# The South Africa COUNTRY BRIEF

*The Country Briefs were prepared by governments ahead of the SWA 2019 Sector Ministers' Meeting. They are a snap-shot of the country's current state in terms of water, sanitation and hygiene, and future targets.*

## 1. Setting the Scene

According to UN Population Division, and Department of Economic and Social Affairs, South Africa had a population of 13,6 million people in 1950, with an urban/rural split of 42%/58%. The country at this point in time was essentially rural in nature.

Today South Africa has an estimated 61,8 million people with an estimated rural component of only 30%, and by 2050 (100 years on) is likely to only have a rural component of 20%. So, the country is now mostly urban in nature and planning for WASH therefore needs to take this rate of urbanisation into account.

The rate of urbanisation underscores the reality of "LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND" and ultimately will affect the country's ability to achieve SDG 6.

## 2. SDGs and the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Sector

According to the WHO Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) South Africa achieved the Millennium Development Goals of access to an improved water source (95%) and improved sanitation (89,6%).

Post 2015 the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were introduced and the JMP converted their MDG data series (2000 to 2015) to align with the SDG goals of access to water and sanitation.

The new water and sanitation access goals (SDG 6.1 and 6.2 respectively) included sustainable service provision by introduction the concept of safely managed services into the indicator mix and by modifying improved water and sanitation access into two components, basic and limited.

In 2015, with regards progress according to the new SDG goals, the national access to a basic water service was 84,7% and to limited access was 10,3% (which translates to a total of 95% access to an improved water source). Access to basic sanitation was 73,1%, limited access was 16,5%, (that translates to a total of 89.6% access to improved sanitation).

***In 2017 JMP water and sanitation access progress was:***

| Indicator | Rural (2017) | | Urban (2017) | | National (2017) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Water | Sanitation | Water | Sanitation | Water | Sanitation |
| Safely managed | 67% | | 87% | | 80% | |
| Basic service | 67% | 60% | 97% | 75% | 86% | 70% |
| Limited service | 19% | 5% | 3% | 17% | 9% | 13% |
| Unimproved | 8% | 31% | 0% | 7% | 3% | 15% |
| Open defaecation | N/A | 4% | N/A | 1% | N/A | 2% |

From a reporting point of view, South Africa is currently able to report on access to safely managed for water services because two elements of this component; namely: i) as and when water is required (is monitored by "stability of water" supply questions placed in the Stats SA General Household Surveys, since 2009) and ii) water quality (by using departmental data from the Blue Drop Regulatory System).

However, in South Africa, safely managed sanitation is not fully measured because the entire faecal sludge management cycle is not being monitored for wet and dry sanitation. Although water borne faecal sludge that is discharged to waste water treatment works is being measured (using departmental data from our Green Drop Regulatory System), the disposal of faecal sludge from pit latrines, is not.

## 3. From the JMP table the following can be concluded:

- "Open defaecation" on a national scale has reduced from 12,6% (in 2000) to 2,3% (in 2015). The rural areas, according to JMP, have shown a remarkable improvement from 25,5% (2000) down to 4,9% (2015).
- "Unimproved sanitation" in rural areas remains unacceptably high. Of interest is that "limited sanitation" in rural areas is 5% while in urban areas it is 17%. This clearly implies that rapid urbanisation is increasing the use of shared toilet facilities, which is putting pressure on existing bulk sewer infrastructure. This implies that only 52% of domestic waste at water treatment plants is "safely managed".
- "Safely managed" water provision in rural area is also remains unacceptably low 67%. When cross referenced against the DWS definition for Reliable Water Supply (which is defined as "safely managed" x "basic service" = 67%x67% = 45%) the level of rural water service reliability is only 45% against a local policy target of 90%. Service reliability can essentially be resolved through the provision of effective scheme operation and maintenance programmes funded from municipal operational expenditure budgets, but this is highly dependent on appropriate levels municipal

revenue streams. In rural municipalities, the socio-economic profile of rural municipalities is such that in excess of 75% of households are indigent and revenue collection is poor at best, resulting in a lack of operational and maintenance, and ultimately dysfunctional schemes. As there is no cross subsidisation in rural areas, from rich to poor households, "safely managed" service provision is not addressed, and remains poorly unfunded. (In 2018 the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs identified 87 distressed or dysfunctional local municipalities, out of a total of 227 local municipalities, and concluded that issues in rural municipalities were much more complex due to lack of skilled technical skills which resulted in an inability to effectively spend the full allocation of grant funding provided for water and sanitation infrastructure, which contributed to a lack of operation and maintenance).

