

MEDIA STATEMENT

We need to synergize and deliver water to people – Minister Mchunu

06 December 2021

The Minister of Water and Sanitation (DWS), Mr Senzo Mchunu and his deputies, Mr David Mahlobo and Ms Dikeledi Magadzi are in the Mpumalanga Province for their seventh provincial working session from 06 to 08 December 2021.

The purpose of the working session is to engage a variety of stakeholders to fully understand the status and challenges encountered in the delivery of efficient and effective water and sanitation services in the province. The working session includes engagements with the DWS Provincial Office, Mpumalanga Provincial Government led by Premier Refilwe Mtsweni-Tsipane, local government, water agencies, water board, water services authorities, water user authorities, irrigation boards and other sector stakeholders.

The DWS Mpumalanga Provincial Office presented on their intervention projects to deliver water and sanitation services to communities and Mpumalanga Provincial Government looked at the holistic water and sanitation service delivery and ways to unlock the challenges to fastrack service delivery to communities.

The engagements emphasized the need for integrated planning to address the challenges in water and sanitation issues in the province. MEC for Human Settlements, Mr Speedy Mashilo emphasised the need for an actual integrated action plan talking to the main issues and funding.

MEC for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Ms Busisiwe Shiba emphasised the need to tighten the screws in the quest to deliver services to the communities. She also highlighted the challenges in relation to non-functional and non-compliant wastewater treatment works and the need for urgent action to respond to these challenges.

Planning is key to effective water and sanitation service delivery. Deputy Ministers Mahlobo and Magadzi also emphasised the need for coordinated and proper planning to effectively deliver the required services to the communities. Deputy Minister Magadzi emphasized that water must go to the people irrespective of who is involved, and Deputy Minister Mahlobo stated that projects must have clear timeframes and deadlines and must be costed. Deputy Minister Mahlobo also called for sanitation to be prioritised and not treated as a stepchild.

Premier Mtsweni-Tsipane in her presentation stated that water and sanitation services are a thorn in the flesh of the province. “We are seeing population growth in the province, and this is putting pressure on the bulk services”, she said. She also called for integrated and coordinated planning as planning is not aligned.

Minister Mchunu in his remarks reiterated that South Africa does not have a water crisis. He called for the development and costing of plans with clear timeframes. “There is never a time when time or the clock is not moving. We need to plan and see what is most important and that is urgent that can be achieved with the available resources as well as within reasonable time. Our office needs to call a meeting urgently with COGTA to align the priorities. We need to synergize and align our planning to ensure that we deliver on our mandate”, he said.

End

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