

INFORMATION SERVICES: RESEARCH

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Water Affairs and Forestry

Water Affairs and Forestry and the 2007 State of the Nation Address

The referencing of the achievements, as noted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)¹, by the President in terms of the improvement of access of South Africans to water, from 59% in 1994 to 83% in 2006, and the reduction of the backlog in the eradication of the bucket system in established settlements by almost half, was also underpinned by the need to improve on the following in the water, sanitation and forestry sectors:

- The fact that 8 million people are still without potable water.
- The emphasis on the eradication of the dehumanising system of bucket toilets, by the end of 2007.
- The finalisation of practical programmes for forestry and paper.

The following key strategic objectives highlighted in the State of the Nation Address have impact or influence on the water and forestry sector:

- To implement detailed programmes to respond to the challenges of the Second Economy.
- To continue with programmes to build a social net to meet the objectives of poverty alleviation.
- To ensure that the public sector discharges its responsibilities as a critical player in the growth, reconstruction and security of all citizens and communities.
- To speed up the process of skills development.
- To accelerate the process of renewal of the African continent.
- Implementation of the final stages of programmes to meet the targets for universal access to water in 2008 and sanitation in 2010.

Impact on Water Affairs and Forestry

In 2005, the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry's (DWAFF) transformation role from an implementer to a regulator and sector leader has entailed shifts to decentralise functions and finance to local government.

¹ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as cited by President Thabo Mbeki, in his 2007 State of the Nation Address.

From the 2005/06 financial year onwards, capital funds for basic services were allocated directly to Municipalities under the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG). DWAF, therefore, will be responsible for ensuring compliance with water and sanitation conditions, and ensuring that Municipalities maintain their focus on ending the water and sanitation backlog. It is against the background of co-operative governance and strengthening service delivery obligations by municipalities mentioned in the 2007 State of the Nation Address, that the work of DWAF and the Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) intersect.

- **8 million people with no access to potable water**

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry is overall sector leader and custodian of the country's water resources, but, since 2003, local government has taken full responsibility for ensuring access to water services in all areas. Decentralisation of responsibility has coincided with increasingly urgent pressure to address service backlogs². The department, in regulating the sector, is in the process of reviewing and assisting the work of local government in working toward ensuring the attainment of access to potable water by all sectors.

- **Eradication of the Bucket System**

The President strongly emphasised the need for eradicating the bucket system. DWAF continued its programme to eradicate the bucket system and replace it with more dignified and appropriate types of sanitation services such as waterborne toilets. Statistics from the department reflect the following progress made in the eradication of the bucket system³:

Table1: Progress made in the eradication of the bucket system

PROVINCE	Backlog February 2005	Progress April '05 - March '06	YTD Progress April'06 - November '06	PTD Progress April'05 - November '06	Backlog at November '06
Eastern Cape	48,417	11,742	20,045	31,787	16,630
Free State	127,658	16,685	15,719	32,404	95,254
Gauteng	5,169	3,844	200	4,044	1,125
KwaZulu-Natal	750	750	0	750	0
Limpopo	80	80	0	80	0
Mpumalanga	15,172	11,737	3,435	15,172	0
North West	35,189	8,220	4,760	12,980	22,209
Northern Cape	16,691	8,221	3,748	11,969	4,722
Western Cape	3,128	927	535	1,462	1,666
GRANDTOTAL	252,254	62,206	48,442	110,648	141,606

Source: Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Sanitation Support Programme

² Sourced at: <http://www.waterdialogues.org/country-03.htm>

³ The following statistics were obtained from the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Sanitation Support Programme, February 2007.

The backlog at the inception of the programme in February 2005 was 252 254 units and the delivery against this backlog was at 110 648 units by the end of November 2006. The remaining backlog is 141 606 units. The provinces with the highest backlogs are Free State (95 254), Eastern Cape (16 630) and North West (22 209).

For the December 2007 target to be met, it is projected that 74 000 buckets will need to be removed by March 2007. To ensure that the target for March 2007 is reached, 25 558 will need to be eradicated. The remaining 102 000 will have to be eradicated by December 2007. To ensure that the remaining buckets are removed by December 2007, the following processes need to be in place within this financial year, that is⁴:

- The planning process is completed, that is, all projects are registered for funding.
- All municipalities should procure contractors this financial year.
- Project designs are ready for implementation.
- A budget is allocated according to confirmed backlog.
- An intensification of support to municipalities.
- Target and clear backlog in provinces with minimum backlog so as to later avail all resources to provinces with huge backlog. This will ensure visible impact of delivery.

