



MINISTRY  
WATER AND SANITATION  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**BUDGET AND POLICY STATEMENT, VOTE 41 DEPARTMENT OF  
WATER AND SANITATION  
BY HON. DAVID MAHLOBO, MP  
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S12A NCOP, CAPE TOWN  
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Honourable Speaker, Mrs T Didiza

HE Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa

HE Paul Mashatile, Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa

Hon. P. Majodina , Minister of Water and Sanitation and other Hon Ministers

Hon. Sello Seithlolo, Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation and other Deputy Ministers

Hon. M Ntuli and D Dlakude- Chief Whip and Deputy Chief Whip

Hon L Basson, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation and other Members

Honourable Members of the National Assembly

The Director-General, Dr. S Phillips, and other senior managers of DWS

Leadership of our Entities- Chairpersons, Members of the Boards, CEOs, and Senior Executives

Leadership of various stakeholders in our sector and civil society Esteemed Guests

Fellow South Africans

## INTRODUCTION

1. Humanity across the globe is feeling scared and some have lost hope due to a number of developments like global security instability, slow economic growth, supply chains disruptions, high cost of living, rising levels of poverty, inequality and unemployment. We need to draw strength from President Nelson Mandela's words when he said: *"There were dark moments when my faith in humanity was solely tested, but I would not and could not give myself up to despair. That way lies death and defeat."*
2. As humanity, we are interconnected and interdependent with one shared aspiration. We all long and yearn for a brighter future, and this department shall ensure your human right to life through access to safe drinking water and its benefits, including restoring your right to dignity and environment that is not harmful through and protection of water resources for the next generations.
3. Honourable Members, due to population growth, migration, urbanisation, climate change and economic growth over the last 30 years, we have witnessed significant decline in the available quantity and quality of water resources in our country and the SADC region with untold impacts on health, food, energy, environmental, economic and security prosperity of many nations. We have to manage our water resources to achieve long term environmental sustainable, social and economic benefits for all.
4. We are dependent on shared water courses as the SADC region, and we have demonstrated the power of cooperation with little evidence of

armed conflict. Water knows no boundaries and does not ascribe to ideologies.

5. Africa is not spared from being a climate change hotspot and faces significant climate risks. Climate change is a reality whose impact is now being felt across all economic sectors, on lives and livelihoods. In most cases, we have been caught unprepared, with some disastrous consequences as a result, and it is the government's call for all stakeholders to take their part and contribute towards reducing risk and vulnerability.
6. It also emphasises the urgency of the need to accelerate and increase investment in building climate change resilience and adaptation, especially at local levels where the impact of these disasters is mostly felt. The question is: "How do we build preparedness for the new normal?"
7. We are on course to create a conducive environment for water security through the harnessing of the social and productive potential of water to the benefit of all, ensuring its destructive potential is sufficiently contained, but equally, we are the first to admit that South Africa cannot yet be considered fully "water secure".

## **ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES IN SOUTH AFRICA**

8. The average national access to RDP level of water service has increased from about 60% in 1994 to about 90% now. This is a major achievement. However, it does not mean that 90% of all communities in all areas have access to water. Some communities have 100% access, while some have 0% access.

9. Women in rural areas and in informal settlements bear the brunt of the burden of this remaining lack of access to water, as they often carry the responsibility of fetching water from other sources, which are often polluted and sometimes infested with dangerous animals.
10. In recent years, many municipalities have been prioritising refurbishment and repair of existing infrastructure with their infrastructure grant allocations, rather than prioritising new infrastructure to provide access to the remaining 10% - this explains why progress in increasing access has slowed down
11. During this 7th administration we will be prioritising investment in both bulk water supply infrastructure and municipal water reticulation to ensure that we provide access to the remaining 10% of our population without access to water as quickly as possible.
12. Despite the above outlook on the state of water and sanitation access, the country remains one of the 30 driest countries in the world, with an average 470mm of rainfall per year. Our water losses have been on the rise in the past 10 years due to population growth, aged infrastructure, low capital investment on infrastructure renewal, lack of operations and maintenance by municipalities to mention but a few. Compounding the problem is the high average consumption per person per day of 218 litres compared to the world average of 173 litres per person per day.

