



INTERNET ARTICLE

Minister Mokonyane calls for responsible water use

27 February 2017

Gauteng water users will soon breathe a sigh of relief after the Minister of Water and Sanitation (DWS), Nomvula Mokonyane, announced precautionary lifting of water restrictions six months after the restrictions were imposed to curtail water wastage.

Addressing journalists during a media briefing held at the Vaal Dam in Deneysville on Sunday, 26 February, Minister Mokonyane said the increase in dam levels was attributable to the recent rainfalls which had a positive impact on the rise of dam levels.

“The current status of the Integrated Vaal River System (IVRS) necessitates a consideration around the lifting of water restrictions we announced for Gauteng in November 2016 with immediate effect. This change will be communicated with municipalities and gazetted accordingly,” said the Minister.

The Vaal Dam is one of the major dams of the system, which were under significant strain in the past few months owing to high temperatures and erratic rainfalls. The dam, which supplies Gauteng, Sasol as well Eskom, is currently at full capacity – thanks to recent rainfalls .

Casting a look at the devastation caused by the drought, Minister Mokonyane said the recent rain has provided relief, adding that this time last year the situation looked grim.

She said: “Looking at where we come from a few months ago, when the country’s dam averaged a lowly 54.8% on 18 April 2016, and 49.1% on 19 December’2016, we averaged 60.5% on the 20th of February 2017. This rose to 67.1% as of 24 of February – a great deal difference from the 54% at the same time last year.”

The Department of Water and Sanitation Gazetted the imposition of water restrictions by 15% in August last year to stave off what could have been a serious situation, as the dam levels continued to dwindle to unprecedented levels.

As a result, Gauteng was adversely affected by the impact of water shortages as it does not have its own sources.

Mokonyane said there was approximately 386 million cubic meters per day flowing into the river systems.

However, due to the uneven spread of the rain, the provinces of the Western Cape, Northern Cape and the Eastern Cape have seen any significant increases in the their dams.

Compared with these provinces, the Ministers said, the Integrated Vaal River System – which also supplies the economic heartbeat of the country – has increased to 78.4% as at February, compared favourably to the 59.2% it was at the same time last year.



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

She said the system review planned for May this year would still take place to look at the outcomes for the 2017/18 hydrological year, and as to whether or not any further decisions on restrictions ought to be implemented.

Mokonyane urged communities in Gauteng to intensify their efforts in saving water, saying that this should be second nature considering that South Africa is a water-scarce country.

“I trust that responsible water use will become a norm and a way of life for us all, and that we will adapt to realities of being a water-scarce country,” Minister Mokonyane concluded.

Hosia Sithole