



THE PRESIDENCY: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
Private Bag X1000, Pretoria, 0001

Our Ref: PAIA- Stephen Moore

Mr Stephen James Moore, MP

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa

Plein Street

Cape Town

8000

By e-mail:

Dear Sir,

Re: Your request for access to information in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2 of 2000 (Act)

1. The above matter has reference.
2. The Presidency received your request for access to information wherein you requested access to the following records and/or information:

“meeting minutes of the National Water Crisis Committee on 18 March 2026,

meeting minutes of the National Water Crisis Committee on 24 March 2026,

resolutions adopted by the Committee on 18 March 2026,

resolutions adopted by the Committee on 24 March 2026,

adopted Terms of Reference by the Committee,

National Water Crisis Action Plan adopted by the Committee.”

3. After careful consideration of your request in line with the provisions of the Act, access is granted to the following records:

- The National Water Crisis Committee terms of reference;

- Minutes of meeting dated 18 March 2026; and

- Minutes of meeting of 24 March 2026

4. I however, regret to inform you that access to the National Water Crisis Committee Action Plan, cannot be granted. The reason for the refusal is that the Committee is still unpacking the details of the execution of the plan. The release of the plan at this stage will frustrate the deliberative process which is currently taking place in the Committee.

5. The basis for refusal is section 44(1)(b) of the Act which sets out as follows:

"44 Operations of public Bodies

(1) Subject to subsections (3) and (4), the information officer of a public body may refuse a request for access to a record of the body-

(a) If the record contains-

(i).....

(ii)

(b) If-

(i) the disclosure of the record could reasonably be expected to frustrate the deliberative process in a public body or between public bodies by inhibiting the candid-

(aa) communication of an opinion, advice, report or recommendation; or

(bb) conduct of a consultation discussion or deliberation

(ii) the disclosure of the record could, by premature disclosure of a policy or contemplated policy, reasonably be expected to frustrate the success of that policy."

6. As a result of my decision conveyed in this letter, I draw your attention to sections 25(3), 74(1) and 75 of the Act.

Yours sincerely


Mr Rory Gallocher
Deputy Information Officer

Date: 10/6/2026.



National Water Crisis Committee (WATERCOM)

Terms of Reference

FINAL Draft

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 South Africa has made significant strides in extending access to basic levels of water and sanitation. Further, the supply of raw water is largely in balance with existing demand on a national scale, but with localized deficits, in particular in the major economic centres of Gauteng and eThekweni.
- 1.2 Yet, today, there is an escalating water crisis, with many communities and businesses across the country experiencing intermittent water supply or poor-quality supply, while many communities still have no access at all. This is happening in an environment where demand could outstrip supply due to economic growth, population growth, urbanization, inefficient use (including increased physical losses in municipal distribution systems), degradation of wetlands, pollution and the impacts of climate change.
- 1.3 Something must be done that recognises both the urgency to resolve the immediate impediments to access and reliability of supply, while at the same time changing the way the water sector will function going forward. These need to work in tandem to ensure water security today and into the future.
- 1.4 This is a hard task. Much of the challenge lies in the sphere of local government, which is constitutionally autonomous, with competencies that include water and sanitation services. The national government can set policies with supporting legislation and provide financial incentives to drive reform - which it is doing - but the resolution of the problems requires a collaborative and coordinated response, with strong leadership commitment to reforming the water sector.

