



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### INTERNET ARTICLE

#### **Water and Sanitation Community Meetings Restore Cooperation**

01 July 2016

The Department of Water and Sanitation's (DWS) community engagement meetings in various areas of the Gauteng Province will help turn the corner on property destruction and spur forward the cooperation between government and communities.

This was the collective view that was expressed by communities of eTwatwa in Ekurhuleni and officials from DWS in a meeting held at Stompie Skhosana Hall. The first meeting was held in Khutsong, outside Carletonville in the West Rand.

In the recent past a number of violent protests accompanied by destruction of public and private property have plagued some communities, leading to important infrastructure that already exists being destroyed.

Explaining the purpose of the meeting, Ms Fikile Mokonoto of DWS, said the meeting was in response to Minister Nomvula Mokonyane's call for officials to be at the coalface of development in communities, emphasising the need for cooperation to resolve issues that remain a challenge to communities.

"Our being here today is a response to Minister Mokonyane's request in her 2014 budget speech that we must work with other stakeholders, especially communities because water challenges are not in our offices but in communities", Mokonoto said. "It is for this reason that we are here as different government departments to ensure we address issues of water and sanitation."

Departments that were present in the meeting included different units within the Ekurhuleni Metro Municipality (EMM) and Gauteng Department of Health.

Otega Sithole of the EMM water and sanitation told community members that water shortages in eTwatwa 19 would be a thing of the past as the municipality's plans were afoot to ensure continued water supply in the area.

Sithole was optimistic that communities would enjoy an uninterrupted supply of water in the next two weeks, attributing this to the availability of a booster pump to fill the reservoir with water.



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Sithole said there were a number of factors that led to water challenges in eTwatwa, citing rapid population growth as one aspect of the problem.

Officials from the EMM warned community members about the seriousness posed by flushing and throwing down the toilets and drains of clothes, coins, raiser-blades, sanitary towels, even condoms as causing blockages in the sewer system resulting in open air spillages of the sewer.

EMM Customer Relations Management, Mr William Mothibe appealed to community members to do their part in the development of their area by paying assessment rates, thereby ensuring that eTwatwa developed at the same rate as other townships in the municipality.

Nyakane said: “Those that are able to pay assessment rates must pay and those that cannot pay should make arrangements with the municipality on how they are going to pay. Some people say that they are not paying because they are not receiving statements but we appeal to you to approach us if you have this challenge.”

He said the municipality also makes provision for pensioners to register as indigents, saying pensioners must be home-owners to qualify as indigents.

Mr Bulumko Guga from the Gauteng Department of Health spoke about issues of hygiene, telling the community members to first purify water by boiling it before use if they kept it in containers. He said illnesses resulted from containers that were not properly cleaned and those that were used to carry chemicals.

He encouraged community members to adopt the practice of proper hand washing to avoid illnesses that may result from not properly washing one's hand.

A community member, Ms Lindeni Msimango, said the communities had an important role to play in conserving water and chastised the youth by wasting water on the 1st September in what has become known as Spring Day. On this day the youths splash one another with buckets of water in welcoming the spring season.

She said as parents they must ensure that not a single drop of water is wasted on that day given the challenges they are facing as the community.

**Hosia Sithole**