The major risk in this effort to eradicate buckets by December 2007 is not about meeting the target but about people's expectations. The communities are expecting that all buckets will be removed in South Africa by December 2007, whether in formal or informal establishments. This is despite ongoing communications that only those in formal established settlement are being addressed now.

Cabinet Lekgotla approved a strategy to accelerate the delivery of basic services, including water and sanitation. The strategy mandates the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry to take greater responsibility for the delivery of basic services. The Department has developed a sanitation acceleration strategy called 'Operation Gijima, that is targeted at improving sanitation in rural areas.

- **Implementation of the final stages of programmes to meet the targets for universal access to water in 2008 and sanitation in 2010**

South Africa has made significant progress in eradicating basic water services backlogs. In terms of basic water supply, South Africa had already halved the backlog by 2005, thus achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) ten years ahead of the 2015 target date. In terms of sanitation services, there has been a 40% improvement since 1994, which is also well within the timeframe of the MDGs⁵.

⁴ The information that follows was sourced from a briefing by the Director-General, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, 14 February 2007.

⁵ Social Sector Cluster briefing document for media briefing at Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 15 February 2007.

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry's water supply target is universal access to a basic water supply by 2008. This means that within the next few years, infrastructure must be put in place for basic water services for the 3.6 million people per annum, who currently have no access to safe water, as well as improving supplies for the 5.4 million who are still more than 200 metres from a source of safe water.

To reach the sanitation target by 2010, DWAF has to provide approximately 0.9 million households per annum with access to a basic level of sanitation. Most of these people are in rural areas, informal settlements and commercial farms.

In order to meet these targets, excellent planning is needed in each Municipality, primarily through their Water Services Development Plans (WSDPs) and Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). It is also necessary to focus implementation plans to turn the Municipal Infrastructure Grant funds into effective services. Funds made available through the Municipal Infrastructure Grant will primarily be used to eradicate the backlog of water supply for the remaining people who lack access to formal infrastructure.

These targets are also given urgency through the targets highlighted in the 2005 and 2006 State of the Nation Address, presented by State President Thabo Mbeki⁶:

- To ensure that within the next five years, all households would have easy access to clean running water.
- During the current year, more than 300 000 households will be provided with basic sanitation.
- Improve the capacity of Municipalities to ensure that the target of providing sanitation to 300 000 households per year is met. The targeted timeframe is 2007.
- By the end of 2007, all bucket toilets must be eradicated.

The above targets assist in translating the Millennium Development Goals into nationally agreed targets.

- **Support to Local Government and the sector⁷**

The alignment of planning instruments across the spheres of government is a strong focus of the work of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry. The transformation role of the department from an implementer to a regulator and sector leader has entailed shifts to decentralise functions and finance to local government. As part of its programme to accelerate delivery, the department provided extensive support to Local Government through the following:

- Implementation planning feasibility study guidelines.
- Planning training sessions.

⁶ 2005 and 2006 State of the Nation Address.

⁷ Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Annual Report 2006, page 47.

- The development of planning reference frameworks for all district municipalities.

The above initiatives resulted in improved Water Services Development Plans (WSDPs).

The department was actively involved in the integrated Strategic Rural Development Programme (ISRDP) and the Urban Renewal Programme (URP) within the identified nodes with other Government Departments to ensure that the relevant water supply, sanitation and forestry perspectives were understood and applied.

The department, via Project Consolidate, also provides focused capacity building and training to needy Municipalities. A water plant operators training programme was developed for staff, and is in the process of being transferred with DWAF owned water schemes to municipalities in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo Provinces. DWAF provided direct assistance to municipalities in crisis.

Significant progress was made with the implementation of the Strategic Framework for Water Services (SWFS). Initial drafts of the National Regulatory and Institutional Reform strategies were completed and widely discussed with stakeholders, while the final draft of the Sector Support Strategy is almost complete. The drafting process of the National Water Services Bill, which replaces the Water Services Act of 1997, is underway. A strategic assessment of the Sector was initiated to identify strengths, weaknesses and future strategic direction and a Municipal Guideline for 'Ensuring Water Services to Residents on Privately Owned Land' was completed.

The department, together with the Department of Health, embarked on a project to develop a National Health and Hygiene Strategy for Water and Sanitation Services. This was accomplished through a consultative process with all stakeholders. The final draft is awaiting approval by the Department of Health.