### **2023 DWS BLUE DROP (DRINKING WATER), GREEN DROP (WASTEWATER) AND NO DROP REPORTS**

13. Results of the 2023 Blue, Green and No-drop assessment reports provided a comprehensive independent assessment of the state of all municipal drinking water and wastewater treatment systems in South

Africa, as well as the degree to which the drinking water distribution systems of municipalities supply water efficiently, without wasting water.

14. The drop reports indicated that the performance of municipal water and sanitation services have declined since the last time these reports were issued in 2014. 67 out of 144 Water Services Authorities (WSAs) scored 'critical' on average across their water supply systems and/or wastewater systems in the 2023 Blue Drop and 2022 Green Drop assessments. A further 38 scored 'poor' on average. Therefore, 73% of WSAs scored critical or poor.
15. **Water supply systems with poor or bad microbiological water quality compliance increased from 5% in 2014 to 46% in 2023 – resulting in increased risk of water-borne diseases.**
16. **66% of municipal wastewater infrastructure is in a poor or critically poor condition. The municipal wastewater systems in an overall critical state of performance increased from 30% in 2013 to 39% in 2022.**
17. **90 of the 144 water services authorities had at least one critical wastewater system, resulting in increased risk of diseases such as cholera across the country.**
18. **National average for municipal non-revenue water increased from 37% in 2014 to 47% in 2023.**
19. **Honourable Members, these reports have the following implications:**

- a. Money spent to develop dams and water treatment works is wasted if a large portion of the treated water is thrown away through leaks in municipal water distribution systems.
  - b. Municipalities with high non-revenue water are unable to pay water boards for treated water supplied by them and cannot afford to properly maintain and operate their water distribution infrastructure.
20. The drop reports were provided to all water services authorities, and they were advised as to the causes of the decline and what needs to be done about it. The identified causes include water and sanitation infrastructure being in a poor condition due to lack of maintenance; and non-adherence to standard operating processes for drinking water and wastewater treatment. It was also found that many municipalities are not hiring the required staff with the correct qualifications. These causes are in turn the result of weak municipal billing and revenue collection for water and sanitation services and insufficient prioritization of budgets for maintenance and operations by municipal councils. Vandalism and metal theft of infrastructure are also an increasing cause of infrastructure failure, due to inadequate security being provided by municipalities.
21. This decline in municipal water and sanitation services has taken place despite the fact that DWS, COGTA, the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agency, the Department of Human Settlements, and National Treasury all provide a high level of support to municipalities, in the form of grants and assistance with the development of improvement plans, technical and engineering support and assistance, capacity building and training, and financial management advice and support.

22. Minister Majodina has decided to continue with these drops assessment as an important instrument to improve the performance of the sector.

## **SUPPORT TO MUNICIPALITIES AND INTERVENTIONS**

23. Honourable Members, through power and functions of the Minister of Water and Sanitation as enshrined in the National Water Act and Water Services Act and in line with Sec 154 of the Municipal Systems Acts, DWS has taken intensive steps to support municipalities through ministerial intervention through-out the country by ensuring that grants allocations to municipalities are used for the intended purpose to complete some of the most critical bulk water and sanitation projects. Our support package includes the following measures:
- a) DWS and Water Boards are supporting many of the municipalities to implement improvement plans agreed to by Ministry and municipal leadership.
  - b) DWS, COGTA, Municipal Infrastructure Support Agency, Department of Human Settlements, National Treasury:
    - i. Allocate water and sanitation infrastructure grants worth more than R20 billion per annum to municipalities
    - ii. Provide technical and engineering support and assistance, capacity building and training, and financial management advice and support
24. Honourable Members, despite all this support, drop reports indicate that municipal water services are declining sharply. Limitations to support:

