

Government scrambles to fix water, power outages with rapid response plans

Deputy President Paul Mashatile outlined the South African government's fresh efforts to tackle water and electricity disruptions plaguing municipalities nationwide. In a question-and-answer session with the National Council of Provinces, Mashatile detailed rapid response interventions coordinated through a dedicated "Service Delivery War Room."



Deputy President Paul Mashatile responded to questions from the NCCP

The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) is spearheading the initiative, crafting improvement plans that include a Results Management Office and revamped Municipal Infrastructure Grants. These grants will channel funds towards repairs, upgrades, and complete overhauls of aging infrastructure.

The War Room is also exploring the continued deployment of technical specialists via the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent (MISA). Mashatile informed Parliament that the Results Management Office will assist municipalities with implementing demand-side management practices and securing alternative energy sources.



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Lindsey Schutters 11 Mar 2024



"These steps aim to lessen the load shedding impact on substations and transformers," Mashatile explained.

Last week, Mashatile, along with CoGTA and Water and Sanitation deputy ministers, visited Knysna Municipality in the Western Cape to address local challenges.

Inter-governmental framework

"We're pleased to report that MISA's support led to the repair of the vandalised pump station in Hornlee, restoring water supply to the community," Mashatile said. "This government remains committed to working within the inter-governmental framework to empower municipalities in delivering services to our people."

MISA is actively seeking private sector investment in bulk water infrastructure projects. Mashatile highlighted the Sishen Mine (Northern Cape) and Anglo Platinum Mine (Limpopo) as examples of such partnerships.

"These private entities have stepped up by funding wastewater treatment plant upgrades in the respective provinces," he stated.

Eskom's Active Partnering Programme offers technical support to municipalities through targeted interventions based on their specific needs. This program also aims to bolster municipal capacity in addressing the high failure rate of mini substations and transformers.

Bulk water SOE

Mashatile emphasised that Parliament is currently processing the South African National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency SOC Limited Bill.

This bill paves the way for establishing a state-owned company tasked with expanding South Africa's bulk water infrastructure and enhancing management of existing water resources, ultimately ensuring water security for the coming decade.

The Deputy President concluded by reiterating the government's unwavering commitment to assisting municipalities in fulfilling their constitutional obligation: providing reliable water and sanitation services to all South African citizens.

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