- 1.5 In recognition of this, the President announced in this year's State of the Nation address on 12 February 2026 that he will lead the coordinated effort through the National Water Crisis Committee (WATERCOM).
- 1.6 The water sector is complex, with 144 municipalities with the authority to deliver water services, as opposed to single utilities as found in electricity and rail and ports. Most of these municipalities are experiencing both financial and service delivery challenges and are unable to effectively discharge their responsibilities with respect to the delivery of basic services and the management of water and sanitation infrastructure.
- 1.7 The 2023 Blue and Green Drop Reports showed that there is widespread failure of municipal water and sanitation services – 105 (73%) of the 144 Water Service Authorities (WSA) in the country scored "poor" or "critical" in terms of the performance of their drinking water and/or wastewater systems. Similarly, the 2023-24 Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) report on water services revealed a severe, systemic crisis in the water sector, with 46% of drinking water systems failing microbiological safety standards and 99% of wastewater plants failing at least one quality standard.
- 1.8 However, the 2023 DWS No Drop Report showed that, on average, municipalities had non-revenue water (NRW) of 47.4%. Water services are in a vicious downward spiral in many municipalities, with high non-revenue water and allocation of water revenues to other functions leading to insufficient maintenance and non-payment to water boards, and insufficient maintenance in turn leading to increasing non-revenue water. Municipal debt to water boards tripled between 2018 and 2025 and now stands at over R25 billion.
- 1.9 Due to neglect of the maintenance of municipal water and sanitation infrastructure over decades, a huge backlog for the repair and refurbishment of water services infrastructure has developed. In addition, investment in waste-water treatment infrastructure has lagged the growth of urban areas and growth in connections to wastewater collection and treatment systems, and there is also a huge backlog in this regard.

2. REFORMS IN THE WATER SECTOR

- 2.1. There is broad consensus in the water sector, including government, civil society and sector experts, regarding the causes of the challenges in the sector and what needs to be done about them. It is therefore not necessary to revisit this. Instead, the focus should be on the strategic priorities that will catalyse and embed change within the water sector, with critical interventions and actions captured in a National Water Action Plan (NWAP). The National Water Crisis Committee (WATERCOM),

under the leadership of the President, will support the delivery of the Plan, through oversight and timeous problem solving to maintain the momentum of implementation and achieve tangible results.

- 2.2. Major reforms in the water sector are already well underway, having been elevated as a government-wide response to accelerate the implementation of reforms in the network industries, coordinated by the Presidency and National Treasury, under the auspices of Operation Vulindlela, since 2020.
- 2.3. In addition, the National Treasury is implementing the Metro Trading Services Reform (MTSR) programme - a R54 billion, 6-year, performance-based incentive launched in 2025 to overhaul electricity, water, and waste services in South Africa's eight metropolitan municipalities. It aims to reverse long-term service decline, improve financial sustainability, and unlock R108 billion in investment by enforcing strict, verified performance targets.
- 2.4. Among the water sector reforms completed are: the passing of the National Water Resource Infrastructure Agency (NWRIA) Act; the establishment of the remaining Catchment Management Agencies; the clearing of the backlog of water-use license applications, with the turnaround time for processing new water-use license applications improved markedly; and the reinstatement of the Blue, Green and No Drop Reports that provide accurate information on the state of municipal water and sanitation services.

3. NATIONAL WATER ACTION PLAN AND NATIONAL WATER CRISIS COMMITTEE

- 3.1. Drawing on the successful response to the energy crisis, the severity of the water sector failures at the local level, together with the urgent need for reforms, requires a government-wide response. The President has added urgency to this effort by providing his leadership and ensuring a coordinated effort to ensure the effective implementation of the National Water Action Plan (NWAP).
- 3.2. The National Water Action Plan will be aligned to existing planning documents and will not duplicate or reproduce them. The existing plans will continue to be implemented by DWS.
- 3.3. The National Water Action Plan will be ready for public release within six weeks of these terms of reference being adopted and approved by WATERCOM, which will be established under these terms of reference.
- 3.4. WATERCOM will be chaired by the President. This new structure will incorporate the existing Inter-Ministerial Committee on Water (also known as the Water Task Team). At a technical level, WATERCOM will be led by the Director-General in the

Presidency. The Director-General will be supported by the WATERCOM Secretariat, responsible for coordinating oversight, including the development of a performance tracking system, as well as managing interventions where necessary to resolve blockages and problems.

