



INTERNET ARTICLE

DWS to intervene to address water and sanitation challenges in Lekwa

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The Minister of Water and Sanitation, Mr Senzo Mchunu visited Standerton in Lekwa Local Municipality in Mpumalanga on a working session to assess the state of water and sanitation services in the municipality on Thursday, 21 July 2022.

Joined by his deputies, Dikeledi Magadzi and David Mahlobo, Minister Mchunu met with the Mpumalanga Provincial Government, led by Premier Refilwe Mtsweni-Tsipane and the MEC for COGTA Mandla Ndlovu, and the Executive Mayors of Gert Sibande District and Lekwa Local municipalities to devise solutions to the challenges facing communities under the municipality.

This engagement between national, provincial and local government was preceded by a visit to the Rooikopen Pump Station and the Standerton Waste Water Treatment Works for physical assessment.

Minister Mchunu was not impressed with the situation on the ground. “What I see here is a big challenge. What I see here is very embarrassing. What is good is that Premier and MEC are here. What we have seen we have to take decisions. We are going to take clear decisions, very hard decisions”, he said in his opening remarks.

In her remarks, Premier Mtsweni-Tsipane alluded that Lekwa has always been a problem and highlighted the importance of an integrated approach. “Minister, we want to say Lekwa has always been a thorn in our flesh. DWS has assisted but the problem continues. We are still not making a breakthrough. The challenge has many facets. In future, we need to integrate our efforts. The situation we see here is not good, it is embarrassing. Let us do right for the people of Lekwa”, she said.

COGTA MEC Mandla Ndlovu thanked the Department for funding the projects. He thanked the Minister for availing money to address the challenges of the municipality and ensured that shoddy workmanship will not be tolerated.

Deputy Minister Dikeledi Magadzi called on the municipality to deal with leaks and to stop the pollution. “Our focus should be: we have seen the challenges, how then do we deal with them”, she said.



Deputy Minister Mahlobo stated that the damage that is there is too big. “On the issue that must be done, the plan must achieve two things: the water that comes out of taps must be fit for use by the various users and stop the spillage into people’s yards and the Vaal River. Leadership must make choices and you must put money on the table. All of us are going to contribute. This is a national emergency”, he said

The Minister emphasized that they need to intervene and contribute to the interventions. The Department of Water and Sanitation will contribute about R300 million for the interventions.

“We need to intervene. When I say we, I mean all of us here. There must be intervention on water works, wastewater works, pump stations and reservoirs both in Standerton and Morgenzon”, he said.

As the purpose of the working session and engagements was to find solutions to the challenges faced by the municipality in relation to water and sanitation, Minister Mchunu called on the municipality to deal with all legal related matters and clean its image.

In relation to sewer spillages which was the core business of the working session, the Minister called for a sequence of actions to deal with the problem. “People want to see sewer disappearing from their yards. They want to see clean water. There is a need to analyse, prioritize and sequence actions. Refine and sequence for impact”, he stated.

Minister Mchunu also called for the prioritization of operations and maintenance. The Gert Sibande District Municipality committed to intervene in relation to the challenge capacity.

He also called on the Department of Water and Sanitation to follow-up and ensure that there are no mines operating without licences in the municipality so as to ensure that they comply to the prescripts of the National Water Act.

“We will be interacting at technical and political levels. We will be interacting until we turn the situation around”, said Minister Mchunu in his closing remarks.

Themba Khoza