- a) If municipal leadership does not respond to directives, does not listen to advice or does not accept support, performance can only be improved by addressing the leadership challenges.
  - b) Routine maintenance and operation must be funded by revenue from the sale of water by municipalities to customers – DWS and COGTA are not allowed to provide funding to municipalities for this.
  - c) DWS and COGTA are repeatedly providing municipalities with grants to repair infrastructure, which is not maintained by the municipalities, deteriorates again rapidly, and then funding needs to be provided again.
  - d) National government cannot make decisions to prioritise maintenance and operation funding for water services on behalf of municipalities – these decisions must be made by municipal Councils
  - e) National government cannot hire staff on behalf of municipalities – municipal leadership must prioritise the filling of positions with appropriately qualified staff and budget for this from revenue.
25. We are making good progress in unblocking and accelerating the delayed projects, but more still needs to be done to address this problem. To begin with, the main bulk pipeline from Nandoni Dam to Nsami Dam near Giyani was completed at the end of March 2023, and the refurbishment and optimization of the Giyani Water Treatment Works was completed in mid-June 2024, while phase 1 of water reticulation of 24 villages of 55 villages is currently underway and as of June 2024, 9 villages out of 24 are complete and 15 villages will be completed and expected to receive water by the end of August this year. Phase 2 of the Giyani reticulation of the further 31 villages is expected to start later this year and will be completed in mid-2026.



26. One of the DWS programmes which have been notoriously delayed is the Bucket Eradication Programme. Completion of this programme will be one of our priorities. Under the previous administration progress was made in completing projects in two out of four provinces, and we intend to complete the remaining projects in the Free State by October this year, and one remaining project in the Northern Cape by March next year.
27. We will also continue to collaborate with the City of Tshwane and Magalies Water to complete the Magalies Water project to provide an alternative source of clean drinking water to Hammanskraal by October this year, while the Rooiwal Wastewater Treatment Works is being repaired and upgraded so that the sewage pollution in the Apies River can be addressed to enable the Temba Water Treatment Works to become functional again.
28. Our intervention through Rand Water to address sewage pollution in the Vaal, particularly by Emfuleni Local Municipality, will also continue. Good progress has been made in refurbishing and repairing sewage pump stations, unblocking and repairing collapsed sewer lines, as well as repairing and refurbishing wastewater treatment works. The remaining work is to upgrade the capacity of the major wastewater treatment works in the area, and these projects are currently in the procurement phase. During this financial year we will also be supporting Rand Water and Emfuleni Local Municipality to implement a decision by the Council of the Emfuleni Municipality to establish a special purpose vehicle with Rand Water to be the Water Service Provider in the municipality in future.

29. Honourable Members, we have mentioned a few of our major interventions at municipal level. We are supporting municipalities in all the provinces and will continue to implement the various support initiatives put in place by the former administration, including the Bulela Metsi initiative in North West; the Kimberley Bulk Water Supply Project in the Northern Cape; the Loskop Regional Bulk Water Supply and Lekwa Water and Sanitation Services Intervention in Mpumalanga; the Moutse East, Loskop and Olifantspoort Ebenezer schemes in Limpopo; the Mandlakazi Bulk Water Scheme in the Zululand district, and the uMkhanyakude and uThukela Section 63 interventions in KwaZulu-Natal; the Maluti-A-Phofung and Matjhabeng interventions in Free State; and the Lower Sundays River, Greater Mbizana, Nqamakhwe, and Ndlambe water schemes and Makana intervention in the Eastern Cape.

## **ETHEKWINI AND GAUTENG WATER CHALLENGES**

30. Honourable Members, water supply disruptions in Gauteng and in eThekweni have increased in recent years and have resulted in much hardship for the residents of these areas.
31. In both instances, the underlying problem is a shortage of water. The demand for water in both Gauteng and eThekweni has grown rapidly, largely due to population growth. The planners in the national department anticipated this growth in demand and planned major new national water resource infrastructure projects to meet the demand. Unfortunately, in both cases the start of these projects was delayed.

## CONCLUSION

32. We are faced by several challenges globally and domestically and many have lost hope. Through the dark tunnel there is light. Our collective effort and resilience of our nation will see us through. Let's remain vigilant of the dangers faced by our revolutionary advancement but we should never be rigid, inflexible, or inactive to change. We have shared dreams and aspirations.
33. Let us work together towards the prosperity of our nation and for the benefit of future generations by using our water efficiently and by protecting our environment.
34. God bless South Africa, and her sons and daughters.

I thank you!