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4 OCTOBER 2017

STATEMENT BY THE CITY'S EXECUTIVE MAYOR, PATRICIA DE LILLE

City is prepared to avoid acute water shortages

Note to editors: the statement below was made by City of Cape Town Executive Mayor, Patricia de Lille, at a media briefing today, 4 October 2017.

Due to the impacts of climate change and reduced annual average rainfall as we have again seen this past winter, the City of Cape Town has adopted a scenario called the New Normal where we are no longer only relying on rain water to fill our dams for our water supplies.

The New Normal means that as a permanent drought region, we have to change our relationship with water as a scarce resource and augment our supply with alternative non-surface sources.

Today, as part of our regular updates on the drought crisis, I am announcing key aspects of the City of Cape Town's Critical Water Shortages Disaster Plan.

It essentially deals with the measures we are putting in place to avoid a time when water users do not have access to municipal drinking water. I want to assure residents that we will not allow a well-run city to run out of water.

A responsible city plans for the impossible, and today we will outline the plan to avoid critical water shortages.

As things stand now, if we all use the water left in our dams more sparingly (which as of Monday stands at 27,6% useable water), combined with other demand management measures which are under way, we can stretch out the number of days of water we have left in our dams to beyond March 2018.

Winter is over and we are in for a long, hot, dry summer period where we will see a rapid decline of our dam levels.

If consumption is not reduced to the required levels of 500 million litres of collective usage per day, we are looking at about March 2018 when supply of municipal water would not be available.

The day or month of this happening is, however, not as important as what we do now to avoid such a time.

Currently our collective water use remains dangerously high, with daily consumption at 618 million litres per day. We have done well to reduce our consumption but there is still a lot of room for improvement.

I want to thank the majority of Capetonians who are saving water. Your efforts have helped us navigate our way through the drought thus far and can take us through the tough summer if we keep up and step up water-saving effort wherever we can.

As part of our water demand measures, we are going after the approximately 55 000 households and people who are still abusing water and show no regard for this crisis and the efforts of the many people who are using water sparingly. They are playing with all of our futures.

We are going after the excessive water users with a mass roll-out of the installation of water management devices, which are being set at 350 litres per day per property. We are also monitoring the commercial sector who must reduce their water use by 20% compared with a year ago.

In terms of our Water Resilience Plan to augment supply with new schemes, we are expecting the first water to come online by approximately December 2017/January 2018 if all goes according to plan. Other new sources will come online at various stages and the yield of each source will rise incrementally.

For instance, water from temporary land-based desalination plants in Monwabisi and Strandfontein is expected to come online by February 2018. Thereafter, from March 2018 onwards, additional desalination projects are expected to come online.

In terms of groundwater extraction at the Atlantis and Silverstroom aquifers, additional water from these projects is expected from about January/February 2018 onwards. In fact, the City has already managed to increase the production capacity from the Atlantis aquifer as part of our Water Resilience Plan and we are continually looking at optimising operations in other areas.

It is expected that additional water through water reuse from our Zandvliet Wastewater Treatment Plant will come online from January/February 2018.

I have just returned from a meeting with the Minister of Water and Sanitation, Nomvula Mokonyane, to discuss water security and water licences for the new emergency schemes.

In terms of our Critical Water Shortages Disaster Plan, as with all parts of our operations, we have a disaster plan for all eventualities as every organisation does as part of risk management.

In order to avoid disaster and build up reserves, we have been reducing pressure over the months and this has been intensified. We are now set to increase it further to force consumption down.

Our plan to avoid acute water shortages comprises three phases. The City has activated **Phase 1**, with water rationing through extreme pressure reduction (throttling).

This is a critical stage where we must all do everything we can to stretch the water supply in our dams.

As water rationing is intensified, some areas will be affected for short periods of time. This will lead to intermittent, localised temporary water supply disruptions.

This process does not result in a complete shutdown of the water reticulation system, but it will severely limit available water supply in the system per day.

We ask water users to store up to five litres of municipal drinking water only for essential usage. Please do not store excessive municipal water.

The City cannot provide definitive timetables of the disruptions as the water systems must be managed flexibly to avoid damage to critical infrastructure. Any zoned outages will likely occur during peak water usage times in the

mornings and evenings. We are asking people to prepare for water supply to be disrupted for a short period of time.

Critical services such as clinics and hospitals will be largely unaffected and mitigation measures will be put in place if they experience intermittent water supply.

We will share the plan summary with businesses in Cape Town to effect their planning and to ask them to assist us.

Phase 2 is a disaster stage.

The difference between Phases 1 and 2 is that in Phase 1 we are rationing the whole system with reduced supply. In Phase 2 we are only keeping a certain portion of the system alive close enough to water collection points. Residents will be able to collect a predefined quantity of drinking water per person per day from these collection sites.

During this phase, the City would more actively assume control over the daily water supply available to households and businesses with more extreme rationing.

Strategic commercial areas, high-density areas with significant risk of increased burden of disease and fires (such as the majority of informal settlements), and critical services (such as hospitals), where possible, would continue to receive drinking water through normal channels.

The City's law enforcement and policing resources, as well as the various resources of our intergovernmental partners, such as the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), will be deployed to ensure that general safety is maintained throughout the city in this phase.

This plan will be submitted to the SAPS and the SANDF who will provide key intergovernmental support.

Phase 3 is the extreme disaster phase.

At this point, the City would be incapable of drawing water from its surface dams in the Western Cape Water Supply System. There would be a limited period in which the City can continue to supply water before complete water system failure.

Non-surface drinking water supplies, sourced from groundwater abstraction from various aquifers and spring water, will be available for drinking purposes only. The City will distribute this drinking water to residents through water distribution points.

I must emphasise that the disaster and extreme disaster phases (2 and 3) can be avoided with progressive savings and rationing in Phase 1. This extreme can only be avoided if we all do what we need to do now to save water.

As a responsible City, the likelihood of such a risk materialising must be balanced against the potential impact of that risk. It is therefore necessary that the City and its residents and stakeholders plan for such a situation if it were to occur.

The City has been investing much of its resources, through our water resilience task team, to avoid a disaster scenario. But, as a City that plans ahead, the above plan is necessary to have in place. Intricate operational plans are being finalised as we speak as this is an ever-changing situation.

This is a call to action to all our water users. We can only get through this by working together.

The severity and duration of this drought could not have been predicted. As a City, we are managing the situation with absolutely every drought intervention that we have at our disposal.

We have not let Cape Town down before and we do not intend to do so now. We need all water users to stand with us, to support us during these trying times, and to be constructive partners.

Thank you Team Cape Town.

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Issued by: Media Office, City of Cape Town

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