- 3.5. Implementation of the National Water Action Plan is the responsibility of government departments and other relevant entities. Designated lead departments will coordinate the development of delivery plans, with support from the WATERCOM Secretariat, and will be responsible for coordinating the implementation of those plans. These departments will convene and engage relevant parties and work closely with the Secretariat, which will provide support as agreed.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

4.1. Composition

- 4.1.1. WATERCOM will be responsible for overall coordination of the response to the water crisis. At a political level, WATERCOM will include the Ministers of Water and Sanitation; the Presidency; Finance; Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs; Human Settlements; Public Works and Infrastructure; Police; Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment; and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA)
- 4.1.2. The Director-General in the Presidency will chair WATERCOM at a technical level, which will include the Directors-General of the departments listed above as well as the South African Police Service and SALGA
- 4.1.3. A joint team comprising officials from DWS and supported by Operation Vulindlela will form the secretariat for WATERCOM. Additional expert capacity and officials from other departments will be mobilised to resource the secretariat as required. In addition, the secretariat will make experts available to the lead departments and prioritised municipalities as agreed.
- 4.1.4. Progress against the National Water Action Plan will be presented periodically to the President Coordinating Council with the Premiers of the provinces.
- 4.1.5. Where provinces have established Provincial Water Crisis Committees, there will be coordination between them and WATERCOM.

4.2. Areas of focus

The National Water Action Plan will focus on five areas of work:

- a) Address immediate challenges in municipal water and sanitation delivery through a focus in a number of municipalities

- b) Expedite institutional, financial and regulatory reforms to address the systemic causes of the water crisis
- c) Attract water infrastructure investments, particularly increasing private sector investment
- d) Legal and regulatory interventions to improve municipal water service delivery
- e) Safety and Security in the water sector

Ultimately the NWAP, combined with existing efforts already underway, will contribute towards:

1. Increased access to water services and reliability of supply
2. Water security

4.3. Principles to underpin the achievement of results

The following principles will guide the work of the WATERCOM:

Focus

- a) WATERCOM will focus on a limited number of prioritised issues, that are suitable to be on the agenda of WATERCOM
- b) WATERCOM will prioritise issues where it can add value, and will exclude matters that are best addressed by the line function departments
- c) There will be a focus on implementing the reforms listed above that address the systemic causes of the water challenges in the country and therefore result in a sustainable improvement in water services
- d) There will be urgency and focus on addressing blockages, i.e. instances where intervention of the WATERCOM would assist with expediting implementation
- e) The temptation to cover all the issues faced by the water sector will be avoided. Other issues not under the purview of WATERCOM remain important and will continue to be addressed by the relevant line function departments.

Accountability

- f) Responsible Ministers will report to the President, with agreed performance measures
- g) Ministerial and Accounting Officer accountability in terms of legislation such as the National Water Act, the Water Services Act, PFMA, MFMA and NEMA will not be affected by the work of WATERCOM

Coordination

- h) WATERCOM will coordinate implementation of the National Water Action Plan, with a “business unusual” approach underpinned by urgency and flexibility to immediately and effectively respond to the crisis.
- i) There will be coordination with existing initiatives, such as the Presidential Johannesburg Working Group - duplication will be avoided

Participation

- j) There will be government-wide participation in the implementation of the plan and engagement with civil society, trade unions and business
- k) Experts will participate through an advisory group, as well as through intervention teams at the municipal level.

4.4. Roles, responsibilities and relationship between local and national government

- 4.4.1 The main causes of the water crisis are at a local government level. As a result, WATERCOM's ability to stabilise and improve water services will depend on actions that are taken at the local level.
- 4.4.2 While South Africans have a high expectation that WATERCOM will resolve the lack of reliable, clean water in their areas, local government is an autonomous sphere and the mechanisms available for national government to impose solutions or reforms are limited.
- 4.4.3 Therefore, success will require a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities, and what each responsible party can and will do to resolve the crisis and place the water sector on a sustainable path. WATERCOM will make use of existing mechanisms to support and intervene in municipalities which are experiencing water challenges, while pursuing longer-term institutional reforms.
- 4.4.4 The National Government is adopting significant regulatory and financial reforms and mechanisms which provide the foundations for change within municipalities. These reforms are crucial to enable intervention in the many municipalities which are not capable of acting as water service providers, but will only take effect in the medium term through legislative reforms.
- 4.4.5 A peer-to-peer learning platform will be established that will share the learnings and experiences from the implementation of turnaround plans.
- 4.4.6 The range of national legislative, regulatory and financial reforms that are currently underway and planned will impact the delivery of water services once implemented.

