

## REMARKS FOR THE MINISTER AT THE MEDIA BRIEFING WITH GAUTENG METROS AND MUNICIPALITIES AT THE CAPITAL, MENLYN MAINE, 14 MARCH 2023

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### 1. SALUTATIONS AND INTRODUCTION:

Good morning to:

Deputy Ministers David Mahlobo, and the newly appointed Ms Judith Tshabalala,

Mayors and Deputy Mayors from various municipalities,

Chairperson of the Rand Water Board and Members,

Executives from Entities – Joburg Water and Rand Water,

Special Advisors,

Director-General of the Department,

Senior Officials from the Department and municipalities,

Members of the media, those here and those connected via other platforms,

All South Africans,

Thank you for honoring our invite.

- **Members of the media, we are here to account to the public on the outcomes of yesterday's meeting and to also inform the public of the measures being taken in the water sector to ensure the sustainable and reliable supply of water.**
- **The month of March is observed as 'Water Month' in the sector, where we focus our attention on the importance of freshwater and advocate for the sustainable management of freshwater resources.**
- **World Water Day, which is on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March, is spearheaded by the United Nations (UN), using the day as a basis for longer-term action involving governments across the globe. The theme for 2023 is "Accelerating Change", and seeks to inform policy and decision-makers, inside and outside the water community, how improvements in water resources management as well as access to water supply and sanitation services, are essential to overcoming poverty and addressing various other social and economic inequities.**

- **Water is at the core of sustainable development** and is critical for socio-economic development, healthy ecosystems and for human survival. **To date, great strides have been made towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6** on water and sanitation by 2030, **and World Water Day is an opportunity to contribute to speeding up progress.**
- **We will be participating in the UN Conference on Water in New York next week and will come back armed with information on how we can better the sector.**

## **2. CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATE:**

- The **Constitution of the Republic is clear – as Government across all spheres, we have to see to the provision of basic services to the people and to successfully do so, we need to work together.**
- The **Department of Water and Sanitation is responsible for planning, development and management of water resource infrastructure** and for the management of catchments, as well as for setting minimum norms and standards for water and sanitation services.
- The **Water Boards are mandated to assist municipalities with potable bulk water infrastructure and services.** Rand Water procures raw water from the department, purifies and supplies to various municipal bulk off-take points like reservoirs, towers and pumpstations.
- **Municipalities as Water Service Authorities are mandated to ensure that local residents and industries are supplied with water** and sanitation services that meet national minimum norms and standards. Sections 154 and 139 of the Constitution do however, allow for Ministerial interventions where municipalities fall short.

## **3. WATER SECURITY IN SOUTH AFRICA:**

- **South Africa is considered to be one of the top 30 driest and water-scarce countries in the world** and our water sources are mainly supported by sporadic rainfall, and this rainfall is distributed unevenly in the country, and across the seasons.

- Furthermore, the average water consumption in the country is 233 litres per capita per day, while Gauteng's average consumption is at least 300 litres per capita per day. Both these consumption levels are way higher compared to a world average of 173. In addition, the non-revenue water is above 40% in average, compared to the international norm of 15%, while physical losses due to leaks and burst is about 25%.
- Therefore, in order for us to guarantee water security, we build dams to preserve for long term use. In areas where there is no sufficient water due to lack of rain, water is conveyed from water rich areas or catchments through a network of infrastructure such canals and tunnels, pipelines, pump stations to preserve for later use and also through underground water harvesting.
- To this end, majority of our dams are currently at full capacity and there is adequate bulk water security to meet current and projected demands, except in areas in the Nelson Mandela Bay which has been experiencing drought at least for the past 8 years. The current storage dam level is at 7.31%. the department is however, intervening there to assist the municipality on addressing component of physical losses through water conservation and water demand, while augmenting other water sources like ground water.
- So, this is just to assure South Africans that, notwithstanding that we are a water scarce country, there is availability of water.

#### **4. CHALLENGES WHICH LEAD TO INTERMITTENT WATER SUPPLY**

- Gauteng Province is South Africa and the continent's economic hub with at least 16.1 million residents. The Vaal Dam, which part of the Integrated Vaal River System is the main source of water to the province, and is currently sitting at 103%.
- There is a constant need to weigh the supply vs the demand; there is currently a shortage of supply in some municipalities, in terms of average daily supply versus average daily demand, reasons for same will be referenced below.

