



WATER remains the central most important resource for our country. | KAREN SANDISON African News Agency (ANA)

Department fast-tracking water-use licences

WATER is central to the development of the economy and job creation. The irrigated agricultural economy, which accounts for 60% water-use, has created 8.5 million direct and indirect employment opportunities (2011, Government Communication and Information System report).

The energy sector, although only using 2% of the available water, contributes about 15% to the gross domestic product and creates jobs for 250 000 people. The energy sector, with Eskom at the pinnacle, is dependent on reliable supplies of

water for the generation of electricity.

The 1998 National Water Act makes provision for one's right to water, being the reserve. This is water required to maintain the ecosystem and basic human needs. All other water uses must be authorised by Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) or the Catchment Management Agencies (CMA).

Fast-tracking the water-use licence procedure is at the heart of the DWS strategy to enhance growth. The DWS recently revised its regulations governing the procedural requirements for

applications and appeals to fall within 90 days, rather than the previously prescribed 300 days. The 90 days applies only after applicants have submitted all correct and authentic documentation to the DWS and the CMA.

We call upon all stakeholders to ensure seamless pre-application processing by submitting correct and relevant documentation timeously.

Advancing the licences also contributes to redressing past imbalances, through water reform allocation.

SPUTNIK RATAU | Acting chief director,
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