



INTERNET ARTICLE

South Africa and Botswana discuss Water Quality Monitoring and Hyacinth Management

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“Water knows no boundaries” These are the words uttered by Minister Nomvula Mokonyane during the Department’s budget vote as water has no boundaries.

The Department of Water and Sanitation recently hosted their counterpart from Botswana on a two day bilateral Joint Permanent Technical Committee (JPTC) Meeting on water quality monitoring and hyacinth management in the upper Limpopo Basin from 18-19 August 2016 in Hartbeespoort in the North West province. The meeting was meant to engage, identify and develop sustainable relations to secure and promote our inter-basin interests. The JPTC involves the sector leaders in both countries to collectively look and initiate programs that are meant to address water challenges and provide long term sustainable water and sanitation solutions for socio-economic development in both countries and the entire region.

The bilateral meeting came as a result of JPTC’s advice to establish a sub-technical committee that will zoom in the four key areas of collaboration in sharing our resources and expertise in inter-basin water quality monitoring and hyacinth management. The JPTC sub-technical committee deliberated and developed four pillars. The four pillars are water quality monitoring in the rivers system, identification of pollution sources in the Limpopo basin, development of a guiding instrument in the form of a memorandum of understanding to help both countries in discharging their commitments in inter-basin monitoring and management and a comprehensive communication model that will result in meaningful engagements and find resonance with stakeholders, citizens, business and other role players as a means to inform and involve them in changing water use behavior.

The overall strategic objectives of the bilateral engagements were met, but the highlight of the session was the drafting of the memorandum of understanding to be signed by both ministers from South Africa and Botswana on a date still to be determined by the JPTC. This important instrument, the MOU incorporates both technical and none technical arrangements for cooperation and ensures alignment with the inherent legal and legislative interests of both



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countries. Whilst providing a mutual platform for water sector leaders to share knowledge, expertise, challenges and solutions, this MOU is also an important milestone in consolidating resources and human capital behind a shared mission and vision underpinned by fundamental objectives such as strengthening focused bilateral relations and fostering strategic partnerships with neighboring countries as espoused by our International Relations Policy Framework and the constitution of the republic.

“This memorandum of understanding is a new beginning for us to cooperate in many other areas, because we also have many areas where we share water courses and are working together as countries but we don’t have an instrument of this nature that can help us where maybe we have some disputes or conflicts” stated Ms. Kene Dick, Principal Water Engineer from the Botswana Department of Water Affairs.

Motape Motokwe