



Media Statement

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To: All Media

Negative Impact of Load Shedding, Bulk Water Infrastructural Challenges Dominate Ministry's Two-Day Visit to the North West Province (Dr. Kenneth Kaunda and Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipalities)

Following the ministry's visit to the province last year in February, during wide-ranging consultative meetings with stakeholders, which included local municipalities as well as provincial departments, the Minister of water and sanitation Senzo Mchunu was back in the province to assess progress made since the last visit and also receive a report of water and sanitation related challenges in Dr. Kenneth Kaunda and Ngaka Modiri Molema district municipalities. This in a bid to establish a synergistic approach towards cooperative governance in respect of improved service delivery.

One of the key milestones from last year's interaction was to announce the disestablishment process, which saw Magalies Water taking over the North West operations and liabilities of the now erstwhile Sedibeng Water, which operated in the Dr. Ruth Segomotsi Mompati and Ngaka Modiri Molema district municipalities since 2014. As part of the ongoing assessments, the ministry conducted a two-day visit to the province with special focus on municipalities which have been battling to ensure sustainable and reliable water and sanitation services to communities.

Magalies Water was invited as a leader in the water and sanitation sector with an impeccable track-record, having been previously mandated to assist Kgetlengrivier and Madibeng local municipalities in the operation and maintenance of bulk water and sanitation infrastructure. The water utility also, has in the past been roped in as an implementing agent on behalf the department of water and sanitation's mega infrastructure projects. The state-owned enterprise's mandate has been extended to include the Dr. Ruth Segomotsi Mompati and

Ngaka Modiri Molema with a long-term view to include the Dr. Kenneth Kaunda district municipality. The water board was represented by the newly appointed chairperson Dr. Lydia Sebege, the company's Chief Executive Sandile Mkhize and his management team.

The first day of the visit was in the Maquassi-Hills Local municipality. Residents in this area have decried the manner in which the negative impact water unavailability has affected their lives. The ministry undertook a walk-about at the Sedibeng pump station, which supplies Leeudoringstad and the surrounding areas to fully understand the infrastructural challenges and associated limitations in respect of water supply. The negative impact that load shedding has on water supply was highlighted consistently, as the infrastructure currently is solely dependent on electricity supply, without which service delivery is impeded.

Another site visit was also undertaken at the Tsweleng bulk water reservoir in Wolmaransstad. The visit to the two sites sought to develop mitigation measures that can be immediately deployed to address these challenges in the region. Present also during this visit, was Deputy Minister Dikeledi Magadzi, MEC for Cooperative Governance Nono Maloyi, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda district municipality Mayor Cllr. Nikiwe Num and Maquassi-Hills local municipality Mayor Cllr. Mzwandile Feleti. The hydrological perspective in the region, requires solutions that are more effective for utilization of underground water which is the current source of bulk water supply.

These interventions include the following:

- Refurbishment of five dysfunctional pumps at Leeudoringstad and Bakfontein pumpstations
- Upgrade bulk pipeline between Buisfontein and Tsweleng,
- Refurbish boreholes in Wolmaransstad, installation of zonal bulk water meters and;
- Construction of sewage pumpstations, establishment of sewer treatment plant required in Kgakala

Day two of the visit was at Zeerust in Ramotshere Moiloa local municipality within the Ngaka Modiri Molema district municipality. The district Mayor Cllr. Khumalo Molefe provided an overview of the working relationship between the district and Magalies Water following the government gazette which directed the water utility to extend its operations into the area including Zeerust and Mahikeng. Challenges that ranked high in the report from Ngaka Modiri Molema district include vandalism of water-related infrastructure, water scarcity in the district which creates a consistent higher demand for households and livestock, pipe leaks which result in water losses as well as raw spillages which poses health risks to communities.

Loadshedding was also highlighted as a major concern which hampers effective provision of water supply. Incidents of sabotage, remain a major concern in the Ramotshere Moiloa local municipality, where acts of vandalism are repetitive and give rise to the use of water tankering which is not a sustainable option for water provision given the vastness of the region. The Minister said, while this is a serious concern more needs to be done in order to ensure that a more permanent solution is found, in order for communities to have access to potable water. He added “the issue of water tankering needs to be eliminated and for an investment in a long term and sustainable permanent solution. We cannot be spending substantial amounts of money in tankering, with the many challenges which have been presented here. Whatever is available needs to be channeled into addressing the infrastructural challenges which we have been appraised about, in order to bring about substantive change” the Minister emphasized.

A technical committee meeting is to be held before the end of this month and will report on its work going forward. The Minister also established a steering committee which consists of the Premier as the Minister’s Co-Chair, the MEC for COGHSTA, District and Local Mayors (political steering committee), the technical team (from North West Provincial Government, district and local municipalities), and the Water Board’s engineers. This Technical committee will be ceased with water and sanitation related matters in the entire province.

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