

Media statement

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Inauguration of the Berg River Project

The Berg Water Project in Franschhoek in the Cape was officially inaugurated by President Kgalema Motlanhle today (Thursday 5 March 2009)

The Berg Water Project is the culmination of a 14 year strategic intergrated planning process by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) to identify appropriate measures to address the water shortage in the Western.

Implemented by the Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority (TCTA) the project increases Cape Town's water supply to 523 million cubic metres per year.

The dam supplies an incremental historical firm yield to the Western Cape water system of 56 million cubic meters per annum.

The concrete-faced rock fill Berg river dam is built 250 metres above sea level, it lies in the upper reaches of the Berg River and consists of an embankment of rock mined from the basin with an impermeable 300mm thick concrete face on the upstream side. The dam wall is 70 metres high and 929 metres long.

Cabinet approved the construction of the R1.5 billion project in 2002 which comprises the Berg River Dam and the Supplement Scheme.

DWAF entered into a raw water supply agreement with the city of Cape Town in 2003.

" The Berg Water project is the first water resource development project in South Africa that is directly linked to water demand management ", said Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry Mrs. Lindiwe Hendricks. Minister added that she was particularly proud that this was the first large water resource infrastructure development project in the country which was designed, constructed and operated within the prescripts of the National Water Act.

The Inauguration of the project by President Motlanthe holds even greater significance as it takes place during the celebration of water week, a significant period on the departmental calendar when the public is made aware of their role in conserving water and ensuring it is not polluted. This year water week (2-8 March 2009) is celebrated under the theme, Water is life: securing the nations needs across generations. In addition as part of efforts to further emphasise the significant of water in our lives awareness raising activities will be held throughout the month of March.

" This dam is a symbol of National pride as it is the first to be completed in South Africa since the democratically elected government came to power in 1994", said Minister Hendricks.

It is also the first time special measures were applied in support of the strategic objectives of government to maximise the opportunities for employment of local communities.

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