



INTERNET ARTICLE

Deputy Minister Seithlo calls for bold investment to secure Southern Africa's water future

12 May 2025

The Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation, Mr. Sello Seithlo, has called for intensified investment in the water sector to secure Southern Africa's future in the face of climate change and growing water demands.

Speaking at the ORASECOM Climate Resilient Investment Conference in Maseru, Lesotho, on Thursday, 08 May 2025, Deputy Minister Seithlo highlighted that resilient water infrastructure and cross-border collaboration are critical to the region's economic development, environmental sustainability, and long-term water security.

As a proud and committed member of the Orange-Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM), South Africa continues to champion regional cooperation for the sustainable and equitable management of shared water resources. Deputy Minister Seithlo reaffirmed the country's support for the Commission, noting South Africa's role as host country and consistent contributor to its operations and basin-wide studies.

"Water is the foundation upon which our economies, communities, and ecosystems rest. In Southern Africa, it also binds us together across borders. Our shared future demands that we invest boldly and wisely in securing this most precious resource," he said.

South Africa is undertaking major reforms to create an enabling environment for water investment. Deputy Minister Seithlo said that these include legislative amendments to strengthen water governance, reduce inefficiencies, and attract private-sector involvement through improved regulatory certainty and streamlined project processes.

He pointed to multiple opportunities for investors, ranging from bulk infrastructure and wastewater treatment to innovative technologies in reuse and smart metering. Public-private partnerships are being pursued with urgency, including through the Water Partnership Office in collaboration with the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA). "Investing in water is not just a necessity; it is a generational imperative. Our policy reforms, institutional innovation, and partnerships demonstrate that we are ready to work with all stakeholders to make water investment a success story," he emphasised.

The Deputy Minister highlighted sustainability, technological advancement, and climate adaptation as key pillars of the country's water strategy. He emphasised the need for robust

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risk management to address droughts, floods, and pollution, backed by government funding instruments such as the Water Services Infrastructure Grant and the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant made available by the Department of Water and Sanitation.

Deputy Minister Seithlo stressed that communities must be at the heart of water solutions. South Africa's water governance model prioritises public participation and inclusive development, particularly through forums supporting youth, women, and civil society engagement. Partnerships with NGOs, research institutions, and the private sector continue to drive innovation and ensure evidence-based planning.

In closing, Deputy Minister Seithlo reaffirmed South Africa's unwavering commitment to regional leadership and global engagement in the water sector. He announced that South Africa will proudly host the Africa Water Investment Summit in August, a strategic platform aimed at unlocking large-scale investment and galvanising multi-sector partnerships for water infrastructure development across the continent.

Furthermore, as South Africa has assumed the G20 Presidency, the Deputy Minister committed that water financing will be elevated as a key agenda item, positioning water not merely as a development issue but as a central pillar of economic resilience, climate adaptation, and sustainable growth.

"South Africa stands ready to lead by example, mobilising political will, catalysing investment, and fostering cross-border cooperation to build a water-secure future for Africa and beyond," he affirmed.

"Let us seize this moment to mobilise the partnerships, political will, and financing needed to ensure a climate-resilient and water-secure future for our region. What we decide today must shape a legacy of inclusive growth and sustainable prosperity for generations to come," concluded Deputy Minister Seithlo.

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