

Water and Sanitation in the News

SA's drought not yet 'national disaster'

South Africa's rivers and dams are running dry and farmers remain disgruntled at the sights of parched land, however that is not enough for Water and Sanitation Minister Nomvula Mokonyane to declare the crisis as a national disaster.

According to Mokonyane, she alone does not have the authority to declare a disaster until all concerned parties, including National Treasury and the department of co-operative governance collectively agree that the country is experiencing a national disaster.

The drought, which hit its two-and-a-half year mark at the beginning of October, has severely affected eight of SA's nine provinces. A drought declaration was affirmed for Gauteng in early October, however the remaining eight provinces continue to battle with maintaining a sustainable water supply.

Gauteng is not in the clear

Briefing Parliament's portfolio committee on the department's annual report, Mokonyane said stringent measures were being implemented countrywide. This included allocating 15% less water to municipalities in order to further decrease water consumption for October.

Earlier this month, stricter water restrictions were implemented in Gauteng as a result of the fast declining water levels in the Vaal River system, and Johannesburg was urged to further reduce its water consumption by 15%.

Mokonyane urged municipalities to focus on saving water and said that Mogale City was the only Gauteng municipality that successfully decreased its water consumption. "Gauteng will get their water back when they behave," she said. If the province could save enough water, the Vaal's levels would return to normal within the next year or two, she added.

Mokonyane said the declaration of a national disaster was also not going to be a "quick fix" as the release of all the necessary funds was not guaranteed as money would have to be reallocated from other programmes.

R1.3 billion of the department's R1.7 billion was also spent on hiring contractors to assess the water crisis last October, the minister said. This was declared as "irregular expenditure" as the hiring did not follow normal protocol, however, Mokonyane stressed that irregular expenditure was not the same as wasteful spending.

All spheres need to help curb the crisis

Mokonyane reiterated that water restrictions that were implemented thus far were not effective, therefore Gauteng was forced to "make do with 85%". She also encouraged municipalities to "enforce your by-laws". Mokonyane added that everyone, including local and national government was responsible for solving SA's water crisis by working together to solve the problem.

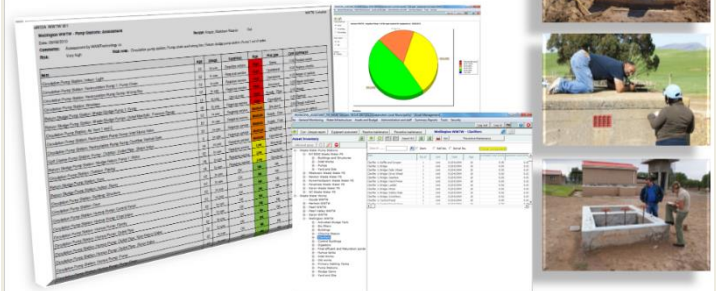
Sources: Infrastucturene.ws, 24 October 2016

WAMTechnology has been assisting municipalities in combating drought impacts by providing water asset and operations management systems and associated services for the past 9 years. Our solutions provide long terms savings in both finances and water, given that they help ensure the correct preventive maintenance procedures on water infrastructure are implemented. This helps to eliminate costly reactive maintenance and production losses, as well as prevents water losses through leaks in broken infrastructure.

We have a working system, The **Municipal Assistant™**, developed for local operating conditions. We train, coach, mentor and assist with the ultimate objective of empowering the user to assume ownership of the system.

ASSET CAPTURING AND ASSESSMENTS

- Field visit to assess assets
- Capture of data: Risk and evaluation of assets
- Reporting: Provision of Asset audit and Asset photo report



Before the Municipal Assistant™ system is implemented, or as a standalone service, WAMTechnology **conducts detailed asset and/or risk assessments** in terms of a range of identified hazards on components critical for water supply and sanitation. In doing so, serious threats to community and ecosystems health are early identified along with priorities of preventive and reactive maintenance.

Contact Mike Nord: Tel: +27 (0)21 887 7161

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