



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE

KwaZulu-Natal running out of water as drought persists



The Hazelmere Dam is getting drier

22 June 2015

The persistence of drought in KwaZulu-Natal remains a challenge. This is because of the unusually dry rainy season recently gone by. This is the severest drought in KZN since 1992. The drought has left the agricultural sector which depends heavily on water in a state of deficiency.

The worst hit areas include uThungulu, Amajuba and UMkhanyakude in the northern region, and UGu in the southern region. Other areas which have also shown signs of difficulty are UThukela and Harry Gwala in the mid-west.

The drought has already cost farmers their stock which consists mostly of cattle, jobs and loss in sugar cane and vegetable yields. The dam levels have also declined sharply due to the current situation.

MEC for CoGTA in KZN, Ms Nomusa Dube-Ncube said the Hazelmere Dam which supplies two municipalities has seen its level dropping further by 32% with minimal rainfall expected in the next four to six months. Supply will remain low with the dam level expected to reach 15%. The current consumption rate is estimated at 45MI/day. At such a rate, the dam is losing 1% every four days and the usable reserve within Hazelmere Dam may be exhausted in approximately 60 days.

She said that water restrictions in the Hazelmere system since last year (2014) were increased as the dam levels were dropping until level 3 restriction of 30% in October. As



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much as hard work was put in, little success has been achieved in slowing down the level of water consumption.

The municipalities of eThekweni, Ilembe and SembcorpSiza will individually apply water restriction plans which they consider appropriate until they ensure that their daily quota is optimally used and any shortfalls on the day are addressed.

UGu District is mainly supplied by Umgeni which is not under threat currently but small towns which are supplied by small affected schemes will feel the pinch. The town of Harding in Umzizwabantu Local Municipality which depends on Harding Dam for supply will be affected. The dam level is only 15%. Other areas which depend on the Harding Dam for supply will be surely hit since the supply level there is 0%. These include KwaMbotho and KwaNyuswa Wier.

To help the affected communities MEC Dube-Ncube said water tankers will be available in the areas of Vulamehlo, Umzumbe, Eziqoleni, Hibiscus Coast, Umdoni and uMziwabantu. Drought Committees are in place to help monitor the systems and develop interventions where needed.

UThukela District is also affected as the Klip River which supplies areas of Umnambithi and surroundings has also seen its levels dropping. Water tankers will also carry out the duties of feeding the public with water.

The Department of Water and Sanitation pumped R352 million with the aim of assisting the affected municipalities. The National Disaster Management Centre has allocated R24 million which has been given to districts to date.

It is important to manage the little available water today because very serious risks are now at hand. Everyone needs to play their part effectively, be it the business sector or domestic users.

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