A national initiative was launched with the Water Research Commission (WRC), and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) to benchmark the performance of the Water Services Associations. The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), on behalf of DWAF conducted an annual National Water Services Consumer Opinion Survey, to assess consumer satisfaction and identify gaps in service levels. A project, aimed at raising awareness of the citizens with regard to regulation and encouraging them to voice their concerns was also launched and is being piloted in the Western Cape.

Health and Hygiene continued to be part of the Department's Water and Sanitation programme and efforts were made to also incorporate these into the Municipal Infrastructure Grant projects implemented at municipal level. Health and Hygiene promotion is now incorporated into the Housing

Programme. The Departments of Health, Housing and the DWAF have developed a health and hygiene package, which is educational programme for new homeowners, that is part of the Housing Customer Care programmes.

- **Sector Capital and Operating Expenditure**

Sector capital expenditure for basic services infrastructure

In South Africa, the public sector is very much in the driving seat of water services provision. Through grant-funded programmes, government is investing heavily in ambitious infrastructure delivery initiatives and pro-poor service delivery programmes.

Privatisation in the water sector is limited, and seems unlikely to increase significantly; there are examples of concessions and corporatisation, but these are exceptions. Recent legislation emphatically precludes the sale of municipal assets necessary for delivery of basic services.

In terms of the sector capital expenditure for basic services infrastructure, the department's 2006 Annual Report noted the following:

- Total funding allocated to the basic Water Services Programme with the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) was R2.7 billion of which an estimated R1.6 billion was allocated for basic water supply and R1.1 billion for basic sanitation.

Figures provided below are based on the DWAF, DPLG (MIG) and Housing budgets, and are not actual expenditure. These figures also exclude Local Government's own capital budgets, and are based on the assumption that 50% of Department of Housing funding is allocated to Higher Levels of Service.

Table 2: Budgeted Capital Expenditure on basic services infrastructure (R millions)

Program	Water		Sanitation	
	Projects 1994 to 2005/6 - Budget	Projects 2005 / 2006 - Budget	Projects 1994 to 2005/6 - Budget	Projects 2005 / 2006 - Budget
DWAF	R 7 130,5		R 1 261,6	
DPLG (MIG)	R 5 952,9	R 1 615,1	R 2 618,2	R 1 076,7
Housing	R 1 643,9	R 435,9	R 1 930,3	R 484,3
Department of Public Works & Health (Schools & Clinics)	R 109,9		R 147,9	
TOTAL SECTOR	R 15 037,2	R 2 051,0	R 5 958,1	R 1 561,1

Source: Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Annual Report 2006

A lack of implementation capacity within many municipalities hampered the sector's efforts to meet the annual delivery targets – only 72% of the financial allocation have thus far been spent by municipalities.

Sector Operating Expenditure⁸

The total Sector Operating Expenditure is estimated at R17.4 billion, with R11.4 billion for water supply and R6 billion for sanitation. Operating expenditure is calculated using the Municipal Services Model and various

⁸ Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Annual Report 2006

other sources, such as the Division of Revenue Act (DoRA), Municipal budgets and National Treasury, and specific case studies undertaken for the DWAF.

- **Programmes to build a social net to meet the objectives of poverty alleviation⁹**

Implementation of the new policy on financial assistance and support to resource-poor irrigation farmers began in 2006 with a pilot project to construct 68 rainwater harvesting tanks in 26 villages in Limpopo, Free State, Kwazulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. These tanks benefit irrigation farmers toward household food production.

The Working for Water and Working on Fire programmes contribute to employment prospects for people. The Working for Water Programme contributed 2 094 028 person days of employment at an overall cost of R199 per person per day. A total of 29 470 people benefited directly from the creation of 11 150 jobs. Of these, 54% were women, 18% youth and 1% to people with disabilities.

The Working on Fire programme created 277 791 persons days of employment with 1 037 people benefiting directly from it. The programme was further successful in changing fire fighting from being a 100% male-dominated function to recruiting 27% women workers.

- **Forestry¹⁰**

Within the forestry programmes of the department, is a sub-programme, the Forest Enterprise Development (FED), which relates to the concept of using forests and forest-based resources as a vehicle for economic growth, employment and socio-economic upliftment. This provides a tool that would take people from a subsistence livelihood system into a market economy. The concept is also central to Government's poverty eradication agenda and a key component of Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) in the forestry sector.