4.5. Establishment of work streams

4.5.1 The WATERCOM will establish five work streams:

4.5.1.1 **Work stream 1:** Water service delivery (overseeing responses to water supply disruptions)

4.5.1.2 **Work stream 2:** Institutional and financing reforms

4.5.1.3 **Work stream 3:** Attracting private sector investment in the water sector

4.5.1.4 **Work stream 4:** Legal and Regulatory

4.5.1.5 **Work stream 5:** Safety and Security

4.5.2 Each work stream will develop a detailed delivery plan to give effect to the National Water Action Plan and will report on a monthly basis to WATERCOM at a technical level.

4.5.3 Work stream 1 will be chaired by the DG of DWS, supported by the DG of COGTA, work stream 2 will be chaired by the DG of DWS, supported by the head of the Operation Vulindlela Unit and the head of the City Support Programme in National Treasury, and Work stream 3 will be chaired by the DG of DWS supported by NT. Work stream 4 will be chaired by the Presidency and supported by DWS and COGTA, Work stream 5 will be coordinated under Natjoints.

4.6. Engagement with business, civil society and organised local government

4.6.1. WATERCOM will facilitate engagements with business, civil society, and organised local government regarding the work of WATERCOM. These engagements will cut across the various workstreams. Discussions will take place with organised business regarding possible ways in which business could provide support for the implementation of aspects of the Action Plan, for example, through funding the provision of experts to compliment the resources in the lead department.

4.6.2. An advisory group will be put in place, consisting of water experts from universities and other bodies, to advise on the National Water Action Plan and its implementation.

4.7. What will success look like?

The desired end state of WATERCOM's work is as follows:

- a) Water services start to turn around in the prioritised municipalities
- b) Implementation of the reforms reaches the stage that they are irreversible and have credible momentum towards full implementation, and the impact of the reforms has started to result in improved water services
- c) Obstacles to attracting private sector investment have been largely removed and private sector investment in water has started to accelerate markedly

The National Water Action Plan will provide more detail, including identifying short, medium and long-term intended outcomes of WATERCOM.

4.7.1 Key performance indicators will be identified to monitor success. These will include:

- a) Improve expected collection level for water
- b) Improved reliability of water services measured through StatSA census surveys and Blue and Green Drop reports
- c) Improved access to at least a basic level of access to water services measured through StatSA census surveys
- d) Reduced average water consumption per capita
- e) Non-revenue water reduced to comparable international levels
- f) Reduction of debt owed by municipalities to Water Boards
- g) Reduction of the deficit in investment in water infrastructure through accelerated private sector investment



THE PRESIDENCY: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
Private Bag X 1000, Pretoria, 0001

DRAFT NOTES

MEETING OF THE NATIONAL WATER TASK TEAM

Date	Wednesday, 18 March 2026
Time	14h00 - 16h00
Venue	Room 26, Tuynhuys, Cape Town
Chairperson	HE President Cyril Ramaphosa

1. Opening and Welcome

The meeting was chaired by HE President Cyril Ramaphosa. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the proposed establishment of the National Water Crisis Committee, also referred to as WATERCOM, and to receive presentations from the WaterCom Technical Team on the proposed Terms of Reference and the draft National Water Action Plan.

The meeting formed part of the President's commitment to elevate government's response to the national water crisis and to ensure a coordinated, urgent and results-focused response across government.

2. Presentations

The WaterCom Technical Team presented the proposed framework for the National Water Crisis Committee and the draft National Water Action Plan.

2.1. WaterCom Terms of Reference

The meeting received a presentation on the proposed Terms of Reference for WaterCom. The presentation outlined the proposed institutional arrangements, the role of WaterCom in coordinating the response to the water crisis, and the proposed governance arrangements for political and technical oversight.

The Terms of Reference were intended to provide a structured basis for the work of WaterCom and to clarify the roles of the Presidency, the Department of Water and Sanitation, National Treasury, COGTA and other relevant departments and institutions.

