



INTERNET ARTICLE

Two Ministries commit on joint drought interventions across the country

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A special joint meeting of Ministers and MEC's (MinMEC) was overseen by the Ministers of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation and Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu and Dr Nosazana Dlamini-Zuma. The deliberations were about the persisting drought effects in the country, as well as the proposed Emergency Drought Mitigation Plan.

Despite the country's recent rainfalls since November last year, drought and high temperatures still persist in several provinces, resulting in a significant drop in the storage of major dams.

The Emergency Drought Mitigation Plan is set to mitigate the drought impact in the affected provinces, by means of short-term, medium-term and long-term interventions. The short-term interventions will be implemented over a 3-6 months period starting from February 2020.

The Department of Water and Sanitation has put aside more than R600 million for immediate drought interventions in eight provinces. The National Treasury has also allowed the Department to use emergency procurement measures in drought stricken areas. Groundwater resource development, water tankering, rainwater harvesting, sand water extraction, desalination of sea water, and reuse of effluent were also identified as short-term measures to be engaged with in the Drought Mitigation Plan.

Both Ministers Sisulu and Dlamini-Zuma conceded that all efforts towards drought relief need urgent decision making and execution. Therefore, a directive was given to CoGTA officials to assist and guide the affected provincial governments with regard to drought disaster declarations. The Ministers also indicated that it is not acceptable that only two provinces (Limpopo and Northern Cape) have been declared provincial drought disasters.





water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



The MinMEC meeting also gave stimulus to the Department's War-on-Leaks programme, designed to equip youths with skills that will benefit municipalities to reduce non-revenue water as a result of malfunctioning and ageing infrastructure.

A resolution was taken to identify municipalities with high non-revenue water losses, and to place trained youths to address the problem of Non-Revenue Water losses. According to a research done by the Water Research Commission, South Africa is losing an average of R7,2 billion a year due to Non-Revenue Water loss. The Ministers instructed officials of both Departments to ensure that the programme is sufficiently funded up to the point of an exit strategy being properly executed.

With the Emergency Drought Mitigation Plan, the proposed interventions will impact optimally at the areas severely affected by drought. The interventions will result in the improvement and alleviation of water crisis experienced in identified areas.

Sanku Tsunke

