



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE

South Africa engages with China to strengthen relations

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The Department of Water and Sanitation hosted a delegation from China's Ministry of Resources late in the month of September to nurture relations between China and South Africa after a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between these two countries in 2005.

The delegation spent six days in South Africa with the main interest being the water sector: how it's structured, what challenges the country faces especially in the field of hydrology, water resources infrastructure and data management. They furthermore showed interest in finding out measures in place in the event of disasters related to water.

Hydrology Services' officials shared an overview of how the systems are managed by the department. They pointed out that there are stations for data collection all over the country. The data collected is crucial because it enables quick decision-making to deal with unanticipated occurrences. It also keeps the department up to date with the state of our water resources.

In the event of disasters, the data serves as a reason to send out early warning messages for all but especially downstream dwellers.

The two countries share similar characteristics when it comes to water challenges. These relate to water scarcity, increased demand for water due to urban growth, poor sediment management and climate change.

The delegation visited the Hartbeespoort Dam where they observed how that dam operates, with particular emphasis on how the dam benefits the surrounding community of Hartbees and its environs.

There was a subsequent visit to the South African Weather Service office to get an idea how current weather patterns are monitored and their impact on water resources. The impact includes the adverse effect the overall global warming has had on the country.



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South Africa and China enjoy strategic bilateral relations on many fields, including water resources management. The first engagement held in April 2015 saw the two countries come into agreement to continue cooperation, exchange information and support each other with technical expertise in the field of integrated water resource management.

Parts of the 2015-16 bilateral plan, which the visit is relating to, seeks to address the following areas of the agreement:

- *Water resources monitoring systems/networks*
- *Better integration with weather and climate change predictions for early warnings*
- *Technologies for dam operation, such as early warning systems, monitoring, instrumentation and security.*

South Africa and especially the DWS have learnt some vital lessons from China over the years. Experts within the country have benefited from the skills exchange programme in modelling techniques and monitoring, seawater intrusion, artificial recharge, as well as flood and drought management.

The continued co-operation between the countries will continue to enhance DWS' overall knowledge and as such ability to deliver services adequately.

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