2.2. National Water Action Plan

The meeting received a presentation on the draft National Water Action Plan. The draft plan set out the proposed approach to addressing the national water crisis, including municipal water service delivery challenges, sector reforms, infrastructure investment, and the mobilisation of technical support.

The presentation highlighted the need to address both immediate water service delivery failures and the systemic causes of the crisis, particularly at municipal level.

3. Discussion

Following the presentations, the President led a discussion on the proposed Terms of Reference and the draft National Water Action Plan. The meeting noted that the water crisis required a stronger and more urgent response, and that the draft Action Plan needed to be substantially revised before being presented at a follow-up WaterCom meeting.

3.1. Timeframes

Concern was raised that some of the proposed timeframes in the draft Action Plan were too long and did not adequately reflect the urgency of the water crisis. It was proposed that the timeframes should be reviewed and shortened where possible. At the same time, it was noted that timeframes should not be shortened where doing so would make them unrealistic or undermine the credibility of the plan. The technical team was requested to review all timeframes and shorten those where this could realistically be achieved.

3.2. Prioritisation of municipalities

Concerns were raised regarding the proposal to identify five priority municipalities. It was noted that this could be politically problematic, as other municipalities and provinces facing serious water challenges may feel excluded. It was proposed that the Action Plan should rather refer to all 105 municipalities that scored poor or critical in the Blue Drop and Green Drop assessments, while still allowing the technical work to focus on specific municipalities where urgent support or intervention is required. The criterion that municipalities should be "willing to transform" was also identified as potentially problematic, as it could create the impression that national government lacks the authority to act where municipalities are failing to deliver basic water services. The technical team was requested to revise the section on municipal intervention to reflect the broader group of affected municipalities and to avoid creating the impression that only a small number of municipalities would receive attention.

3.3. Access to water in unserved communities

It was noted that the plan should give greater prominence to the provision of water to unserved communities. This was identified as a politically and socially important issue, particularly in communities that still do not have access to basic water services. It was proposed that the Action Plan include information on the Department of Water and Sanitation's programme to provide access to unserved communities, including boreholes, protected springs and other appropriate interventions. This should also be summarised in the section dealing with municipal intervention.

3.4. Tone and strategic framing of the Action Plan

A strong concern was raised that the draft Action Plan was too bureaucratic and did not read like a decisive response to a crisis. It was noted that the plan needed to be more strategic, direct and hard-hitting. The meeting proposed that the structure of the plan should be revised. After the introductory section, the plan should clearly set out the nature of the municipal water services crisis, the causes of the crisis, and then move directly into what government will do to address it. It was further proposed that the language of the plan should be bolder and more direct, particularly in relation to the consequences of reforms such as the Water Services Amendment Bill. The plan should make clearer that non-performing water service providers may lose the function and that alternative capable water service providers may be appointed where municipalities are unable to perform effectively.

3.5. Grant financing and leveraging funding for reform

The meeting noted that the plan did not sufficiently aggregate grant financing or explain how existing water-related grant funding would be better leveraged to support change. It was proposed that National Treasury be requested to lead work on this issue, including the possible aggregation, reprioritisation or better targeting of water-related grant funding to support the implementation of the Action Plan.

3.6. Local government accountability

The meeting raised concern that the plan did not sufficiently address the issue of local government accountability.

It was noted that the water crisis is largely located at municipal level and that accountability mechanisms should be strengthened. It was proposed that this issue should be addressed through a dedicated legal workstream, which would consider municipal roles and responsibilities, national government's intervention powers, and any additional legal changes that may be required.

3.7. Additional workstreams

The meeting noted that the proposed workstreams did not adequately cover some key issues, including legal mechanisms and corruption, theft, vandalism and water mafias. It was proposed that two additional workstreams be included: a legal workstream to consider municipal roles and responsibilities, national government intervention powers, and possible additional legal amendments; and a corruption and criminality workstream to address corruption, theft, vandalism, water tanker mafias and other criminal activities affecting the water sector.

