



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE

Director General in Beijing for crucial talks

24 February 2014

The Director General of the Department of Water and Sanitation, Margaret-Ann Diedericks this week left for Beijing to participate in a technical working committee of the Joint Working Group (JWG) between China and South Africa.

She is joining her South African peers from other departments to discuss crucial issues on the funding of infrastructure development and to review progress made thus far..

The meeting comes after President Jacob Zuma and his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, signed the "Pretoria Declaration on Partnership" in 2012 that paved the way for formal bilateral relations between the two countries. The two leaders met again in December 2015 during the Johannesburg Summit Forum on China- Africa Co-operation at which China committed itself

The aim of JWG is to monitor the implementation of co-operative projects, co-ordinate and solve difficulties and challenges that may occur during implementation and to elevate bilateral relations by deepening practical co-operation.

The technical committee meeting will discuss among others, the maintenance of ailing infrastructure, including the replacement of old water pipelines that leak water. The maintenance of water treatment plants and waste water treatment plants is expected to feature in the agenda. Water that is unaccounted for (non-revenue water) is costing South Africa an estimated R70 million a year.

The technical committee consists of Directors General from various ministries, including the Department of International Relations and Co-operation, which were part of the Pretoria Declaration when it was signed in 2012. The Department of Water and Sanitation joined the group after a state visit by the Chinese leader in December last year, after several water issues were raised during the Johannesburg Summit Forum on China- Africa Co-operation.

The Deputy Director General of International Water Co-operation within DWS, Lindiwe Lusenga, said South Africa stood to benefit hugely from a R60 billion budget that China committed to the development of infrastructure in Africa.

At the Johannesburg summit in 2015 the Minister of Water and Sanitation, Nomvula Mokonyane, presided over the signing of an agreement between South Africa's Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA) and China Communications Construction Company (CCCC), an international engineering company with expertise and experience in the design and construction of infrastructure around the world.

It is hoped that the JWG will unlock further funding opportunities for South Africa as the country implements a Nine Point Plan on infrastructure development.

By Themba Khumalo