



## INTERNET ARTICLE

### Minister Mchunu supports calls for private sector investment in water infrastructure in Africa

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Minister Senzo Mchunu has expressed support of investment in water infrastructure, particularly in wastewater, by the private sector in Africa.

Minister Mchunu echoed the sentiments made during a panel discussion at the Stockholm World Water Week conference on Monday, 29 August 2022.

Speaking during a panel discussion under the theme ***“How can the private sector finance wastewater treatment in Africa?”***, Minister Mchunu said that the South African government is in support of the private sector collaborations as a means to ensure water security and the treatment of wastewater.

“The demand for water and sanitation infrastructure development and refurbishment in South Africa has been increasing due to both population and economic growth. We also envisage that by the year 2030, there will be a 17% deficit in availability of water and the projected demand at that stage,” Minister Mchunu said.

He said that the current rate of infrastructure development has to be increased to sustain and support growth in the country.

“It is for this reason that we felt that collaboration with the private sector presents a mutually beneficial path towards achieving this goal. It was quite enlightening to behold the enthusiasm from the private sector to be a partner in projects and programmes towards improving the water sector,” he said.

Minister Mchunu admitted that while the collaboration programme is still in its infancy, great strides are being made and are sufficient to indicate that together, more can be achieved.

As such, the Department of Water and Sanitation has established a Water Partnership Office with the assistance of the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) to serve as a special purpose vehicle to facilitate partnerships and manage joint accounts for specific funding for projects implemented through collaboration.

The office also manages special programmes such as water conservation and demand management (particularly reducing non-revenue water), water reuse, wastewater treatment improvement and seawater desalination, amongst others.

“The Water Partnership Office is in the process of being adequately capacitated with the necessary skills to ensure that both public and private sector are served well. This means that Government will benefit from this additional capacity to manage partnerships,” said Minister Mchunu.

The Department is also engaging the agricultural sector; earmarking collaboration in investing in the refurbishment and upgrades of strategic canal systems to sustain food production in the country.

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## water & sanitation

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Minister Mchunu further detailed that the benefits of private sector collaboration will entail off-set programmes to allow the private sector to assist municipalities with water conservation and demand management and availing the savings for economic development with such communities.

He is expected to participate on other discussions during the week which will explore political commitment and leadership required to transform and improve the investment outlook for climate resilient water security and sustainable sanitation for a prosperous, peaceful, and equitable African society.

Panel members on private sector investment on wastewater included Diego Rodriguez from World Bank, Bernice Ndaitwah from Windhoek Wastewater Recycling Project as well as Anton Earle from the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), amongst others.

**Lebogang Maseko**

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