



MEDIA STATEMENT

The country's water storage levels remain stable amid erratic weather patterns, citizens must continue to use water sparingly

For immediate release

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Water Supply Systems remain stable although a slight decrease is observed in some of the storage reservoirs around the country. The declining water levels are attributed to climate conditions including lack of rainfall in most parts of the country as well as heatwaves that are being experienced in provinces such as Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, central and eastern regions of North West, northern areas of Free State, and the northern parts of KwaZulu-Natal.

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) calls on all domestic, agricultural and industrial water users to continue using water with extreme caution during this time.

Members of the public are urged to keep hydrated by consuming enough liquids, keep away from direct sunlight, while being considerate in the use of available potable water in the system to ensure equitable access for all users during this heatwave.

The Department also warns communities to avoid using water bodies such as rivers, dams, quarries and water canals to try and cool off or carry out extramural activities such as swimming as they may pose life threatening risks. Parents are urged to keep children away from water bodies as it may endanger their lives.

The country has been experiencing varying weather patterns in various parts of the nine provinces including sporadic heavy rainfall to above normal hot temperatures leading to a decrease in surface water storage in dams due to increased water demand and evaporation rates in dams. The national surface water storage is currently at 75.9% of full supply capacity, a 0.6% decrease from the previous week.

Eastern Cape provincial surface water storage has declined from 85.6% to 84.4 this week, Free State from 73.5% to 72.8%, Gauteng from 84.4% to 84.3%, KwaZulu-Natal from 79.6% to 79.4%, Mpumalanga from 77.9% to 76.9%, Limpopo from 69.4% to 68.8%, and Western Cape from 93.2% to 92.7%.

Storage capacity in 10 out of the 14 country's major Water Supply Systems (WSS) has shown slight decline by below 1% on average. The Integrated Vaal River System (IVRS) which consists of 14 dams has dropped from 72.2% to 71.5% this week. Last year at time, the water levels were sitting at 86.0%. The Vaal Dam, one of the country's largest dams in the IVRS, is at the lowest level of 28.2% of full supply capacity, when compared to other major dams in the country.

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In the Eastern Cape, Amathole WSS has dropped from 101.9% to 100.6% this week. The system has a total of six dams which serve Bhisho, Buffalo City and East London. Klipplaat WSS which serves Chris Hani District Municipality has also dropped from 96.3% to 95.9%. Meanwhile, Algoa and Butterworth Water Supply Systems have experienced an increase this week. Algoa which supplies Nelson Mandela Bay Metro, Sarah Baartman District, Kouga Local Municipality and Gamtoos Irrigation, has slightly increased from 84.7% to 84.9%. Butterworth Water Supply System has increased from 95.5% to 97.3%.

Luvuvhu WSS in Limpopo, serving Thohoyandou has dropped from 88.3% to 87.8%, while Polokwane WSS has also declined from 79.3% to 78.8%.

In the Free State, Bloemfontein WSS which serves Bloemfontein, Botshabelo and Thaba Nchu has dropped from 75.4% to 75.1%. Orange WSS which supplies Free State and Northern and Eastern Cape provinces has moved from 79.6% to 79.2%.

Crocodile West WSS which serves Tshwane in Gauteng and Rustenburg in North West, has dropped from 75.0% to 74.2%. Crocodile East WSS serving Nelspruit, KaNyamazane, Matsulu, Malelane and Komatipoort in Mpumalanga is also down from 63.3% to 60.8% this week.

Although the dam levels are relatively high in the Western Cape, the Cape Town WSS has dropped from 97.2% to 96.3% this week.

In KwaZulu-Natal, the water supply systems have experienced an increase this week, with UMgeni slightly rising from 86.1% to 86.5% and uMhlathuze from 89.8% to 90.0%.

The North West province, a largely semi-arid region, has experienced a continuous decline of its surface water storage which is sitting at 56.7% this week, as compared to last week's 57.6%. Last year at this time, the province's water levels stood at 75.8%. The province has a total number of 28 dams, and 14 of them are below 50% mark and only one dam, Elands Dam in Swartruggens River is at a low level with 10%.

Northern Cape province is the only province which has increased water levels by 1.8% this week. The province's surface water storage is 66.9% this week, a dramatic increase from last week's 65.1%.

The following district municipalities have surface water storage below 50%: Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality in North-West has 30.8% this week. Mopani and Capricorn Districts in Limpopo are at 32% and 21.8% respectively. Sedibeng District in the Free State is at 29.6%. Parts of the districts have been experiencing moderate to extreme drought conditions in the past 24 months as a result of persistent below-normal rainfall in these areas.

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Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Although there is an expectation of isolated to scattered rainfall over parts of the Eastern Cape, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape provinces this week, DWS has called on the citizens to continue to use water sparingly.

It is predicted that wetter conditions over the interior of the country during the early and mid-summer seasons may improve water levels, particularly in regions that receive most of the rainfall in the summer season.

END

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