

Water and Sanitation in the News

South Africa Risks Water Shortages as Drought Cuts Reserves

South Africa is facing water shortages after the worst drought since 1992 cut dam levels by 12 percent from a year earlier as most of the country enters its four-month dry season. Drought in eastern and central South Africa around the turn of the year has slashed corn and sugar output and may trigger water shortages for homes and businesses. Weaker river flow also threatens water quality.



Dried maize corn plants grow in a drought affected field in Lichtenburg, North West Province of South Africa. Photographer: Waldo Swiegers/Bloomberg

South Africa is the 30th-driest nation on Earth, according to the government, which expects water demand to outstrip supply as early as 2025. "Water will definitely be at a premium over the next few months," said Sputnik Ratau, a spokesman for the Department of Water Affairs. Toward the end of the dry season "we will be in an even more dire situation in terms of available water." The country's dams are 79.2 percent full this week, down from 90.1 percent a year earlier, according to data on the DWA's website. Ratau didn't know the last time dam levels were lower. Of the seven largest dams in South Africa and neighbouring Lesotho, which also supplies water to the continent's second-biggest economy, four have "low" or "moderately low" reserves, DWA data show.

The drought earlier this year was probably caused by El Nino, a global weather pattern that causes dry conditions in sub-Saharan Africa, according to Anthony Turton, a professor at the Centre for Environmental Management at South Africa's University of the Free State. Water quality may decline as rivers can't flush away sewage and dilute toxic discharges

from mines, he said. "The balance of probability suggests that we can anticipate a severe drought in the near future," Turton said in an e-mail. "Water restrictions are likely to be imposed"...

Source: [Bloomberg, 19 May 2015](#)

Good governance is all about preparation for when you're hit by the unexpected. It's about planning for the future, doing the boring stuff when you can, so that as challenges emerge – as they always do – you can ride the turbulence. Like we say in the Scouts: Be Prepared. South Africa is getting quite a lesson in this reality. After four hours of load shedding in our suburb last night, we are now having to contemplate water shortages. This in the city that markets itself as the commercial centre of the continent that's home to a billion souls. Those who fail to plan really do plan to fail – Alec Hogg – as quoted on: [BizNews, 20 May 2015](#).

The **Municipal Assistant™** systems helps to conserve scarce water resources and ensure sustainable service delivery by facilitating the proper management and operational activities of waste water and water treatment plants.



The systems provides many useful modules and tools (e.g. calculators) that helps to ensure that assets are correctly operated and maintained. A holistic approach is followed, where not only a management and information technology system is provided, but that the underlying principles of sustainable utilization of water resources in local municipalities are also addressed.

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