



**PARLIAMENT**  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES**  
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## **OPENING REMARKS BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES, HONOURABLE N. A. MASONDO, ON THE OCCASION OF THE MINISTERIAL BRIEFING SESSION ON WATER AND SANITATION**

**VENUE:** VIRTUAL

**DATE:** 15 MARCH 2022

**TIME:** 10H00

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Greetings and Good Morning!

Programme Director, Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, Honourable Sylvia Lucas

Minister of Water and Sanitation, Honourable Senzo Mchunu

Deputy Ministers of Water and Sanitation, Honourable Dikeledi Magadzi and Honourable David Mahlobo

House Chairperson for Committees and Oversight, Honourable Jomo Nyambi

House Chairperson for International Relations and Members' Support, Honourable Winnie Ngwenya

Chief Whip of the National Council of Provinces, Honourable Seiso Mohai

Honourable Permanent and Special Delegates

SALGA President, Cllr Bheki Stofile

Ladies and Gentlemen

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Programme Director, allow me to start by congratulating and welcoming the new leadership of the South African Local Government Association that was elected during the 6<sup>th</sup> SALGA National Conference held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre recently.

We congratulate the new President of SALGA, Cllr Bheki Stofile, who is the Speaker of the Matjhabeng Local Municipality in the Free State. We congratulate the three Deputy Presidents:

1. Cllr Xola Phakathi – Executive Mayor of the Buffalo City Municipality in the Eastern Cape;
2. Cllr Flora Maboja-Boltman – Executive Mayor of Govan Mbeki Local Municipality in Mpumalanga; and
3. Cllr Xanthea Limberg – from the City of Cape Town

We also congratulate the newly-elected members of the National Executive Committee of SALGA. We are looking forward to a great working relationship, given the role that is played by SALGA in the National Council of Provinces.

Programme Director, today's Ministerial Briefing on Water and Sanitation focuses on *Progress in Eradicating the Gaps in the Provision of Water and Sanitation*.

It is intended to provide us with the opportunity to receive information on the efforts by the three spheres of government with respect to the progress made, and measures taken, to deal with the challenges relating to the provision of water and sanitation.

## **2. WATER AND SANITATION ARE KEY**

Our Constitution entrenches the right of everyone to have access to sufficient water. The Constitution obliges the state to take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of this right.

To fulfil this obligation, and to reverse the effect of apartheid policies, in its early years the democratic Parliament passed legislation:

1. To provide for the rights of access to basic water supply and basic sanitation;
2. To address the discriminatory laws and practices of the past that prevented equal access to water, and use of water resources;
3. To give national government overall responsibility and authority over the nation's water resources and their use, including the equitable allocation of water for beneficial use, and water redistribution; and
4. To protect the quality of water resources to ensure sustainability of the nation's resources in the interests of all water users.

Through these and other legislative and policy measures, the democratic state has been able to roll out massive infrastructure, and to avail free basic services to millions of poor households. However, challenges remain.

Last week's Ministerial Briefing highlighted the centrality of water and sanitation services in the creation of integrated and sustainable human settlements. As Members would recall, one of the issues raised was the critical role of bulk water infrastructure in the achievement of this goal.

This was clear in some of the following examples:

1. That in certain cases, stalled development projects are as a result of, amongst others, poor planning whereby a settlement is built before the necessary infrastructure is laid out;
2. There is a need to support initiatives such as self build homes, especially in rural communities, through the provision of water infrastructure; and
3. The impact of the delays in the declaration of informal settlements on the provision of services, including water and sanitation.

With respect to these few examples, one would like to recall Programme Director that when it was first released in 2011, the National Development Plan made the following observation:

“In general, human settlements are badly planned (*if at all*), with little coordination between those installing water reticulation infrastructure and those responsible for providing bulk infrastructure”.

As Delegates correctly pointed out during the previous Ministerial briefing, there is a need for the strengthening of co-ordination and co-operation among the spheres to continue to address these matters. The new District Development Model is thus a critical intervention in this regard.

#### **4. WATER IS A STRATEGIC RESOURCE**

Programme Director, water is generally regarded as a scarce and unevenly distributed national resource. This reality affects many of our communities, especially informal settlements and rural areas. Some of our metros, cities and rural towns have in the recent past experienced serious water shortages due to drought.

There is also the phenomenon of demand-driven water scarcity – whereby water demand is higher than the capacity of available water sources, owing largely to the high rate of in-migration driven by the search for economic opportunities. Water pollution and ageing infrastructure also add to this challenge.

In addition, we are also facing the effects of climate change, which require us to better manage our human activities.

As Members would agree, the Covid-19 pandemic has strongly demonstrated the importance of water in mitigating public health disasters and ensuring an environment that is not harmful to health and well-being.

## **5. ENSURING WATER AND SANITATION FORMS PART OF THE GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

Programme Director, water and sanitation are critical in the achievement of the 17 global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the UN General Assembly in the year 2015.

It is widely accepted that SDG 6, which is about ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, is essential for the progress on all other SDGs and vice versa. It strengthens wider efforts to end poverty, advance sustainable development and sustain peace and stability.

In this regard, it is worth noting that the oversight of our country's performance in this area has been made much easier by the aligning of the global targets with the National Development Plan.

## **6. ON THE SONA 2022 COMMITMENTS**

Programme Director, we welcome the view shared by the President of the Republic, Cyril Ramaphosa, during this year's State of the Nation Address, that water is vital to life, development and to economic growth. Therefore, we support government efforts:

1. To introduce institutional reforms to capacitate the Department of Water and Sanitation; and
2. To review the water boards in as far as their mandates are concerned and to ensure that they serve municipalities in terms of the District Development Model.

In addition, we are looking forward to interact with the proposed legislation for the establishment of the National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency, to improve the management of bulk water infrastructure and resources.

## **7. IN CONCLUSION**

Programme Director, water and sanitation are critical in contributing to the improved quality of life of all the citizens and to the promotion of human dignity.

At a global level, ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, is viewed as key to the achievement of all the sustainable development goals.

Nationally, our own progress in this regard depends largely on how we close the existing gaps in the provision of water and sanitation.

I thank you very much for the opportunity to make these remarks.

Thank you