

Drought declared a national disaster

Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs minister Zweli Mkhize has declared the drought and water crisis affecting parts of the country as a national state of disaster.



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He was speaking at a briefing by the interministerial task team on drought and water scarcity on Tuesday, 13 March. Mkhize said that South Africa "should continue to save water as water is one of the indispensable commodities".

There were no comforting signs of improvement in three of the worst affected provinces, Western Cape, parts of Northern Cape, and Eastern Cape.

Mkhize said that dam levels in the Western Cape were the lowest in the country at 25,5%. Gauteng has the highest dam levels at 92,8%, followed by Mpumalanga at 77,9% and Northern Cape at 67,9%.

Despite these higher dam levels, these provinces, he cautioned, were not out of the woods in terms of water scarcity.

The reclassification of the drought as a national state of disaster will allow government to tackle the problem in a coordinated way with access to funding reserved for national disasters.

Source: The Times

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