's continue to wash our hands or sanitize, wear masks and keep the requisite social distance. Let's continue to support the roll-out of the vaccination programme and frown upon those who continue to spread false narratives about vaccines. Civic education, mobilization and solidarity during this period will go a long way in our collective effort to turn the tide and save humanity.

5. On the 16 June this year, we shall commemorate the 45th Anniversary of June 16 student uprising against the apartheid regime that imposed Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. This gallant action of this generation of youth changed the course of our struggle for freedom. As a nation in part we owe this generation a sense of gratitude and other generations for the freedom we enjoy. In this youth month lets create a conducive environment and nurture our youth because they are leaders of tomorrow.

6. Madiba words remain profound when he said: *“young people are capable of bringing down the towers of oppression and raising the banners of freedom.”*

7. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 6 set forward by the United Nations (UN) is access to clean water and sanitation. We are acutely aware of the interdependence of development and sustainable use of the environment. In a number of instances this issue has become a matter of life and death. The SDGs' goals are a human collective effort in addressing modern environmental challenges that extend far beyond the capacity of individual countries and we need to find ways of working together to preserve our heritage.

8. Between rising demands for water and lack of sanitation services in many regions around the world, we have a long way to go before all people will be free to enjoy this essential human right. We therefore have to ensure that we work towards reaching the global targets by 2030:
- a. Improve water quality by reducing pollution and, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally
 - b. Substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity
 - c. Implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate
 - d. Protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes
 - e. Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management

Improve Water Supply and Sanitation Services and Water Resources Management

9. The ANC-led governments over the last 27 years had to expand access to services to many South Africans who were deliberately excluded before. The population has grown substantially, and increased levels of migration, urbanization and economic growth in terms of GDP compared to 1994 have also had an impact. In addition, consideration has to be placed in adapting to climate change imperatives and taking advantage of the technological advances in line with the 4th industrial revolution.

10. The General Household Survey for 2019 report by StatsSA indicates overall access to improved water increasing between 2002 and 2019 but significant variation within provinces growing from 84.4% to 88.2%. More households in absolute numbers from 4.5m to 7.7m have access to piped water but with a small percentage increase of 4.5% over the same period.
11. The proportion of households (HHs) reported to be paying for water has been declining steadily over the past decade. Through the provision and efforts of government, support agencies and existing stakeholders, the percentage of HHs with access to improved sanitation increased by 20.4% points from 61.7% to 82.1%.
12. Despite all the advances we have recorded, we are the first to admit that more still needs to be done especially in rural areas where services and infrastructure are poor or non-existent whilst urban areas continue to experience service delivery disruptions or failures for a variety of reasons.
13. This budget and plans is allocating more resources to rural communities especially rural provinces.

Water for Economic Growth and Development

14. Water is arguably the most precious resource on earth and yet we often value and manage it extremely poorly.
15. Water resource infrastructure is part of network industries that should constitute the bedrock, a catalyst and enablers for economic recovery. Economic investments in this network infrastructure must have specific and deliberate focus aimed at planning, development and management of energy, water resources, transport and information and communication technology infrastructure.

16. Investing in improved water and sanitation and water resources management is vital for national economies and poor communities. Such investment will be to the benefit of those countries with the greatest water challenges and eradicate poverty. The economic benefits far outweigh the investment costs. Wherein decision makers often view such investments as mere costs.
17. There is a considerable need for public and private sector investment in the water supply and sanitation and water resources management. The productivity and production capacity of people and economic sectors such as agriculture and industry depend on people's health and secure water availability.
18. Our President, HE President Ramaphosa has full appreciation of the importance of water resources management including improved water supply and sanitation hence its inclusion in the National Development Plan, Vision 2030 and Economic Recovery and Renewal Plan for our country.

WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

19. South Africa's challenges remain in the delivery of water and sanitation services caused 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 lack of skilled water engineers, scientists, hydrologists, geo-hydrologists and resource economist, etc.
20. We continue to experience high levels of non-revenue water ranging from 50% in Eastern Cape to 20% in Western Cape. Most of our municipalities cannot account for at least one third of the water they produce or buy. Most of the water losses are exacerbated by poor operations and maintenance including gross under investment.

21. The Water Research Commission, the CSIR, Institutions of Higher Learning, the Water Academy, SALGA, MISA and Water SETA, private sector, and international partners like JICA are investing in skills revolution and technologies required for the current epoch and future demands.

Water Resources Protection

22. Due to population growth, migration, urbanization, and lack of infrastructure maintenance, we have experienced negative impacts on the quality of the water resources. Water quality continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate. Results indicate that the source of pollution emanates from the lack of or inadequate sanitation, return effluent from industries, mines, rural settlements, agricultural run offs, ground water, and pollution from human settlement activities.

23. We previously announced the establishment of an Anti-Pollution Task Team (APTT) to manage and minimize the effects of pollution on the water resources. I am pleased to announce that the APTT was formally established and is made up of 22 experts from various sections within the Department. The APTT has formally drafted an action plan, and the plan has 8 key tasks which are in line with the Integrated Water Quality Management Strategy.

24. Monitoring of our water resources has resumed in all provinces and we anticipate having a report on the quality of our resources by end of this financial year. The task team also managed to identify water quality hotspots in a few WMAs and will this financial year (2021/22) put plans in place to deal with these hotspots. High risk facilities were also identified and prioritized for compliance monitoring and the Department has already started enforcement action with a few water users including municipalities.

