



## INTERNET ARTICLE

### **Water and Sanitation Portfolio Committee Visits KZN to Assess Drought Relief Interventions**

18 September 2015

The Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation recently visited KwaZulu-Natal province in particular the areas that are affected by drought, to look into the challenges faced by municipalities. The objective of the oversight visit was to assess national government initiatives in monitoring drought relief interventions, evaluate selected district and local municipalities audit outcomes and to evaluate projects planning, construction of infrastructure.

According to the Portfolio Committee, municipalities are the heart of service delivery as they are closer to the masses. The week-long visit commenced on 14 - 18 September 2015 with the district and local municipalities giving presentations on their business plans. These were more focused on drought relief interventions and projects planning, construction of infrastructure such as dams, water schemes, waste water treatment plants and the bucket eradication program.

There were two groups that paid particular attention to district municipalities. They visited uMkhanyakude, uThungulu, iLembe, Amajuba, uMzinyathi and uMgungundlovu District Municipalities. The delegation included members of the Portfolio Committee; officials from various sectors such as district and local municipalities, Department of Water and Sanitation KZN region, KZN Water Boards -Mhlathuze and Mgeni - as well as the KZN Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. The delegation which was led by Committee Chairperson Mr. Mlungisi Johnson was satisfied with the progress made in some of the district and local municipalities. He however highlighted that more work still needs to be done to improve the lives of the people in the province. Johnson noted that not all challenges could be solved overnight and therefore, long-term solutions are needed.

During the visit, the Committee listened to presentations by district municipalities before seeking clarity on certain projects and operations of different municipalities. The physical verification followed with site visits to areas such as dams, water schemes and waste water treatment plants. To get first-hand information on the working conditions in water and sanitation, the first group commenced with their site visit on 14 September 2015. They visited uMkhanyakude district municipality, Jozini Dam and Shemula Water Works. On 15



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September the delegation visited Big Five False Bay Municipality, with site visits at the emergency drought water schemes at Hluhluwe Dam, Mpukunyoni and Mtubatuba.

On 16 September the delegation got a presentation from Mhlathuze Water Board. They were enlightened on the strategic objectives of the water board and the areas of its operations with different municipalities. The delegation then commenced with site visits within uThungulu district municipality. On 17 September, Mgeni Water Board presented their function as a water board and the areas of operations with different district municipalities. The delegation then proceeded with site visits within iLembe district municipality, visiting the emergency drought scheme (inter-basin) to supplement the inflows into Hazelmere Dam during the current drought and Ward 19 at Ndwedwe.

The second group started with their site visit on 14 September, by visiting the emergency upgrade of Ngagane Water purification Plant in Amajuba district municipality, checking progress on the upgrading of Madadeni Waste Water Treatment Works and gained access to the implementation of the Buffalo Flat sanitation projects. On 16 September, the delegation visited water and sanitation projects in Msinga and Umvoti municipal areas. On 17 September there was a site visit of the drought relief initiatives in Greytown, in UMzinyathi District. There was also a visit to the Regional Bulk Water supply in the district. On 17 September, the delegation visited the Midmar Water Treatment Works in UMgungundlovu District, Midmar Dam, Spring Grove Dam and Greater Eston Water supply.

On Friday 18 September the two groups met to discuss their findings. The overall report with recommendations was debated then. The provincial week oversight provides an opportunity for members of the portfolio committee to achieve its mandate of representing the provinces in the national sphere of government. It further provides an opportunity to receive reports from government departments and municipalities on progress made regarding service delivery

**KwaZulu-Natal Department of Water and Sanitation**