3.8. Inclusion of SALGA, provinces and the President's Coordinating Council

The meeting noted that the proposed arrangements needed to be broader and more inclusive of SALGA and provincial government. It was proposed that SALGA be included in WaterCom and in the technical structures. It was further proposed that the President's Coordinating Council should be engaged, particularly in relation to interventions in the 105 municipalities affected by poor or critical water service performance. The Action Plan was to be revised to reflect the role of the PCC and the need for broader intergovernmental engagement and buy-in.

4. Way Forward and Closure

The President directed that the National Water Action Plan be substantially revised and circulated for consideration at a follow-up WaterCom meeting to be held the following week, again chaired by the President.

The technical team was requested to review the feedback from the meeting, agree on an approach to revising the Action Plan, allocate responsibilities for the required changes, and confirm the timelines for producing the revised plan. It was agreed that the revised plan should be prepared urgently and the document should be ready for the follow-up WaterCom meeting.

The meeting concluded with an understanding that the revised National Water Action Plan should be more urgent, strategic, inclusive and implementation-focused, with clearer workstreams, stronger accountability, and a more credible approach to municipal intervention and support.



THE PRESIDENCY: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
Private Bag X 1000, Pretoria, 0001

**MEETING SUMMARY
WATERCOM FOLLOW-UP MEETING**

Date	Tuesday, 24 March 2026
Time	19h00 – 21h00
Platform	Zoom
Chairperson	HE President Cyril Ramaphosa

1. Opening and Welcome

The President opened the meeting and recalled that the previous engagement had agreed that a further meeting would be convened once additional work had been undertaken on the proposed plan. He noted that the purpose of the meeting was to further consider the response to the water crisis facing communities, municipalities and the broader water system.

The President welcomed the progress made since the previous meeting and indicated that he expected the presentations to provide a clearer and improved way forward on how government would address the challenges affecting water access, reliability and quality.

The agenda was tabled, and apologies were taken as read.

2. Presentations

The meeting received presentations on the revised WaterCom Terms of Reference and the revised National Water Action Plan. The presentations were led by DG Phindile Baleni, Mr Rudi Dicks and DG Sean Phillips, in line with the agenda.

DG Baleni indicated that, following the previous meeting, the technical team had met to improve the first draft presented to the President and Ministers.

3. Discussion

3.1. General response to the revised documents

Members welcomed the revised Terms of Reference and National Water Action Plan, noting that the documents had improved substantially since the previous meeting. The President confirmed that the Terms of Reference were much improved and more clearly demonstrated the nature and extent of the water crisis.

The meeting agreed that WaterCom must be treated as a crisis-response mechanism, with urgency, focus and measurable progress.

3.2. Reticulation and "water to the tap"

Minister Simelane supported the revised approach but emphasised that the plan would remain limited if it focused only on bulk supply without addressing reticulation. She indicated that the plan must clearly link infrastructure projects to the point at which municipalities take over from bulk supply and deliver water to households.

She further proposed that DCoG and relevant officials should identify which Municipal Infrastructure Grant-funded projects relate to the WaterCom priorities, to ensure practical estimates of when water would reach households in specific areas.

The President agreed with the need to focus on reticulation and emphasised that the public communication should not create the impression that government is focused only on bulk supply. He recalled the State of the Nation Address commitment that taps must run with water and stressed that this is what matters most to people and businesses.

3.3. Accountability across the water value chain

Minister McPherson raised concern that the accountability provisions in the Terms of Reference appeared to place accountability mainly at Ministerial level. He proposed that accountability should also include local government, mayors, councillors and water boards, since successful implementation would depend on cooperation from these actors across the value chain.

The President agreed that accountability cannot end at Ministerial level and must extend further down the delivery chain. He noted that the crisis is rooted significantly in local government weaknesses, including capacity, governance and the diversion or misuse of water revenues.

3.4. Projects affecting immediate access to water

Minister Ntshaveni welcomed the improvements to the plan but proposed that the project lists should be refined to include projects whose non-completion directly affects water supply in communities, even where the remaining budget amount is not large.