ACID MINE DRAINAGE (AMD)

25. The risks for water security in the Integrated Vaal River System (IVRS) due to Acid Mine Drainage have been substantially mitigated through the Witwatersrand AMD Short-term Solution Emergency Works Project. A review is underway seeking options and mechanisms to convert the Short-term Solution Emergency Works Project into a long-term, sustainable and self-funding solution, potentially converting impacted mine water into a resource that can be used elsewhere to promote social and economic development.
26. We have also learnt from the Witwatersrand AMD challenge that other mining-intensive areas such as the Limpopo and Mpumalanga coalfields, platinum belt and Northern Cape base metal mining areas may in due course also manifest mining-ascribed water resources impacts. Furthermore, we have adopted a Mine Water Management Policy and working closely with sector departments on revenue instruments and mine closure to deal with post-mining water risk.

WASTE DISCHARGE CHARGE SYSTEM

27. The principle of Polluter Pays will be enforced through the waste discharge system to ensure that other waste impacts from industry, agriculture and local government may be quantified and appropriate charges incurred on the relevant sectors. All revenue will be ring-fenced for the discrete implementation of interventions that are geared towards improved water resources management and water security.
28. This system will be rolled out in the Vaal, Crocodile West Marico and Olifants water management areas starting in the current financial year and full roll-out by 2025 ensuring significant reduction in pollution load.
29. We are on course working with National Treasury, COGTA and SALGA with the establishment of an independent water economic regulator as part of Operation Vulindela. The matter of water pricing continues to receive attention within the water sector.

BLUE DROP & GREEN DROP REPORTS

30. Water and wastewater management is almost reaching a crisis level and there is an urgent need for collaboration among different stakeholders. There are a number of challenges faced by municipalities with respect to management of wastewater treatment works and water distribution and metering due to operational problems. To produce potable drinking water municipalities should adhere to operational practices and use of appropriate technologies with people with requisite skills.
31. There are 612 WWTWs that are operating within the design capacity, whilst 154 are operating to the design capacity. It is concerning that 144 wastewater treatment plants are operating above design capacity whilst about 199 WWTWs design capacity is not known.
32. The Department has progressed with the revival of the Blue/Green Drop Programme. In 2021/22 financial year full Green Drop assessments and Progress Assessment for Blue Drop will be done. The plan is to engage the sector and conduct training by July 2021. All municipal information should be loaded on the IRIS by end of July which will be followed by confirmations in October and moderation of the scorecards will be completed in November. It is envisaged that there will be a draft report by end of January 2022.
33. The implementation of the No Drop Guideline is currently being piloted at 5 different categories of Municipalities (Tshwane metro, Dawid Kruiper LM, City of Mbombela LM, Modimolle-Mookgopong LM and iLembe DM). I am happy to announce that in the background, our work has evolved into a true realisation that the No Drop Programme not only be used as a Regulatory tool but also as an operational tool to guide and prioritize interventions and Investment.

WATER ALLOCATION

34. The quantity and quality of water depends on the landscape. The current allocations in terms of water use by various sectors is unsustainable and some of these measures have to be implemented to promote socio-economic imperatives:

- a) Demand side measures to increase water availability and improve water use efficiency.
- b) Reallocation of water from lower to higher benefit uses by trading water use authorization without compromising the transformation imperatives.
- c) Supply side measures through construction of new dams, related water resource infrastructure, inter catchment and regional transfers.
- d) South Africa's growth hub, the Gauteng Province depends on the Integrated Vaal River System to meet its growth requirements, thus there is a need to implement water conservation and demand measures.
- e) Inter-catchment transfer will remain a viable option to meet water needs for inland provinces.

WATER SECURITY AND MITIGATING SCARCITY

35. Water resource is not always in surplus and we need to optimize the use of the existing water resources through water re-allocation to reduce the expensive importation of water. We need to explore disruptive technologies to shift the way we value water and drive resilience across supply chains and ecosystems through: *Development, operations, maintenance and refurbishment of eager resources infrastructure; Regional bulk infrastructure roll-out; Reduce the demand by implementing water through water conservation and demand management; Development of surface water sources through construction of new dams and transfers; Development and exploitation of ground water sources; .Promotion of water reuse to increase the yield beyond the current 20% contribution; Explore increasing desalination for the coastal areas; Management of acid mine drainage; Water harvesting*

CONCLUSION

36. Let's remain steadfast and on course in building a truly united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic society as envisioned in the freedom charter, our constitution and NDP 2030.
37. Water is essential to life. We need to work hard to bring safe water and dignified sanitation to all. Let's provide families with hope, health and the opportunity to break the cycle of poverty, unemployment and reduce inequality.
38. South Africa and the world are in the midst of profound challenges but equally this epoch is full of opportunities, the prospects are bright whilst the challenges might look severe. We remain vigilant of the dangers faced by our revolutionary advance but we are never rigid nor inflexible or inactive to change.
39. On this day we remain inspired by the original aspiration of our forebears and our tasks are far from complete in advancing our noble objectives of freedom, human rights and social justice. We are motivated by the desire to create and fulfil our promiser of a better life for all.
40. The youth of the globe must unite in creating a just and humane society. Let them be inspired by President Mandela when he said: *“the future belongs to our youth. As some of us near the end of our political careers, younger people must take over. They must seek and cherish the most basic condition for peace, namely unity in our diversity and find lasting ways to that goal.”*
41. God bless South Africa, and her sons and daughters
42. I thank you!