

MEDIA STATEMENT

DWS to take over water and sanitation services in uMkhanyakude District Municipality

13 December 2021

The Minister of Water and Sanitation Mr Senzo Mchunu announced on Monday, 13 December 2021, that the Department of Water and Sanitation intends to take over water and sanitation administration in uMkhanyakude District Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal.

Minister Mchunu joined by Deputy Minister David Mahlobo returned to the province to lead provincial working sessions and engage with various districts and stakeholders within the water sector following on the earlier Ministerial working session in the province.

uMkhanyakude becomes the second municipality to have the services under the department's guide after Minister Mchunu made the decision to remove such powers in Tshwane following recommendations by the SA Human Rights Commission.

Mhlathuze Water Board made a presentation that painted a bleak picture of the district's services, which Mayor Cllr Dlomo echoed the water board's sentiments.

Mayor Cllr Dlomo said since he took office after the recent local government elections he has noted an unstable, dysfunctional system that needs a complete overhaul.

The municipality is already under administration.

In his address, Minister Mchunu acknowledged that some work has been done but said the slow pace in progression meant there was nothing to show for it compared to the rise in demand.

"I am uncomfortable with the report given. What is clear is that the municipality does not have the stability or capacity to carry out water related tasks.

"We have to act, and act now," Mchunu said.

Minister Mchunu says the decision to have the department run water and sanitation services in the district is so that the municipality can get their affairs in order.

"We will meet each other halfway. You ensure stability in your office while we make sure people get water. Otherwise, people will be waiting to get their constitutional right while you fix things," Mchunu said.

"Let's work together to ensure people have water. This will give you time to find solutions to the problems you are facing."

The Minister said that government cannot afford to let the people of uMkhanyakude down anymore.

He added that a lot of work needs to be done at a very quick pace as people have waited long enough.

"These people have been patient. We must make them feel like they are part of South Africa."

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Mhlathuze Water Board will be made the implementing agency in the district for the period.

He said the paperwork to formally appoint Mhlathuze as the implementing agent will be done within the next few days.

Ends

Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation

For more information, contact Sputnik Ratau, Spokesperson for the Department of Water and Sanitation on 082 874 2942

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