



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MINISTRY OF WATER AND
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

2011-03-29

PRIVATE BAG 313
PRETORIA 0001

Enquiries: Mr M. Matlala
Telephone: 012-336-7860
Reference: 2/1/5/1

MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 160 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

A draft reply to the above-mentioned question asked by Mr M J Ellis (DA); is attached for your consideration.

ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 29/03/2011

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED

with amendments

Done 29/3/11

MRS B E E MOLEWA, MP
MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

DATE: 29.3.2011

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 160

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 10 FEBRUARY 2011
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 01)

160. Mr M J Ellis (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

- (1) (a) What policies inform the management of percentage capacity of dams and (b) when were these policies implemented;
- (2) whether there have been any changes in policies that govern the management of the percentage capacity of dams since 1 January 2008 in order to actively condone exceeding capacity for the purposes of storing more water; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (3) whether she will review the policies that govern the management of the percentage capacity of dams in light of the (a) recent floods and (b) likelihood that under the impacts of future climate change the frequency and intensity of floods is predicted to increase; if not, why not; if so, when;
- (4) whether she will institute an inquiry into the management of the Vaal Dam during the recent floods; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (5) whether her department has learnt any lessons from the management of the Vaal Dam during the recent floods that will inform future management practices; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

NW173E

---0000---

REPLY:

- (1)(a) The management of water storage is not informed by any policy but by operating rules that are specific for each dam. These operating rules govern how much water must be stored or released taking into account the water allocation requirements and flooding risks.
- (1)(b) The implementation of operating rules is a continuous process that depends on the hydrological conditions in the catchment.
- (2) There has been no change in the approach to dam operation. Instead, operating rules are reviewed in line with hydrological and development trends in the catchment. However, the operations aim to ensure that at the end of the rainy season, the dams should be storing possible maximum volume of water.
- (3)(a) The Department is continuously reviewing operating rules depending largely on the hydrological conditions/events in the catchment - like future climate change.
- (3)(b) The dam operating rules are specific for each and are reviewed in line with development trends, frequency and intensity of floods and drought in the specific catchment.
- (4) There is no need for the inquiry since these were only floods of a medium magnitude which were handled quite adequately by the flood management team. All outflow peaks were less than the inflow peaks and the recurrence period of the highest Vaal Dam inflow peak was less than 20-years.

The Vaal Dam outflow peak of 2400 m³/s was only 80% of the inflow peak.

- (5) Yes, the Department has been communicating effectively during the recent floods to those affected and farmers and blomhof areas NC areas, who met during the floods also volunterly infomed me in a meeting that they were receiving adequeate and information. We do continue to lear as we listen to any further matter or innovation raised subject to hydrological scientifically determined as refer to above.

---0000---