



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE

Forum Discusses Olifants Catchment Issues

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The Department of Water and Sanitation, through the Lower Olifants Catchment Management Forum engaged stakeholders to discuss the issues around the catchment on 09 September 2016. The stakeholders included SANPARKS, AWARD, Department of Agriculture, Department of Environmental Affairs, the Agricultural sector, Lepelle Northern Water, Ba-Phalaborwa Local Municipality, Mopani District Municipality, industries, mining, media and residents.

The purpose of the forum is basically information sharing and discussing ways to manage the catchment in a beneficial way for all stakeholders. Presenting the purpose, Mr van Aswegen reminded the participants that we are still in a drought situation and temperatures are much higher than normal, thus a negative impact on water availability prevails.

Key issues of discussion included the forum charter, water quality status, water availability, hydropower generation and climate change. The stakeholders were also encouraged to make inputs on the Sustainable Hydropower Generation draft policy to ensure that all crucial elements are infused in the policy.

It was emphasised that more awareness and communication with residents is required to ensure that they comply with the water restrictions being implemented to deal with the effects of the drought.

Illegal sand mining was also raised as a serious issue of concern as it has a negative impact of the water courses, especially the flow of water in the rivers and streams. This issue needs serious attention and intervention as some rivers are no longer flowing also due to the severe drought in the country. The illegal sand mining activities also affect water quality by way of turbidity and the chemicals and fuels used by the machines utilized to extract the sand from the rivers.

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