- **During the months of September last year, January and February this year, there were peak demands in Rand Water's systems due to heat waves, which resulted in some system malfunctions, compounded by high levels of load shedding.**
- **This led to Rand Water losing its production capacity and subsequently experiencing low water levels in its reserve reservoirs, resulting in municipalities not able to meet their peak and fluctuating hot summer demand to their residents.**

#### **5. ENGAGEMENTS WITH MUNICIPALITIES:**

- **We've called today's media briefing following a series of meetings we have held, but particularly following yesterday's meeting on the sustainability of water provision in the Gauteng province.**
- **The Department has had one-on-one engagements with the three Metros namely, City of Johannesburg, City of Tshwane and Ekurhuleni as well as other municipalities within the bulk-supply areas of Rand Water e.g. Emfuleni, Rand West, Mogale City and a technical report has been presented.**
- **The findings in the technical report are as follows:**
- **The current water demand for Gauteng is sitting at 4563 megalitres per day while Rand Water is currently able to supply 4431 ml/pd, with therefore leaves a variance of 396 ml/pd and equal to 9%.**
- **Out of the 4431 that pumped into municipalities' systems, at least 5 % is lost within the Rand water System resulting in 3968 megalitres per day reaching municipalities.**
- **Out of this 3968 ml/pd, an estimated 45% is lost within municipalities' systems as Non-Revenue Water, yet the international norm should be 15% and below.**
- **Of the 45% Non-Revenue water, at least 20% is recorded as physical losses such as leaks and burst pipe.**
- **Inefficiencies in the speed and quality of repairs for leaks and burst pipes.**

- **Non implementation of water efficiency solutions** such as Water Conservation and Water Demand Management in municipalities.
- **Unplanned human settlement** resulting in un-metered water consumption.
- **Effect of load-shedding** on the bulk water treatment, storage and distribution from Rand Water to Municipalities and then to customers.
- **Impact of low infrastructure financial investment by municipalities** into water services projects such as storage reservoirs, pump stations, towers and old pipe renewals or upgrades.
- **Customer behaviour** for not reducing their water usage even when asked to do so by WSA.

## 6. **INTERVENTIONS:**

- Therefore, **to self-sustain water provision in South Africa and Gauteng in particular, there are short, medium and long terms plans that the Department is implementing together with Rand Water and Municipalities in Gauteng.**

### ***(I) Water Security Provision: DWS and Rand Water***

- In the **short term**, within this current calendar year 2023, **Rand Water has in February commissioned an additional 210MI/d Reservoir under the Mepleton System in Vlaakfontein**, aimed to increase water security for part of Ekurhuleni and Tshwane.
- **Rand Water is also increasing the treatment capacity at Zuikerbosch from 3800 MI/day by a further 600 MI/day** between 2023 and 2025. Of the additional 600 MI/day, in June 2023, Rand Water will commission 150MI/Day while 300MI/day will come in 2024 and the 150MI/day in 2025. The total treatment for Zuilerbosch will therefore be 4400MI/day by 2025.
- In the **long-term**, by 2028 **Rand Water is planning to invest R28 billion by constructing additional storage reservoirs** for Meredale, Daleside, Klipfontein,

Germiston, Hartebeeshook, Bronberg, Brakpan and Selcote. **By 2028, Rand Water would have increased its storage capacity of treated water from the current number of reservoirs from 60 to 72 while its storage capacity from 6100MI/day to 7630MI/day.**

- In addition to the long-term, the **Department is also accelerating the Lesotho Highlands Water Phase 2**, which **once completed**, will transfer up to **485 million cubic meters /annum of water** from the upper reaches of the Orange (Senqu) River in Lesotho through the existing conveyance infrastructure to the Integrated Vaal River System in South Africa, and the bulk of this water is routed to Gauteng Province.

**(II) Metropolitan Municipalities and other WSA**

- **City of Johannesburg's Water Entity (Joburg Water) undertook to revise its Water Conservation/Water Demand Management Strategies in October 2021** with aim **to reduce demand by 37 123 MI per annum** from the technical interventions such as pressure management, active leak detection, pipeline replacement, customer metering and etc. **This intervention is already in place for the 2022/2023 FY and has drastically reduced its physical losses.**
- In addition, **City Of Johannesburg, through Johannesburg Water has set aside at least R402 million for the next 18 months starting in March 2023 to construct a new Crosby pumpstation, a new bulk line to connect Rand Water supply into Crosby Reservoir as well as Brixton Reservoir and Tower.**
- In the **long term**, compared to its annual capital budget of under R1 billion, **City Of Johannesburg / Johannesburg Water has an estimated annual infrastructure requirement of at least R6.4 billion a year to match the projected infrastructure upgraded.**
- **City of Tshwane** has planned an estimated **R350 million for the next 24 months** starting in March 2023 **to augment new water infrastructure such as reservoirs, bulk pipelines and towers for areas in Soshanguve, Atteridgeville system and Laudium /Erasmia system, Mooikloof, Western Centurion, Garsfontein and others surroundings. City of Tshwane however, needs a project investment of**

not less than R7.8 billion year on year for the next 10 years to match its infrastructure backlog and future upgrades.

