

# Minister Sisulu's **anti-corruption efforts** should be commended

**L**indiwe Sisulu is only a year into office as Minister of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation. Since her appointment, she has set her sight on turning the department around.

When Minister Sisulu took to office in her new role, she made a commitment to clean up the Department of Water and Sanitation and stabilise all the water boards that work directly with municipalities through the supply of bulk water. She reiterated this commitment during her Budget Vote in July.

Some of the interventions Minister Sisulu introduced included establishing a Stabilisation Committee to provide advisory services to her and to assist the department's director-general with professional capacity in various disciplines.

The committee has since accelerated investigations into matters related to maladministration, fraud and corruption and misconduct, and worked on improving findings of audits by the Auditor-General (A-G).

It is worth noting that the department attained an unqualified audit outcome for the 2018/19 financial year. During a recent media briefing, Minister Sisulu outlined efforts to root out corruption by senior officials in the department and its entities.

She said that from 1 April 2012 to 31 September 2019, 249 reported cases were investigated. Of these, 139 were referred for disciplinary action.

Following the disciplinary cases, 86 officials were found guilty while 14 officials were not found guilty. The Minister also has appointed Advocate Terry Motau to lead a team of lawyers to review all fraud, corruption and irregular expenditure reports at the department and ensure that all recommendations are fully implemented.

This follows reports that more than R16 billion worth of projects were issued irregularly, including corruption and fraud by officials in the department and its entities.


These are just some of the efforts

by the Minister to root out corruption at the department, amid a number of negative reports casting doubt on her capacity to bring about positive change in the water and sanitation sector.

The negative media reports are an unfortunate distraction from what needs to be done to accelerate the provision of water, especially now as the global community is at the mercy of the coronavirus pandemic.

As President Ramaphosa said when addressing the nation on 13 May 2020, we need to come together and embrace change. Change in this regard is meant to restore the dignity of the most impoverished in the country, through the supply of proper sanitation and clean water.

For the sake of our country, let us put politics aside and enable Minister Sisulu to do what she was appointed to do, which is to ensure that the country's water resources are protected, managed, conserved and controlled in a manner suitable to benefit the environment and all citizens of the country.

We should not praise a fish for swimming, what we should do is to commend a captain for saving a sinking ship. 

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**\*Lebogang Maseko works for the Department of Water and Sanitation.**

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