



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SPEAKING NOTES FOR MINISTER SENZO MCHUNU AT THE MEDIA BRIEFING REFLECTING ON ONE YEAR IN OFFICE, FRIDAY, 26 AUGUST 2022, AT THE GCIS OFFICES

1. SALUTATIONS AND INTRODUCTION

I would like to acknowledge the presence of:

The Deputy Ministers of the Department – Dikeledi Magadzi and David Mahlobo,

Acting Director-General – Ms Nthabiseng Fundakubi,

Deputy Director-General: Water Services Management – Mr Risimati Mathye,

Deputy Director-General: Water Resource Management – Ms Deborah Mochotlhi,

Members of the media – those present here today and those on virtual platforms,

And all South Africans.

A very good morning to you all!

- It is, indeed, an honour to stand here this morning and address you as we reflect on our *'One Year In Office'*, taking stock of the achievements, challenges and future work by the Department of Water and Sanitation.
- We present ourselves here this morning, addressing members of the media and South Africans as per the imperatives contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.
- The **mantra** of the Department of Water and Sanitation is *'Water is Life, Sanitation is Dignity'*. This mantra is closely linked to two non-derogable rights in the Constitution: namely, the rights to life and dignity.
- As we strive each day to ensure that South Africans are provided with access to water and basic sanitation services, I must admit that it is no easy undertaking. There have been

many hurdles we've had to jump over, many bottlenecks we've had to undo in order to realise most of the gains we've made to date. We do, however, want to state that: notwithstanding the progress we will report on today, we still have a long way to go. We understand that we must always be ready for the task and dedicate ourselves to serving the citizens of South Africa!

2. A STRONGER DEPARTMENT

- In assuming Office, one of the tasks we prioritised was the stabilising of the Department. To that end, we appointed a Director-General, who started on the 3rd of January 2022 – an engineer by the name of Dr Sean Phillips.
- We set about ensuring that all senior posts are filled – namely that of CFO, DDG:Corporate Services, DDG: Water Services Management and DDG: Regulation, Compliance and Enforcement.
- When doing so, we took a stern decision that we would employ people who are fit for purpose and with the necessary qualifications, skills and capabilities.
- I am happy to report that with all of these senior posts filled, the Department is now fully functional.

3. DELIVERY MECHANISMS

- Now, the Department of Water and Sanitation comprises two main streams, namely: Water Resource Management and Water Services Management. Today, we will today outline progress on both streams. –
- On Water Services Management, we have several projects throughout the country – others in conjunction with neighbouring countries. These projects are at various stages and are aimed at ensuring water provision and water security.
- We have said on a number of occasions that we have prioritised Water Services Management while continuing to keep focus on Water Resource Management.

- The context in which prioritisation has taken place includes the following:
 - Incomplete projects that must be completed as soon as possible;
 - Addressing the problem of incapacity of municipalities to deliver on water and sanitation services;
 - Desperation of communities for water, of which we try our best to mitigate;
 - Storms in KZN and drought in Gqeberha;
 - Lack of resources;
 - Old and dysfunctional infrastructure.

- Based on the above, it has become imperative that we explore many delivery mechanisms and increase our tempo.

- We have long announced the need to reconfigure Water Boards; that process is underway and by the end of the year, we would have made substantial progress. The aim is to use Water Boards (via Directives) as one of delivery mechanisms for water and sanitation to communities, with limited differentiation between bulk and reticulation.

- One of the mechanisms we are employing is the use of the Department's Internal Construction Unit.

- We are also prioritising some district municipalities.

- We are also working towards modifying the manner in which we've been working with the private sector. Traditionally, our relation with the private sector has been via tenders - but we are now working on upscaling our partnership. In achieving this, the Department has established a National Water Partnerships Programme and a Water Partnerships Office in the Development Bank of Southern Africa.

