



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



EdTM

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MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 910 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

A draft reply to the above question asked by Mrs B D.Ferguson (COPE) is attached for your consideration.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Acting)

DATE: 14/05/2013

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED ✓

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

DATE: 2013/05/20

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 910

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 3 May 2013
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 14)

910. Ms B D Ferguson (Cope) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

Whether South Africa has water shortages; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details? NW1136E

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REPLY:

Currently South Africa has sufficient water to meet its present social and economic requirements. However, this does not mean that water shortages will not be experienced in future in some localities as the country is characterized by low and highly variable rainfall relative to the world average, erratic runoff, high levels of evaporation, sedimentation problems in storage dams and increasing challenges due to water pollution. All of these pose constraints on the reliability of water available for use.

It is also worth noting that droughts (when less than expected water is received in a place), are natural phenomena and will keep occurring in the country from time to time. But it is not correct to say that the country has a water shortage when water requirements cannot be met due to excessive drought – just as much as it is not correct to say that the country has excess water when floods occur. Other challenges that may also lead to temporary water shortages include infrastructure breakdown, lack of skilled personnel and system water losses due to high levels of water wastage and inefficient use.

In order to mitigate against such water shortage problems, my Department has developed operating rules whilst promoting improved water use efficiency to guide water use and to reduce the risk of system failure during drought spells. As such, operating rules have been established for all systems serving large economic centers, whilst their development continues for smaller schemes and dams with 20 completed in the 2012/2013 financial year. Due to current favourable conditions, no scheme is expected to experience water shortages in the short-term.

Further to this, my Department has developed Reconciliation Strategies to cover the long term planning of water supply for all the large systems supplying the metropolitan areas and other areas where the largest portions of the economy is generated, as well as for all the other towns and villages in the country. These strategies consider future water requirement scenarios in consultation with institutions and users in the various areas taking into account all the possible measures that could be implemented to ensure enough water is available in the future and recommend a programme of implementation thereof. Strategies have been completed for the following areas:

- Western Cape System supply area
- Algoa System supply area
- Amatole System supply area
- KZN Coastal Metropolitan System supply area
- Vaal River System supply area
- Crocodile (West) System supply area
- Olifants River System supply area

- Bloemfontein System supply area

The following strategies are currently under development:

- Mbombela System supply area
- Orange River System supply area
- Luvuvhu/Letaba System supply area
- Richards Bay System supply area
- Limpopo Water Management Area Northern supply area

The first order strategies for all the other towns and villages in South Africa have also been completed. The completed strategies and information on the current understanding of the long term prospects in each area are all available on the website of my Department under <http://www.dwa.gov.za/projects.aspx>

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