



MINISTERIAL ADDRESS ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DROP REPORTS FOR THE MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION, MR SENZO MCHUNU, AT THE RELEASE OF THE BLUE DROP, NO DROP REPORTS AND GREEN DROP PROGRESS REPORT AND AWARDS CEREMONY ON 5 DECEMBER 2023 AT EMPEROR'S PALACE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND PURPOSE OF THE DAY

Programme Director and Deputy Director-General: Water and Sanitation Services Management, Dr Risimati Mathye,
Deputy Minister, Judith Tshabalala,
Executive Mayor of Ekurhuleni, Cllr Sivuyile Ngodwana,
All Mayors present,
Director-General of the Department, Dr Sean Phillips,
Director-General: Regulation, Compliance and Enforcement, Mr Xolani Zwane,
Chairpersons of Water Boards present,
Representatives from various municipalities present this morning,
All Government officials throughout all spheres,
Members of the media present,
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning!

1. Let me also take this opportunity and welcome you all to the release of the Blue and No Drop reports and awards ceremony, where we will be **awarding those who have heeded the call** and subscribed to ensuring that citizens are protected – **with the hopes of amplifying the call** for all municipalities to join in. Today, the Director-General will also provide a progress Report on the Green Drop assessments.
2. The **Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, affords citizens the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or wellbeing; it also affords citizens a right to have access to sufficient water** – these two rights are

fundamentally linked to the rights to life and human dignity – two non-derogable rights in the Constitution and our mantra; *“Water is Life. Sanitation is Dignity”*. Our mandate is indeed one that gives life and we dare not fail the citizens of the Republic.

3. **The Blue Drop and Green Drop certification programmes were introduced in 2008 – 15 years ago, with the first reports released in 2009 and each year thereafter, until 2014.**
4. **When we joined the Ministry back in 2021, we committed the Department to reintroducing these flagship programmes** for the sector, we **have since resuscitated these programmes** and I am very pleased with this achievement. We **have once again audited all Water Services Authorities** in terms of their drinking water systems, water conservation and demand management as well as wastewater treatment works.
5. These programmes are important as they **serve as indicators** as to where we are as a country **in terms of the quality of our drinking and waste water**. We also have the **No Drop programme, which focuses on water conservation and demand management, aimed at ensuring that water distribution systems function effectively** and do not lose precious, much needed water via leaks.
6. One other important aspect of these programmes is that they **set standards higher than minimum requirements and they challenge Water Services Authorities to go the extra mile in a quest for excellence**. Whilst there is primary legislation which deals with these aspects, it **needs to be understood that these programmes are intended to augment and compliment** the normal legislative and regulatory provisions.
7. The **Drop Certification programme has ignited the passion and pride in the water sector**. It **embeds a culture of regulatory compliance** and provides a standard for municipalities to work towards. Through the recognition of excellent performance, the



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



blue drop
CERTIFICATION
drinking water quality
REGULATION



no drop
CERTIFICATION
water use efficiency
REGULATION



green drop
CERTIFICATION
waste water service
REGULATION

programme provides a powerful incentive for improvement. The Drop Certification programmes have become more than just a reporting mechanism to the participants – it has become the accolade of water professionals, in and outside of this beautiful country. Perhaps most importantly, the programme provides citizens with important information about the performance of their water and sanitation services.

8. It was encouraging to see the response from Water Service Authorities, Water Boards, and other stakeholders who heeded the call to provide relevant evidence required by the Drop Assessments. To municipalities which have not fared according to expectation, the message is to use these results to develop improvement plans.
9. We understand that as a National Department for Water and Sanitation, we have an overall responsibility for ensuring that citizens of the Republic have access to clean water and healthy sanitation systems throughout the country indeed . So, to that end, we have been assisting and engaging Municipalities to deliver on their mandates and have devised a number of mechanisms to help them achieve that.
10. We remain committed to ensuring that Water Service Authorities provide our people with access to safe drinking water and protect them from the real risk of waterborne diseases. However, there is a concerning decline in the performance of many municipal drinking water systems since the last report was released in 2014.
11. The Department of Water and Sanitation is working collaboratively with the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, the Municipal Infrastructure Agency, the Department of Human Settlements and National Treasury to to address the findings of the Drop reports. Action plans have been developed to address the key findings in the worst performing municipalities. These action plans include the provision of grants worth more than R20 billion per



annum to municipalities, technical and engineering support and assistance, capacity building and training, and financial management advice and support.

12. **There are however, limits to which national government support and intervention can address the decline in services, and fundamental reform is also required. To this end, we recently gazetted the Water Services Amendment Bill** for public comment. The **Bill will result in more professionally managed, capable, efficient, and financially viable water services institutions.**
13. The **Department will continue to devote its resources and focus to ensuring that water services received by citizens of this country are of acceptable quality and standard.** The Department uses its regulatory and support branches to identify challenges and address them as early as practically possible. The **role of the Blue, No and Green Drops are key in this process and will continue to show their value going forward.**
14. **As I step down, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the participating municipalities, including the researchers, service providers and sector partners, who have collectively taken ownership of this programme and made it what it is – an internationally recognised programme.**
15. **Congratulations to all the award recipients – thank you for truly being in service of the people.** To those who are still left behind, we call upon you to step -up!

I thank you.