She specifically referred to a Water Treatment Plant in Makhado, Vhembe, indicating that its non-completion affects water supply in Makhado town and adjacent areas. She proposed that provinces should be reviewed to identify projects whose completion would have direct impact on water availability.

The President agreed that the plan must avoid the risk of excluding areas facing serious water challenges. He noted that if government goes public without recognising key problem areas, communities whose challenges are not reflected may become disheartened. He requested that a balance be struck between keeping the plan focused and being sufficiently specific on critical problem areas.

3.5. Classification of municipalities and communication of Blue Drop, Green Drop and No Drop results

Minister Ntshaveni requested that the plan clearly explain how critical and poor municipalities are classified, and how Blue Drop, Green Drop and No Drop results translate into people's lived experience of access to water and safe water.

She noted that communities in areas such as Mopani may not understand why a municipality is not classified as critical if they do not have water. The plan should therefore clarify the criteria used and the meaning of the technical assessments in relation to access, reliability and water quality.

3.6. Ring-fencing of water revenue and incentives

Minister Ntshaveni proposed that National Treasury should accelerate the development of incentives for ring-fencing water revenues in municipalities outside metros, noting that October was too far away given

the urgency of the crisis.

Deputy Minister Mahlobo further supported ring-fencing, arguing that it should no longer be optional for municipalities. He indicated that implementing agents, water boards or private sector partners would need certainty that revenue would be ring-fenced to support operations, maintenance and investment.

The President also emphasised that large amounts of money are already being put into water, but that water is either wasted through leakages or does not reach households. He noted that financial flows, maintenance and accountability must therefore be addressed.

3.7. Technical capacity and deployment of support

Minister Ntshaveni highlighted the absence of technical capacity in municipalities, using Vhembe as an example. She proposed that WaterCom should classify municipal technical capacity to determine where technical support should be prioritised.

DM Mahlobo supported the mobilisation of delivery capacity through water boards, DBSA, MISA, capable implementing agents, private sector capacity and retired engineers or experts. He also emphasised the need for tools of trade, including pump stations, chemicals, tankers and other equipment required to restore infrastructure functionality.

3.8. Non-revenue water

Minister Ntshaveni proposed that non-revenue water should be addressed more deliberately, with clear targets for when reductions should be expected once interventions are implemented. She referred to international examples in the presentation and noted that reductions in non-revenue water require deliberate action, including ring-fencing, repiping, metering, billing and enforcement.

The presentation had identified average non-revenue water of 47.4% across Water Service Authorities, compared to a benchmark of 25%.

3.9. Boreholes, bulk supply and reticulation

Minister Ntshaveni proposed that the plan should review the use of boreholes in areas where bulk water supply exists but the real constraint is reticulation. She cautioned that resources may be better spent on reticulation lines and pump stations in such cases, rather than on boreholes.

3.10. Legal mechanisms and interventions

DM Mahlobo noted that the plan had identified relevant statutory mechanisms, including section 139 of the Constitution and section 63 of the Water Services Act. He proposed that the legal route for deploying support institutions and implementing agents should be clarified urgently.

The President agreed that the legal framework requires further attention. He noted the need to consider the legal instruments available to national government, while also ensuring that the approach respects the roles of provinces and local government. He further noted that the Water Services Act was before Parliament and should be processed with urgency, without undermining the quality of the legislative process.

3.11. Grant funding and conditionalities

DM Mahlobo noted that water-related funding exists across various departments and conditional grants. He proposed that consideration be given to reviewing some conditionalities, at least in relation to a defined quantum, to support urgent water delivery.

He also referred to the conversion of direct grants into indirect grants where necessary, in order to enable implementation where municipalities lack capacity.

3.12. Need for review during implementation

Minister Godongwana supported proceeding with the plan but proposed that room should be left for review as implementation unfolds. He noted that experience may show which matters can be addressed quickly and which will require more time due to complexity.

The President agreed that implementation must proceed with urgency while allowing for learning and adjustment.

3.13. Convening of a special PCC

Minister Ntshaveni proposed that a special President's Coordinating Council be convened to consult provinces, finalise the approach and enable government to communicate publicly.

