



**PARLIAMENT**  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**FOLLOWING UP  
ON OUR COMMITMENTS  
TO THE PEOPLE, MAKING  
YOUR FUTURE WORK BETTER.**

# **The role of Parliament in addressing the South African water crisis**

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5 August 2022



## CONTEXT: WATER CRISIS

- South Africa is a water scarce country with an east-west rainfall gradient.
- Unequal distribution of water (inter-basin transfer systems).
- Access to water – 88.7% of households in 2021.
- Water quantity, quality, and access challenges.
- Ageing infrastructure, water losses and maintenance challenges.
- Municipalities (WSP, WSA), poor municipal administration and debt owed to water boards.
- Shift from maintenance to crisis management (Military involvement in Vaal).



# THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT

- **Oversight**

- Municipal performance.
- Progress and expenditure on large water infrastructure projects.
- Performance of Department and its entities.
- Proactive vs reactive oversight.
- Oversight visits and engagement with affected communities and stakeholders.

## **Legislation**

- Need for wide-scale adoption of water saving technologies, including water recycling and re-use.
- Water legislation is strong – need for better governance, management, monitoring, enforcement and consequence management.
- Need for greater transparency – databases, baseline and continuous monitoring, data capturing and publishing on public platforms.



## THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT CONTINUED

- **International Commitments, Bi-lateral and Multi-lateral Agreements**
- South Africa shares major rivers with six neighbouring countries (Lesotho, Botswana, Eswatini, Namibia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.)
- South Africa has made a number of international commitments related to water, including SDGs, international agreements (SADC Protocol on shared Watercourse Systems, African Ministers' Council on Water).
- International Agreement between the Republics of Mozambique, South Africa and Eswatini on the Protection and Sustainable Use of Incomati and Maputo Water Courses and the Lesotho Highlands Water Project Treaty, Orange-Senqu River Commission Agreement.
- International agreements are binding once they have been approved through resolution by the NA and NCOP, except if these agreements are of a technical, administrative or executive nature, or an agreement which does not require either ratification or accession.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Clustering of NCOP Committees - not optimal for oversight. Potential for Ad Hoc Committee.
- IGR: Need for greater cooperation between departments and spheres of government (ex. SALGA, Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Department of Water and Sanitation and the Office of the Auditor-General.)
- Opportunity for engagement between a wider range of government (local, provincial, national) and other stakeholders, including professional bodies, NGO sector, think tanks and academics.
- Strengthening capacity for compliance monitoring, enforcement and technical (engineering) functions.
- Following up on parliamentary projects (TPTTP and provincial week) (public participation) - continuity.



## CONCLUSION

- Water is a basic human right and a Constitutional right.
- State is custodian of water resources and therefore needs to sustainably manage and allocate resources responsibly.
- Need and responsibility for greater oversight, consequence management and eradication of corruption, creating greater capacity for monitoring and enforcement to ensure protection of water resources, adequate management and improved access to safe drinking water.



Thank you