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Title: Effective water-use licence registration can help manage water resources in the country

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# Effective water-use licence registration can help manage water resources in the country

During this year's State Of the Nation Address (SONA), President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that the Department of Water and Sanitation will now issue water use licences in a period of 90 days, as opposed to the previously 300 days (3-year-period).

This was well received by independent water users, especially in business and the agricultural sector.

South Africa is an arid country, making it one of the top 30 countries in the world facing the dire challenges of water scarcity.

Hence, earlier this month, COGTA Minister Dr Nkosazana-Dlamini Zuma declared drought in the country a national emergency.

Given this, rocket science knowledge is not required to bring home the fact that citizens of the country have to use water effectively and wisely if we wish to build a sustainable future.

For a sustainable future to be realised, as the gatekeeper of water resources, Minister Lindiwe Sisulu through her Department, has to monitor how much water there is, how much is used, by whom and where.

This is a mandate that flows from the National Water Act (Act 36 of 1998) which gives the Minister tools to gather information required for optimal management of the country's water resources. The registration of water use is one of these tools.

Water use registration helps to manage water resources, ensure fair share allocation, protects the environment and enables the department to charge for water.

Those obligated to register for water use licences include water users who use water for irrigation and recreational purposes, industries including mining, power generation and agriculture.

As the Department of Water and Sanitation gears up to implement President Ramaphosa's revised timeframe, interested parties should also play their part.

In this regard, all water users have an obligation to register their water use as per statutory requirements. Any failure to comply with these requirements, the

department will invoke the strict penalties as prescribed in the National Water Act.

Universal access to water is a basic human right. This fundamental right finds expression in the Human Rights month of March and is commemorated on the eve of World Water Day on 22 March 2020. The basic right to water provision is thus accompanied with the responsibility placed on water users to register for water use.

The registration for water-use licences will enable the Department of Water and Sanitation to effectively manage the water resources of the country. **By Lebogang Maseko**