



INTERNET ARTICLE

Minister Mchunu to set up an independent investigation into allegations of illegal blockages of tributaries into Middle Letaba Dam in Limpopo

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Water and Sanitation Minister, Senzo Mchunu will set up an independent investigation into the alleged blockage of contributing streams into upstream of Middle Letaba Dam which resulted in a dreadful low levels water in the dam. The Minister and his Deputies David Mahlobo and Judith Tshabalala conducted a site inspection at the streams and tributaries along some of the biggest farms at Mooketsi in Limpopo, before interacting with the concerned farmers and community members who have been negatively affected by the alleged blockages.

Middle Letaba Dam is fed from the Middle Letaba, Koedoes and Brandboontjies rivers in the Middle Letaba sub-catchment within the Olifant Catchment Area. Its primary objective is to supply raw water to domestic users and for irrigation purposes. The dam is a source for Middle Letaba, Mapuve and Giyani Water Treatment Works through a 60 km canal. However, due to the low levels of the dam currently at about 2.8%, the WTWs cannot yield raw water according to their designed capacities resulting in restricted water supply to the communities.

The dam supplies 82% of water agriculture, with industry and mining using 3% and 6% respectively, whereas it supplies 8% of water for domestic use.

The Department of Water and Sanitation has received complaints from the concerned local farmers and community members, and it has conducted investigations into the allegations. The Department has also implemented interventions that includes developing groundwater to maximise the available source from the dam, and the transfer of water from Nandoni Dam to Nsami Dam to augment water in the Nsami system in Giyani.

Minister Mchunu has indicated that the investigation will pave way to solving the allegations of blockages of streams and illegal dams and finally bring closure into the matter, ensuring fair distribution of water in the area.

“There have been complaints on these illegal blockages which cause water supply challenges in the area, and we have therefore resolved to set up an independent investigation into the matter, and its recommendations will give way to the resolution into the matter. We understand that this is an urgent matter, and we will give our full attention to ensure that there is justice and fairness for everyone in the area”, said Minister Mchunu.

Minister Mchunu also visited Tzaneen Dam, where the R550 million raising of the wall project is currently under way. He commended progress made on the project which commenced last year and is currently at 25% completion. The raising of Tzaneen Dam wall by 3 metres will result in increased storage capacity, ultimately providing much-needed additional water for domestic, industrial and agricultural use in the north-east of Limpopo.

Sanku Tsunke