



INTERNET ARTICLE

Government working to totally eliminate the bucket toilets system by end of 2015/16 Financial Year – Minister Mokonyane

10 September 2014

Minister Nomvula Mokonyane has indicated that government is hard at work to totally eliminate the toilet bucket system by the end of the 2015/16 financial year.

Addressing the National Council of Provinces during a recent debate on the matter, the Minister said, "The budget that the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) secured together with the plans we have in place we will be able to meet the target during the 2015/16 financial year. I believe that, with the current intervention, the guidance and oversight of members, we can bring hope to our people and demonstrate that challenges are not insurmountable".

She apologized, on behalf of the country and State President Jacob Zuma; to the people of South Africa for being over ambitious in targeting the completion of the bucket eradication backlog by December 2014, "a target that we will not meet," said Minister Mokonyane.

Minister Mokonyane said, the National Treasury approved the amount of R899million for 2014/15, as well as the amount of R975million for 2015/16 only around December 2013. However, the R899million for 2014/15 budget can only deliver 30,000 units. The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) and Municipalities need to be mobilized so that almost 50% of the R15 billion Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) budget in 2014/15 is re-directed towards Bucket Eradication Programme (BEP). "It is important to note that R1 billion can eradicate 33,000 bucket sanitation per annum. To achieve this, a Cabinet Memorandum may be required to persuade Cabinet to re-orientate MIG Grant towards BEP," said the Minister.

On the sanitation front, according to Minister Mokonyane, "while we have made good progress in global terms we still remain with a backlog of 2, 4 million households are without dignified sanitation services. Of this backlog, 282 000 households, both in informal and formal settlements, still rely on the bucket sanitation system, mainly in the provinces of Gauteng, Free State, Western Cape, North West, Eastern Cape and Northern Cape. Our current focus however is on the 88 127, of which we have already eliminated 14000."

Since the programme started in September 2013, at which time there was no budget until December 2013, DWS managed to eradicate 14,386 buckets country-wide.

The collaboration among the three Departments, DWS, Human Settlements and COGTA commenced around July 2013 - almost 8 months towards the end of the 2013/14 Financial Year. This process started with the appointment of former Minister of Water, Connie September as the Human Settlements Minister. Having worked in Water, she forged close ties with the water sector/Department/Minister to fast-track sanitation delivery.

Minister Mokonyane said, the initial focus was to identify and deal with water and sanitation hotspots now the focus has changed into eradicating buckets in formalized areas after consultations with the African National Congress (ANC) and President Zuma. "Then the marching orders were that buckets in formalized areas should be eradicated by March 2014.



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These decisions were taken during August 2013 meetings. At the time there was no budget for the BEP programme and Director Generals (DGs) were requested to re-prioritize and also engage National Treasury.

Minister Mokonyane said, DWS has to develop and seek Cabinet approval for a 10 Year National Water and Sanitation Programme which will seek to eradicate both the water and sanitation backlogs. This programme will be differentiated based on the identified needs per province. The 10 Year Programme will address infrastructure backlog, infrastructure refurbishment, new connections for the un-served, introduce sustainable Operations and Maintenance (OM) for both rural and urban areas and commandeer bulk water and bulk sanitation supply.

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