



## INTERNET ARTICLE

### **MINMEC outlines drought relief interventions**

17 January 2019

Minister Lindiwe Sisulu and Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma led a joint Ministers and Members of Executive Councils (MINMEC) Meeting in Johannesburg on Thursday, 16 January 2020.

The meeting discussed ways in which intergovernmental relations could be enhanced in order to implement drought relief measures.

The meeting noted presentations and recommendations on the measures towards drought relief.

Acting DDG Head of the National Disaster Management Centre, Ané Bruwer provided an update on drought conditions and recent floods in some parts of Gauteng and Kwa-Zulu Natal.

“The country has been receiving rainfall in various provinces since November to date. In December, there were thunderstorms accompanied by heavy rain and localised flooding, especially in the KwaZulu-Natal area, with reports of extensive damage to infrastructure and loss of life,” she said.

Bruwer added that given these weather incidents, drought and high temperatures are still observed across the country.

“Despite the rainfall alluded to, more rain is needed to recover from the impact of the drought,” Bruwer said.

Providing a hydrological national drought overview, she indicated that dams are still at a lower average level than both last year and last week.

The meeting also touched on the Department’s Emergency Drought Mitigation Plan which is designed to mitigate the dire effects of drought in affected provinces.

The Plan comprises of short, medium and long term interventions. The short term interventions will be implemented over a 3 to 6 month period starting in February 2020.

The interventions will provide a foundation for the medium and long term interventions that will be implemented during the current 6th term of governance.

Adding to this, it was noted that the DWS has reprioritised more than R600 million of its finances towards assisting in the short-term drought interventions.

The National Treasury has also allowed the DWS to use emergency procurement measures in drought stricken areas.





## water & sanitation

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Minister Sisulu said the medium term interventions of the Emergency Drought Mitigation Plan will build on the foundation laid by the short term interventions with the introduction of new innovations that will be sustainable in the long term.

The interventions will include continuous optimum operation and maintenance of water infrastructure, including upgrading and refurbishment, amongst others.

The long-term interventions will focus on sustaining the measures put in place during the short and medium term with a specific focus on the development, management and use of groundwater.

Adding to this will be the desalination of sea water and the development of surface water resources.

The two Ministers directed that all efforts towards drought relief needed urgent decision making and implementation.

“As we return to our respective provinces, I urge all members of the MINMEC here to ensure we implement all that is being discussed,” said Minister Sisulu.

There was also a directive to the COGTA officials to assist and guide the affected provincial governments with regard to drought disaster declarations.

Minister Sisulu also implored all senior officials in attendance to acquaint themselves with the National Water and Sanitation Master Plan, which spells out the country’s plan towards water security.

**Lebogang Maseko**

