



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

Delays in Lesotho Highway Water Project Phase II not the cause of current water shortages - Minister Mokonyane

26 October 2016

Water and Sanitation Minister, Ms Nomvula Mokonyane says it will be gravely misleading to suggest that the current water challenges facing the country is caused by the delay in the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP).

She made this pronouncement today when she appeared before the Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation in Parliament, adding that the project was never meant to be operational in 2016.

Mokonyane attributed the severity of the current drought due to current unfavourable climatic conditions and the intensity of the El Nino phenomenon that has hit the country's shores and caused a visible knock on dam levels, resulting in water shortages and the country experiencing its lowest rainfalls in 95 years.

Minister Mokonyane further urged people to acknowledge the fact that both South Africa and Lesotho have immensely benefitted from the completion of Phase I through clean water supply which South Africans enjoy. She however acknowledged that there has been a minimal benefit in terms of economic empowerment and skills and social development for the people of both countries.

"The envisaged time period for the completion of LHWP Phase II is 2025 and this project will ensure that the country is better equipped to deal with effects of climate change. We have also taken a lot of lessons from Phase I which will assist in ensuring proper implementation of Phase II, such as establishment of clear lines of accountability from the two Governments in the project and prioritisation of the national interests of Basotho and South Africans" she said.

The LHWP Phase II, being the largest water project of its kind due for implementation in the world currently, is set to guarantee benefit the national, regional and international interests of South Africa and Lesotho. These benefits are not limited to water supply only; they stretch to economic empowerment in line with Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment principles.

THE END.



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