



INTERNET ARTICLE

High temperatures are here to stay – says the Department of Water and Sanitation

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The current high temperatures in large parts of the country are here to stay and are gradually having a negative impact on South Africa's dam levels. A weekly report by the Department of Water and Sanitation shows that as a result of sweltering temperatures, dam levels are dropping levels at an average one percent week-on-week.

Comparatively, dam levels in the country have dropped by 10%, from 74% to 64% compared to the same period last year.

Even more alarming is the water situation in Limpopo and Eastern Cape where dam levels have dropped to almost half of where they were in 2018. At the beginning of this week Limpopo levels dropped to 51,2% from 51,8%, while Eastern Cape slid to 52,4% from 52,7%.

According to Dr Chris Moseki, Specialist Scientist in the Department of Water and Sanitation, scientific projections are that hot temperatures will persist until the end of summer next year. Between October and December the country will experience below-average rains that will be accompanied by hot temperatures that will continue to raise evaporation levels in the dams.

However, the South African Weather Services (SAWS) predicts that between mid-December and February next year the major parts of the country may receive heavy rains (above-average rainfalls) which may lead to flash floods.

"Key to the water situation is the responsibility of South Africans to use water wisely and sparingly. We must move away from the dogma that water is the government's responsibility alone." Moseki said.

It is against this background, that the Department of Water and Sanitation has renewed the call to all South Africans to intensify their water conservation and avert a possible crisis.

Climate Change has made it necessary to review our behaviour regarding water use. The cumulative damage that was done by the droughts in Western Cape and the rest of the country between 2014 and 2017 is still fresh in the memory of many.

Some parts of the country are already experiencing extremely dry conditions due to the lack of rainfall. Last week Deputy President David Mabuza visited Northern Cape province where he committed R30m for the procurement and distribution of fodder for the farming communities in the province. The province is currently experiencing persistent drought in five districts.

Queenstown in Eastern Cape is also experiencing drought due to the lack of rainfall and low water levels. **The water flow out to a pumping station was alarmingly low which prompted the Department of Water and Sanitation to investigate operation of all**





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chambers in the dam and possible opening of an additional chamber to increase pressure. Graaf Reinet is experiencing dry conditions due to the lack of rain.

Deputy Minister David Mahlobo this week visited Nkangala region in Mpumalanga where water shortages are fast approaching a crisis point. He met with local stakeholders, including the JS Moroka Local Municipality, to craft an emergency plan to pump water from Loskop to the local dam.

Tzaneen Dam in Mopani district, Limpopo, has plummeted to 7,2% this week, prompting fears of a dry dam that might drastically affect local citrus economy and domestic water consumption. However, DWS in the province is compiling a comprehensive report about the water situation in Tzaneen which will provide possible interventions to deal with the water challenges.

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