



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE

SA-Cuba 20 year cooperation bears fruits in imparting critical skills

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The twenty-year bilateral cooperation between South Africa and Cuba is bearing fruits, with a group of Cuban specialists engineers imparting invaluable skills to Department of Water and Sanitation's (DWS's) candidate engineers in operations and maintenance of various water schemes.

The National Institute of Hydraulic Resources' (INRH's) Cuban specialists have been integrated into the DWS and have been partnered with local staff to mentor and transfer skills and experience in the critical areas of operations and maintenance.

DWS's Knowledge Management official, Nwabisa Fundzo, said the department had received 35 engineers in February 2015 who are currently deployed at head office, regional offices and clusters in terms of the cooperation between the two countries.

Fundzo said these engineers were seconded from the INRH for a period of two years with an option to extend it by a further year.

"The cooperation has a direct impact on thousands of people of both countries. It influences their livelihood, their development and their understanding of nations geographically far apart. It engages them in their respective communities, where cultural and sentimental bonds are forged," Fundzo said.

She said the department had been monitoring the placement and the contribution that these engineers had made, adding that it was encouraging that they had been placed in different offices and have been allocated with different responsibilities.

"In the performance of functions allocated to them, they were also involved in skills transfer to colleagues who are closely working with them, Fundzo said.

The agreement between South Africa and Cuba in the field of water resources management and water supply was signed on 9 September 2013 as a result of which the 35 engineers were deployed to the department.

Presenting a paper titled: 'diagnosing the operation of hydraulic systems' during the celebration, one of the engineers, Eduardo Loriga Mena, said difficulties in the water control and use, together with the lack of maintenance of the hydraulic infrastructure, lead to hydraulic system losing the efficiency needed.

He said the objective of the cooperation was therefore to make a better use of the human and material resources the department had on its structures, saying to achieve an adequate control of the water quality and its use was of vital importance.

"Achieving an adequate control of the technical surveillance of the hydraulic work and system is at the core of the work of the department," he added.



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He said hydraulic works were constructed by man with the fundamental purpose of benefitting all spheres of society, facilitating its economic development and progress.

“Through the system, it is possible to defend the population and socio-economic objectives from the phenomena caused by nature,” Loriga Mena concluded.

Hosia Sithole