The President agreed and indicated that a special PCC would be arranged through Minister Hlabisa. He emphasised that the PCC would be important for securing buy-in from Premiers and local government, and that the presentation to the PCC should be more specific and focused on the actions to be taken.

3.14. Communication and public release

The President indicated that the plan must go public and must clearly explain the crisis, the intended interventions and the role of national government. He stressed that the approach must be framed as involving and supporting local government, while making clear that national government will intervene where failures are persistent and unexplained.

3.15. Reporting and monitoring

The President requested regular progress reporting, indicating that he would like to receive updates every fortnight. He stated that the work must continue at technical level with greater vigour and that the next WaterCom meeting should be convened on the basis of implementation progress.

3.16. Safety, security and criminality in the water sector

The President emphasised that the safety and security component needed further attention for the plan to have full credibility. He indicated that he would engage the Minister of Police on measures required to focus the justice system on the water crisis, including action against water mafias and those damaging water infrastructure.

The National Water Action Plan presentation had identified water tanker mafias, theft, vandalism, corruption and construction mafia activity as matters to be addressed under Workstream 5 through NATJOINTS.

4. Way Forward and Closure

The President concluded that the meeting had advanced the work significantly. He welcomed the improved Terms of Reference and National Water Action Plan and confirmed that the next step would be to convene a special PCC for consultation and buy-in.

He emphasised that the plan must remain focused on the lived reality of citizens: ensuring that water reaches people's taps. He further stressed the importance of urgency, legal clarity, accountability, reticulation, municipal technical capacity, security of water assets and fortnightly reporting to the President.

The President thanked Ministers, Deputy Ministers, DGs and officials for their participation and closed the meeting.

5. Meeting Resolutions

No.	Resolution / Action Required	Responsible Party	Timeframe
1	The revised WaterCom Terms of Reference and National Water Action Plan were noted as substantially improved and accepted as the basis for further refinement.	The Presidency / DWS / WaterCom Secretariat	Immediate
2	The National Water Action Plan and Terms of Reference must be updated to reflect the inputs received during the meeting, including on reticulation, project prioritisation, accountability, municipal technical capacity, non-revenue water, legal mechanisms, and security of water infrastructure.	The Presidency / DWS / WaterCom Secretariat, with relevant departments	Before PCC engagement and public release
3	The plan must clearly communicate the nature of the water crisis, the criteria for prioritising municipalities and projects, and how interventions will ensure that water reaches households and businesses.	DWS / WaterCom Secretariat / GCIS	Before public release
4	WaterCom must proceed with urgent implementation, including the mobilisation of technical support teams and the identification of priority municipalities for intervention and support.	WaterCom Secretariat / DWS / National Treasury / DCoG / MISA	Urgent
5	The legal framework for national government intervention in municipalities must be reviewed urgently, including existing constitutional and legislative mechanisms, and recommendations must be made on how these can be used or strengthened.	The Presidency, supported by DWS and DCoG	Urgent
6	National Treasury, DWS and DCoG must consider how water-related funding instruments, including conditional grants and ring-fencing incentives, can be better aligned to support urgent water delivery interventions.	National Treasury / DWS / DCoG	Ongoing
7	A special President's Coordinating Council must be convened to consult provinces and local government, secure buy-in, and finalise the approach before broader public communication.	The Presidency / Minister Hlabisa / WaterCom Secretariat	Urgent
8	The presentation for the special PCC must be refined to be practical, focused and specific, while clearly framing national government's role as supporting and involving provinces and municipalities.	The Presidency / DWS / WaterCom Secretariat	Before special PCC
9	The President must receive fortnightly progress reports on the implementation of the National Water Action Plan.	WaterCom Secretariat / Workstream leads	Every two weeks
10	The safety and security component of the plan must be strengthened, including measures to address water mafias, theft, vandalism, corruption and damage to water infrastructure.	NATJOINTS / SAPS / DWS /	Urgent and ongoing
11	The President will engage the Minister of Police on measures required to strengthen law enforcement and	The President / Minister of Police	Urgent

justice system focus on water-related criminality.