



MEDIA STATEMENT

Polluters of the environment and water sources to be dealt with harshly

13 April 2024

A Workshop on Water Services Authorities Impacting the Vaal River held at Emerald Resort and Casino in Vanderbijlpark on Friday, 12 April 2024 has resolved that the country needs to have a National Register of Polluters to deal with pollution of the environment and water sources in South Africa.

The workshop was attended by various stakeholders, including Mayors of Emfuleni and Metsimaholo Local Municipalities, Cllr Sipho Radebe and Cllr Jack Malindi respectively as well as Rand Water Board Chairperson, Mr Ramateu Monyokolo, representatives from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment, amongst others.

Announcing some key resolutions of the workshop, the Minister of Water and Sanitation, Mr Senzo Mchunu said his Ministry was to deal with this scourge head on and take it by the scruff of the neck for the benefit of the environment, business, and communities.

He said a National Register of Polluters is necessary in measures to make people to account for their transgressions.

“We want those in position of authority, Mayors, CEO of companies to have their names put there in the register so that they account for the neglect that leave our rivers polluted”, said Minister Mchunu.

In addition, he said the other resolution is that a sectoral forum of experienced individuals will be established as a matter of urgency to help arrest the situation and devise practical ways that will ensure that the current state of the Vaal River System is the thing of the past. Adding to this, he said forums focusing on other systems will also be established as well with the same objective.

“The Vaal River is not just a vital water source, it is a lifeline for our communities, industries and ecosystems. Its health is under threat from various sources, including wastewater discharge and it is imperative that we collaborate effectively to mitigate these impacts and protect this invaluable resource for future generations”, added Minister Mchunu.

Furthermore, a meeting with Mayors of Ekurhuleni, Johannesburg, Tshwane and Mogale City will be held to look at the state of Centurion Lake and tributaries impacting on the state of the lake.

Minister Mchunu said government in all spheres need to have upper hand in its resolve to deal with pollution of water sources and environment. He said the approach in this regard should include:

Prevention – implementing measures to prevent the introduction and spread of alien invasive species. This could include raising awareness among the public and enforcing regulations on the importation and sale of potentially invasive species.

Early detection and rapid response – developing monitoring programmes to detect invasive species early and implementing rapid response measures to control their spread. This could involve the use of manual or chemical methods.

Restoration - rehabilitating areas affected by invasive species through the restoration of native vegetation and ecosystems. This can help to restore the ecological balance of the river and improve its overall health.

Collaboration - working collaboratively with other stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and local communities, to address the issue of invasive species. This could include sharing resources, knowledge, and expertise to develop effective management strategies.

Research and innovation - supporting research and innovation in the field of invasive species management to develop new and improved methods for controlling invasive species and restoring native habitats.

Meanwhile Deputy Minister David Mahlobo implored all those in position of authority to act now and do their job and not pass their current responsibilities to the next generation and said the Department of Water and Sanitation as a regulator of the water sector needs to act without fear or favour.

Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation

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