A number of initiatives have already been taken by the DWAF in support of FED. This includes the transfer of state forests, the development of an afforestation strategy for the Eastern Cape and Kwazulu-Natal, and the inclusion of forestry as a key sector in Provincial Growth and Development strategies. The current projects include beekeeping, in partnership with the Agricultural Research Council, and the establishment of medicinal nurseries, in partnership with various stakeholders.

⁹ The information that follows was sourced from Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, 2006 Annual Report

¹⁰ The information that follows was sourced from Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, 2006 Annual Report

- **Supporting the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)¹¹**

The role of the department extends beyond the borders of South Africa. In aligning itself to government policy on the consolidation of the African agenda, as noted in the 2006 State of the Nation Address, DWAF supports the economic integration of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and its contribution to the success of NEPAD.

Many of South Africa's rivers are shared with neighbouring states. In managing these rivers, DWAF must comply with the SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses and with agreements with neighbouring states. South Africa is proud that the management of shared watercourses in the SADC region is internationally recognised as a study in best practice.

In 2006, progress was made within SADC and more generally in Africa in the following ways:

- DWAF played a leading role in the resuscitation of the Water Resources Technical Committee of SADC in terms of facilitating and hosting the meeting. This meeting is important in terms of coordinating a joint position in the area of water and sanitation for approval by the Integrated Committee of Ministers (ICM). Furthermore, DWAF continued to participate in the negotiations for donor funding to support regional projects in the water and forestry sectors.
- DWAF participated in the negotiations to confirm African Ministerial Council on Water (AMCOW) as a technical committee of the African Union (AU) as provided for in the Constitutive Act. DWAF represents the SADC on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the AMCOW.

Implications for Parliament for 2007

South Africa's water services sector has undergone far-reaching transformation since the advent of democracy in 1994. This transformation process has been underpinned by a strong commitment to eliminate the inequities of South Africa's past, but driven by a broader programme to decentralise functions and finance to local government. It is within this context that the oversight role of Parliament should be located:

- Institutional reform and changes to the policy framework may require amendments to current legislation. Therefore, an audit of current legislation to identify gaps, particularly with respect to national standards for service delivery is necessary. While there are sectoral standards, these need to be more detailed.
- Greater cooperation between Parliamentary Committees, particularly during oversight visits. For example, between Water Affairs and

¹¹ The information that follows was sourced from Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, 2006 Annual Report

Forestry and Local Government to monitor the transfer of water services to Municipalities.

- Parliamentary Committees, together with the relevant sector Departments should facilitate the sharing of experiences and case studies between Municipalities, Workshops and conferences bringing stakeholders together should be convened. Relevant intergovernmental forums should also be utilised.
- Parliamentary committees should actively engage Departments during the annual budget process, particularly on the current funding regime with particular reference to the equitable share formula and the Division of Revenue Act. Select Committees, particularly, should engage departments during the annual tabling of the Intergovernmental Fiscal Review by the National Treasury.
- Success in achieving the Millennium Development is also dependent on the strength of provincial and municipal structures. These structures are at differing states of readiness and hence the need for government to intervene to support these that are in bad shape. Parliamentary committees should assist departments in identifying areas of weakness, particularly through recommendations and oversight reports.

Progress on issues raised in the 2006 State of the Nation Address

An assessment on the progress of the 2006 strategic objectives identified by the President for the sector, is detailed below:

- **Basic water supply¹²**

In 2006, local government provided basic water supply to a further one million people. Of a population of 48.6 million people (based on an updated 2001 Census figure to the end of March 2006), there are currently 3.3 million people with no access to a basic level of water supply and a further 4.9 million people have access to a water supply, which does not meet the basic service levels.

- **Basic sanitation**

In 2006, basic sanitation was provided to a further 200 000 households. Of a population of 48.6 million people, there currently 15.3 million people with no access to basic sanitation facilities. Since 1994, access to sanitation infrastructure in the sector improved from 49% to 69% of the population.

DWAF continued its programme to eradicate the bucket system and replace it with more dignified and appropriate types of sanitation services, such as waterborne toilets. R1 billion of the total R1.2 billion will be spent in the 2006/07 financial year to ensure that the bucket system is eradicated by the end of 2007. Households are being provided with a level of service that

¹² The information that follows was sourced from Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, 2006 Annual Report.

varies from Ventilated Improved Pit Latrines (VIP) to full water-borne sanitation.

5. References

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