- In addition, **Ekurhuleni Metro** has a planned **R581 million** for the next 2 years to address pipeline upgrades, construction of new reservoirs and towers that will aid relief to affected areas such as Tsakane, Vlakfontein, Duduza, Benoni and others. **Ekurhuleni still has water and sanitation infrastructure backlog of at least R19.1 billion with infrastructure almost reaching its designed useful life.**
- The rest of the other municipalities also have similar challenges as the 3 metros, namely, **Emfuleni LM through section 63 has a planned water services investment of R410 million for the next 2 years for infrastructure upgraded to reduce common challenges such as illegal connections, poor speed and quality of repairs.** The outer year planned investment is **R600 million.**
- **Lesedi Local Municipality's** next 2 year planned investment is **R150 million** for upgrading and replacement of **Asbestos Cement Water supply pipelines in Heidelberg, Phase 7, drilling of boreholes in rural areas in Lesedi, construction of a 15 MI Reservoir for Obed Nkosi Township and bulk water supply pipeline.**
- **Midvaal LM** has a projected investment need of **R1.43 billion** for the next 5 years, however they have for the next 2 years, **R56 million** that is aimed at addressing aged infrastructure and installation of zonal bulk meters to measure accurately its demand and supply patterns. **Rand West LM** on the other hand has planned **R18.5million** for the **construction of alternative water supply pipeline in Glenharvie, replacing of conventional meters with prepaid water in Finsbury.**
- **Merafong LM** has planned budget of **R271 million** for the next 2 years to invest in the following: **Khutsong North Water Project (STAGE 4), Rehabilitation of the old 007 Reservoir due to structural instability caused by sinkholes** and Adata Khutsong Reservoir project for Stabilisation of the Reservoir Foundation.
- **Finally, Mogale City LM** has a planned budget of **R710.1 million for the next 2 years**, while its expected future investment beyond 2025 will require at least **R1.32 billion.** Immediate projects include: **Construction of 4x Solar Powered Borehole Scheme and 8 km water reticulation for Sekata Community, Construction of 5 Megalitre**

**Steel Reservoir, Planning, Design and Implementation of 15 Megalitre Steel Reservoir, bulk water pipeline, sewer pipeline to support the planned Leratong node housing and commercial development, to name a few.**

- **The consolidated megalitre increase is anticipated to be 600MI. Therefore, in Gauteng alone, Rand Water, metros and other WSA have committed an estimated R3 298.5 billion, for the next two years.**
  
- **While we have these plans in place, we need to call on consumers to use water sparingly and to also take note of the following:**
  - **Adhere to requests to reduce demand during crisis periods.**
  - **Prioritise payment of their water bills** to ensure that WSAs re-invest the resources to water and sanitation infrastructure e.g. Operations and Maintenance, Capital Expenditure.
  - **Abstain from illegal water connections and water theft** which weakens sustainable water provision and results in low pressure provision by the system.
  - **Stop and report vandalism of water infrastructure** such as valves and meters.
  - **Report leaks and blockages to municipalities and hold municipalities accountable.**
  - **Reduce water usage and watering of gardens during heat waves** as this increases demand while reducing sustainable water provisions

## **7. CONCLUSION:**

- **So, ladies and gentlemen, those are in essence some of the interventions which will be implemented.**
  
- **I do intend to have a meeting with the Minister of Electricity** with all the Water Boards in South Africa **to address the impact of load-shedding** while developing alternative energy sources.
  
- **We do intend to partner with the private sector** through our Water Partnerships Office, **with the aim of jointly investing in the water sector** and ensuring water sustainability for the province.



- The **Department will develop a project dashboard and co-ordinate annual review progress meetings on implementation of these measures** and their impact on water supply in Gauteng (e.g. to measure reduction in losses and infrastructure upgrade to address future water challenges)
- We **have representatives from Joburg Water, Emfuleni, City of Tshwane, Merafong, Midvaal, Ekurhuleni, City of Johannesburg, Rand West and Lesedi LM**, who were present in yesterday's meeting. **They will speak to other interventions which will be carried out in their respective municipalities.**
- **I trust that today's engagement will be insightful and fruitful** as we take you on board regarding the water sustainability in the Gauteng province.

Thank you!