



MINISTRY  
COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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**Media Statement**

**No End in Sight for Western Cape Drought as Winter Rainfall Draws to a Close**

The National Disaster Management Advisory Forum (NDMAF) met in Centurion on Thursday, 7 September 2017. The primary purpose of the NDMAF is to provide a mechanism for relevant role players to consult one another and to coordinate their actions on matters relating to disaster management [Section 5(3) of the Disaster Management Act, 2002].

Officially opening the gathering, the Head of the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC), Dr Mmaphaka Tau called for a moment of silence for victims of the devastating worldwide disasters that have taken place since the Forum's last meeting in June. Present at the Forum were officials from national departments as well as heads of provincial disaster management centres and representatives from Eskom, National Council for GeoScience, South African Weather Service, South African Reserve Bank, South African Police Services and the South African National Defence Force.

**In terms of seasonal climate watch**, Dr Eugene Poolman from the South African Weather Services presented the periodical meteorology report to the Forum. He indicated the Standardised Precipitation Index (SPI) showed severe dry conditions that continued over the South Western part of the country.

"SPI maps give an indication of areas where prolonged droughts exist because of below-normal rainfall recorded over a period of six months or longer. It's evident that even though the North Eastern half has largely recovered due to a good rainfall season, the South Western region is likely to experience severe drought conditions," said Dr Poolman.

However, the likelihood of an El Nino / Southern Oscillation (ENSO) occurrence remained minimal as forecasting systems predict that Neutral conditions were to prevail in Summer. "You'll recall that during neutral conditions, below normal, normal or above normal rain are historically almost equally likely to occur," he said.

Dr Poolman cautioned that seasonal forecasts tend to be less reliable for longer lead-times during neutral conditions than during an El Nino or La Nina. "It is very important to keep monitoring any developments that may provide more clarity on the current expectations for the coming seasons," Dr Poolman concluded.

**In terms of Disaster Response Coordination,** Dr Mmaphaka Tau said the NDMC continues to coordinate the Disaster Risk Management system, to ensure integration and alignment of efforts within the country. "As it was announced by Minister van Rooyen about a week ago, funding requests for drought were submitted by the Western Cape province for the water and agriculture sectors and subsequently an amount of R74.8 million for the affected sectors was approved and transferred," he said.

Dr Tau indicated the NDMC will continue to work with relevant stakeholders in monitoring the implementation of drought intervention measures in the Western Cape," said.

The Forum also noted the reports of persistent drought conditions in the Eastern Cape province from the following municipalities:

- a) Sarah Baartman District Municipality (DM)
  - b) Amathole DM
  - c) Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality
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The Forum was informed that the NDMC was analysing the reports and a process of classification was underway and that further details would be shared as soon as they became available.

The NDMC also announced Durban, as the venue for the 2017 International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR) on Friday, 13 October 2017. The Forum will meet again on Thursday, 7 December 2017.

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