



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OPINION *PIECE*

Department ensures water to remote areas

THE NEW AGE – PAGE 18

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South Africa is experiencing drought in parts of KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo but this does not mean citizens must panic.

The Department of Water and Sanitation always has in place effective and efficient mechanisms ensuring constant and sustainable delivery of water to even remote parts of the country through the chief directorate for water services bulk infrastructure. Therefore, despite temporary water shortages, resources are available and should be delivered to every community through all the means available to do so. Jojo tanks are commonly used to ferry water to areas that urgently need it.

On February 6, 2015, the Department of Water and Sanitation's deputy director general for national water infrastructure resources, Zandile Mathe, stated that the chief directorate had four programmes to ensure the availability of bulk water and waste water services infrastructure in the country – the regional bulk infrastructure grant, the municipal water infrastructure grant, the accelerated community infrastructure programme and the water services operating subsidy.

Since then the country has reached universal access to improved water resources in urban and rural areas. Those with access rose from 66% to 79% from 1990 to 2010.

South Africa also has a strong water sector with a track record in innovation. Two distinctive features of the sector are the policy of free basic water and the existence of water boards, which are bulk water supply agencies that operate pipeline and sell water from reservoirs to municipalities.

In May 2014 Durban's water and sanitation department won the Stockholm Industry Water Award for "its transformative and inclusive approach," calling it one of the "most progressive utilities in the world."

The city has connected 1,3 million additional people to piped water and provided 700 000 with access to toilets in 14 years. It was also South Africa's first municipality to put free basic water for the poor into practice. For furthermore, it has promoted rainwater harvesting and mini hydropower including desalination, a programme gradually gaining momentum in KwaZulu-Natal and other parts of the country.

Service quality is good but highly variable. In 2003, 63% of municipalities were not able to say if they met drinking water quality standards. The department introduced in 2008 the blue drop, incentive-based water quality regulation strategy under which municipal service providers are certified with a blue drop if they fulfil certain requirements, such as compliance with water quality standards, draw up a water safety plan, process controlling and the credibility of sample results, among others.



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The system is regarded internationally as unique and has been well received by the World Health Organisation. Whether there are droughts or not, get connected to the bulk water system. If you can't, the Jojo tanks will ensure water supplies in your area.

Key Points

- *South Africa is experiencing droughts in parts of KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo but this does not mean citizens must panic.*
- *The Department of Water and Sanitation always has in place effective and efficient mechanisms ensuring constant and sustainable delivery of water.*
- *South Africa also has a strong water sector with a track of innovation.*
- *The country has reached universal access to improved water sources in urban and rural areas. Those with access rose from 66% to 79% from 1990 to 2010*

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