



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

STATEMENT BY MINISTER NOMVULA MOKONYANE ON THE BUDGET VOTE FOR 2016/17

Parliament; Cape Town

11 May 2016

Deputy-Minister of Water and Sanitation, Pam Tshwete

Director-General,

Ladies and Gentleman;

- Today we present the budget vote of the department of Water and Sanitation with great strides having been made in the delivery of water to our people and decent sanitation.
- To date, as a country we have delivered access to water to 80% of our total population and 80% of our people equally have access to decent sanitation.
- Whilst the progress made is commendable, the urgency to serve the unserved persists. Our priority and concern remains those of our people who are yet to have access to water and decent sanitation.
- When this department was established by President Jacob Zuma in 2014, bringing together water and sanitation into a stand-alone department, we agreed that for the five-year mandate of this administration we would be guided by the phrase that **'Water is Life and Sanitation is Dignity.'**
- Guided by the broad vision of the NDP, that of providing affordable access to all South Africans to sufficient and safe water and hygienic sanitation, the budget

we will present today is focused on ensuring the reliability of supply and the provision of decent sanitation to our people.

- Through water and sanitation, the previous regime deprived our people of their basic rights and used these important services to denigrate and dehumanize them.
- As government we are now in a process to restore the dignity of our people and to ensure that they too enjoy their rights to dignified sanitation and access to quality water as enshrined in the constitution.
- The transformation of the water sector is at the centre of the mandate of the department to promote equity and radical socio-economic transformation.
- Over the last twenty-two years, government has built over nine (9) new dams as part of extending access to water for our people. Whereas previously our people were neither consulted nor accommodated as beneficiaries in such developments, presently we are incorporating community interests and participation as a key element in the delivery of water services infrastructure.
- The unfortunate part is that in the development of the above , transformation of the sector has not been prioritized and a monopoly of majority white-owned companies have been the primary beneficiaries.
- We seek to use water and sanitation services infrastructure projects to create opportunities for the empowerment of communities in particular women, youth and people with disabilities. We are moving with vigour to ensure a larger and significant portion of our procurement spend is targeted for the above groups and SMME's.
- We will soon be able to speak of a Dam developed by women. One that will be designed, constructed, operated and maintained by women and women owned companies and SMME's. These are the outcomes of transformation we expect to see realized and happening here in our country and during this term of office.
- In transforming the sector, we are also dealing with the anomalies that have previously characterized the water sector in our past. We are now moving to eradicate single-purpose dams, often used by a few and at worst for

recreational purposes, to the exclusion of the majority of our people who reside in villages that surround such dams. No more, will we develop dams where our people remain without water whilst they see and live by water sources developed to serve industry or a few.

- We are now transforming single-purpose dams to multi-purpose dams to ensure that they serve surrounding communities and benefit our people in the main.
- We are determined to use our future and current infrastructure projects to also promote the development of new industries within the sector and open opportunities for Black Industrialists to explore opportunities within this sector.
- As the department, working with the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, we have participated and are actively involved in the Back-2-Basics programme being implemented in 27 District Municipalities across the country.
- The issues of operations and maintenance of water and waste water infrastructure is at the top of our priorities.
- As a country, we pride ourselves with the quality of our drinking water and using the blue and green drop reports we are identifying challenges and working with municipalities to rectify and provide support in problem areas.
- Lack of adequate capacity, skills and revenue generation and/or collection are common realities in the municipalities wherein the Back-2-Basics programme is being implemented. As a department we have set up interventions to support municipalities to deliver water and sanitation services in areas such as Giyani in Limpopo, Madibeng in the North West and Makana in the Eastern Cape.
- Lessons learnt in this process have partly influenced our decisions to review the Water and Water Services Acts to ensure that as a department we do not only intervene once systems have collapsed in municipalities but we are given the legal mandate to deliver these services where there are inherent challenges.
- We are no longer throwing money at problems and are more focused on bringing on board our full capacity and support, using our water entities and

boards, to intervene and to support municipalities. In turn, they must invest on building the required capacity to operate and maintain the water and waste water infrastructure.

- I am pleased to mention that we have since intervened to ensure that we maintain and protect the Vaal river system from contamination and have committed R300 million to this important project. There's significant strides that have been made in this regard and the situation has notably changed.
- In the same breath, I might as well add that as part of the budget vote we will be presenting on a long-term solution on Acid Mine Drainage for the country.
- Lastly, the effects of drought remain. Our country remains largely dry with lower than normal rainfalls that have had a minimal impact on our dam-levels. We remain in a gloomy situation and must continue to use water wisely.
- We must thank all those South Africans who responded positively and adapted their behavior during this period. We urge those who have done so to continue and encourage those who are yet to adapt, to do so urgently.
- Despite drought, we are a water scarce country and it cannot be business as usual. We must change our water use patterns and behavior.

Dankie. Ngiyabonga!