



MEDIA STATEMENT

For immediate release

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Intervention on Water Crisis in Zululand District Municipality - Mandlakazi Scheme

The Minister of Water and Sanitation, Mr Senzo Mchunu came into office in August 2021; part of his overarching commitment was to accelerate some of the regional bulk water schemes that have been moving at a snail's pace for the last decades. These bulk schemes are the Loskop Regional Bulk Scheme [Mpumalanga/Limpopo], Nandoni to Nsami Regional Scheme in Giyani [Limpopo], Vaal Gamagara Water Scheme (Northern Cape), Ludeke Dam and Regional Scheme in Alfred Nzo District Municipality [Eastern Cape], The Ebenezer Olifants Integrated Bulk Scheme [Polokwane_ Limpopo], The Lesotho Highlands Water Project Phase 2, uMkhomazi Water Project (KZN), Xhariep Dam Pipeline (Free State), Dinokana Water Services (North West), to name a few (all these schemes have been accelerated in various ways from planning to funding allocations).

The Mandlakazi Regional Bulk Scheme is part of the priority list of projects that the Minister identified as key for unlocking socio-economic development in the quest for the National Development Plan and Sustainable Development Goal 6 for 2030. The project started back in 2015 and had a positive spin-off to areas under uMkhanyakude District Municipality as well. The scope covered upgrading of water treatment works from 10ML/day to 30ML/day, laying-up of bulk main for over 30km, construction of various reservoirs and pump stations. The project also extends to providing water to further areas outside Zululand District Municipality such as Esiphambanweni, which is planned to benefit as early as next year under the accelerated Phase 6 of Mandlakazi Scheme.

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The scheme requires an additional funding of R2.3 billion. The Minister firstly met with Inkosi Zulu of Mandlakazi and his Traditional Council and later with the whole community, all of whom raised their grievances on water challenges in the area. To date, subsequent to the Minister's engagement with the Zululand Business Forum and His Majesty, King Misizulu, the Minister established a technical task team in his Department to conduct technical evaluation on current progress made and what technical delay the scheme was facing. The technical team met on the 27 September 2022 and had a follow-up site visit on the 26 October 2022. The team inspected the whole pipe route and further opportunities in Phase 6 as planned.

It is also worth noting that Zululand has been receiving direct grants under the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant framework under the Division of Revenue (DORA) for these scheme years before. After assessment and the criticality of the current water challenges experienced by not less than over 200 000 residents in these two municipalities, it was technically decided to increase the funding allocations to help accelerate completion of the scheme at least within the next 2 to 3 years. The Department, as the custodian of water and sanitation in the Republic, will provide oversight to the District to make sure that the allocation is utilised efficiently to achieve the intended objective.

It is therefore worth noting, that the Department of Water and Sanitation is striving towards acceleration of these and many other schemes in the country.

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