

SISULU ON COURSE TO ROOT OUT CORRUPTION



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POLITICS aside, Minister Lindiwe Sisulu's efforts to root out corruption at the Department of Water and Sanitation should be commended.

Since her appointment to the ministry, she has set her eyes on turning the department around.

When Sisulu took to the office this time last year, she committed to clean it up and to bring stability to all the water boards that work directly with the municipalities through the supply of bulk water.

She reiterated this commitment during her budget vote in July.

She revealed that during the period from April 1, 2012 to September 31, 2019, a total of 249 reported cases have been investigated, and that 139 of these cases were found to be true and were referred for disciplinary action, while 110 of them were found to be false.

She said out of the 139 disciplinary cases, 86 officials had been found guilty while 14 were cleared. She added that 24 officials had re-signed as a result.

Sisulu set out to clean the department, to bring about stability

In addition to this, Sisulu has appointed advocate Terry Motau to lead a team of lawyers to review all fraud, corruption and irregular expenditure claims at the department and to ensure that all recommendations are fully implemented.

This came to light as more than R16-billion worth of projects were issued irregularly, which included corruption and fraud by officials in the department and its entities.

Among some of the interventions Sisulu set out to implement at the time was the establishment of a stabilisation committee that would provide advisory services to her and also 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, misconduct and worked on improvements following findings of audits by the auditor-general (AG).

While on improving the audits, it is worth noting that the department has attained an unqualified audit outcome for the 2018/19 financial year. This was heard in Parliament this week, during a sitting of the portfolio committee on water and sanitation.

Meanwhile, Sisulu revealed during a media briefing on May 13 that she has dug her hands into the mud to root out corruption by a senior official in the department and its entities.

These are some of the strides the minister continues to focus on in rooting out corruption, even amid negative media reports that continue to propagate false claims that she has her eye on becoming deputy president.

The negative media reports are an unfortunate outcome, and serve to deter the steps needed to accelerate the provision of water, especially now as the global community is at the mercy of the coronavirus pandemic.

As President Cyril Ramaphosa said while addressing the nation on May 13, we need to come together and embrace change.

Change in this regard is meant to restore the dignity of the most impoverished people of the nation, through the supply of proper sanitation and clean water.

For the sake of our country, let us put politics aside and allow Sisulu to do what she is 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 the citizens of the country.

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