- "Safely managed" water services provision in urban areas is relatively high at 87%, and in terms of the DWS indicator of Reliable Water Supply, is 84%. By 2019 a local target of 90% Reliable Water Supply needs to be achieved, and according to South Africa's National Development Plan 100% Reliable Water Supply needs to be achieved by 2030. There is an Inter-Ministerial Task Team for Service Delivery driving the achievement of this Goal.

## 4. Gaps in the sector:

- Through the recently developed (2018) National Water Investment Framework, the funding needs for South Africa to meet the SDG 6 water targets by 2030 are approximately R1 trillion over the next 10 years with a funding gap of 37%. This is gap reflected in the GLAAS Report.
- As South Africa, as an Upper Middle Income Country, does not qualify for Official Donor Assistance (ODA), but, to meet the SDG 6 commitments more innovative funding approaches need to be developed and applied.
- Although there are enabling environment policies, plans, regulations and standards in place they have not been effectively implemented.
- The lack of technical and professional technical skill levels in the water sector remains problematic coupled with inadequate processes to improve skill levels and replace the loss of retiring experienced professionals.
- There are programs in place that seek to address water services challenges related to inter alia governance/ institutional re-alignment at municipal level but there are currently no effective models or approaches in place to deal effectively with poor governance in local authorities.

## 5. Actions in DWS to ensure progress towards SDG 6:

The Department has established an SDG Steering Committee consisting of eight task team leaders to address the 8 SDG 6 Goals. Status Quo Reports have been developed and Action Plans per Goal have been created. Funding requirements have also been determined. Regular progress reports have also been

submitted. An SDG Monitoring and Reporting Tool is also being developed. (The DWS SDG Focal person for DWS is the Acting Director General).

## 6. Collaborative Behaviours, Building Blocks and Guiding Principles

An appropriate expression of collaborative behaviour is the co-operation from all water sector players and DWS to buy into the erstwhile MDG programme in order to ensure achievement of the Goals.

And of late, over the past 10 years, via collaboration with Stats SA, the Department was able to track "stability of supply" using the Stats SA General Household Survey instrument, and since then developed a new indicator called "reliability of supply. This indicator, through further negotiations with Stats SA, was placed the in the National Census 2011 having identified serious problems with operation and maintenance at local municipal level. After the results of Census 2011 were presented to Parliament, the Department was able to influence the Country's Medium Term Strategic Framework (2014-2019) to include a new indicator "Ensure access to reliable water service provision of 90% by 2019". By including reliable service provision at this early a smooth transition into the SDG program was ensured.

## 7. Eliminating Inequalities

The latest GLAAS report submitted has identified service provision inequalities in the rural/urban context which have not been adequately addressed by existing policies, plans, regulations and standards. Notwithstanding this, since 74% of all water infrastructure backlogs continually occur in rural municipalities, a programme in 2014, targeting infrastructure provision within 27 priority District Municipalities was initiated, and more recently 57 municipalities have been included.

## 8. Water, sanitation and hygiene Financing

There is an identified 37% SDG 6 Target budget shortfall.

## 9. Country priorities and commitments

It is anticipated that the next MTSF 2019–2024 will focus on municipalities who are capable of becoming economic hubs, in additional to addressing remaining service delivery issues in District Municipalities. The greatest challenge will continue to be the rate of urbanisation in urban centres and the associated lack of bulk infrastructure and overloading of existing bulk services.

Water Conservation and Demand Management will remain a top priority, along with ensuring increased municipal revenue collection. Ensuring more effective and stable municipalities will also remain an area of concern and will be addressed.

In this regard the country is developing a Water and Sanitation Master Plan which, when implemented later this year, will address these priorities and ensure increased sector commitment.