- The Water Partnerships Programme will run **5 programmes** in the main, namely:
 - Non-revenue water
 - Management contract

- Wastewater treatment
 - Water re-use
 - Sea water (desalination)
- We have partnerships with the private sector that have already worked out, with Lebalelo Water User Association, Ivanplats Mine and with regards to the **Vaal Gamagara project**.
 - On the **Giyani Water Project**, substantial progress has been made in respect of the pipeline from Nandoni to Nsami; we have only **4km left** for the connection. Work will get underway at the beginning of September to refurbish the existing water works. In Malamulele, we anticipate the reservoir to be completed and operational by February 2023.
 - Another project relates to **drawing water via the De Hoop Dam** pipeline and Flag Boshielo to the Mokopane pipeline. This is a joint venture with **mines and Lebalelo Water User Association**. We are monitoring progress in respect of this partnership.
 - **In Gauteng**, we continue to engage with the **City of Tshwane** in respect of water challenges in Hammanskraal. In **Emfuleni**, there is generally good progress around 4 areas of work, that being **refurbishment of treatment plants and pumpstations; unblocking, replacing and refurbishment of pipes**. We've engaged with Emfuleni Local Municipality in terms of ensuring that it takes full responsibility for its water and sanitation systems.
 - **In Free State**, we announced that we would be intervening via Bloem Water on particularly water and sanitation challenges that continue to plague **Matjhabeng, Mangaung, Kopanong and Maluti-A-Phofung** – and we are indeed doing so.
 - Now, the situation **in Kwa Zulu Natal** has been exacerbated by localised flooding, resulting in damaging the very same infrastructure that is critical for provision of water and sanitation services.

- To this end, we have intervened in the uMkhanyakude District Municipality, issuing a Directive for Mhlathuze Water – as an Implementing Agent – to intervene by addressing challenges on the performance of water and sanitation functions.
- We have the **uMkhomazi Water Project** which is set to benefit eThekweni, Msunduzi, uMgungundlovu, Ugu, Ilembe and Harry Gwala. The project will transfer water from the uMkhomazi River to augment the **uMngeni Water Supply System** (uMngeni WSS), which supplies domestic water to more than 5 million people and industries in South Africa's third largest regional economy, viz Durban and Pietermaritzburg regions.
- We recently held a meeting with all the affected Water Services Authorities, the Water Boards in KZN and the Trans Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA) and reached consensus on the offtake agreements which will have to be entered into. I am happy with the current trajectory and the willingness of all parties to work together.
- Yesterday, residents in Tongaat took to the streets, voicing their distress in respect of a lack of water in the area. I will be addressing them later today.
- Our intervention in the **Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality** has yielded positive results. As we continue to work together with the Municipality, we are even exploring other ways to elongate the use of available water.
- One way in which we have assisted the Metro was through the **Nooitgedacht Water Scheme** which released its first drops at the end of March this year. This has largely assisted in increasing water supply to the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro. We successfully convened a Workshop this past Tuesday, focusing on **creating a water resilient Nelson Mandela Bay Metro**. The participation and inputs received from all attendees (which comprised members of academia, business representatives, amongst others) are overwhelming.

4. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

- The **Bill on the National Water Resource Infrastructure Agency** has gone through, and we are now at the consultation stage.

- We were expected to establish another **entity for regulation**, we have instead opted for an alternative due to financial constraints. We are happy to announce that **the Regulator** is in place – it has taken the form of a Branch and will provide Secretariat support to 11 Commissioners.
- **Water rights have evolved over time**, with the main law being from 1956. The changes have given rise to challenges by some Water User Associations on the transfer of licenses qualified by ownership changes, and the issue is: Should land transfers automatically also lead to license transfers?
- We are aware that this very aspect was before the Constitutional Court yesterday. We will convene a workshop to deal with this subject, and it will be attended by all stakeholders, including the Water Tribunal.

5. CONCLUSION

- Ladies and gentlemen, members of the media, we are in public administration. Whilst this comes with a certain honour, it also places great responsibility on us in Office.
- Public administration entails **accountability, transparency and responsiveness**. We were elected into Office as a result of citizens exercising their democratic right. We are therefore in Office to be of service to the people, who are the first law!
- As a department tasked with a resource as precious as water – which is vital not only for life but for economic development as well – we are very alive to the task at hand and we remain resolute in our stance.
- I would like to take this opportunity and thank you for your time and attention.

Thank you.