



# Emergency measures to curb critically low water supply

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>> Pipeline construction moves ahead

**KAVEEL SINGH**

**U**MGENI Water has resolved to take drastic measures to curb the low water supply at Hazelmere Dam which supplies water to large parts of the iLembe District. The water parastatal said that the current drought was the worst in over 30 years.

Umgeni Water corporate stakeholder manager Shami Harichunder said Umgeni Water took a decision to construct an emergency pipeline and a temporary pump station that will transfer daily between eight million and 12 million litres of raw water from the uTongathi River to augment the resource in Hazelmere Dam in Verulam.

The level of Hazelmere Dam as at 25 March was 46%, and the level has been falling consistently since February because of below-average rainfall.

"Work is progressing well on this emergency scheme. Construction of the pipeline has already begun," said

Harichunder.

He added that thus far 50% of the site bush clearing has been completed, trenching has reached a stage of 20% completion and the laying of the pipeline requires road crossing and one river crossing, which is currently under way.

Harichunder said that 1.5km of

**"THE EMERGENCY SCHEME, ONCE IMPLEMENTED, WILL ALLOW WATER IN THE DAM TO LAST UNTIL THE NEXT RAINFALL SEASON (AN ADDITIONAL TWO MONTHS).**

the 7,5km-long pipeline has been put in the ground.

This means another six kilometres has to be completed. Commissioning of the pipeline is due on 3 May.

"The emergency pipeline, when fully operational, will allow an increased flow into Hazelmere Dam thus reducing the rate of decrease in capacity of the dam. Currently the dam drops one percent every seven

days, and if it does not rain, and based on the current level of production, the dam will only have sufficient water to last until mid-September.

"The emergency scheme, once implemented, will allow water in the dam to last until the next rainfall season (an additional two months). However, it must be remembered that water demand at the Hazelmere

Water Works must continue to be kept low and that savings of 30% is still required of Water Services Authorities," he said.

Harichunder reiterated that the construction was an emergency requirement and that consumers should still use water sparingly.

"While the emergency scheme will assist in augmenting water resources in Hazelmere Dam, it is not the ultimate answer to the current water shortages being experienced in the north of Durban and parts of iLembe District that are supplied by the Hazelmere Water Works. Good rainfall is required in order to make a significant difference to the level of Hazelmere Dam."

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## Emergency measures in place to curb low water supply



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Work on the pipeline in full force.



The uTongathi River where the pipeline will run from.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

UMGENI Water expects to pump water from the uTongathi River for six months, but will stop pumping if there is sufficient rainfall to raise the level of the Hazelmere Dam to 70%.

The emergency scheme will only be used while there is sufficient water to supply Hazelmere Dam, the Tongaat Hulett Mill and the Tongaat Water Treatment Plant.

"This therefore, means that if there isn't sufficient water in the uTongathi River, transfer into the emergency pipeline will be stopped.

"The level of the uTongathi River, like other rivers, generally drops in the winter months. In view of this situation, it is expected that the scheme will not operate for a

period during winter, at this stage estimated to be about a month," added Harichunder.

He said that for the future, the emergency scheme will assist even after the first rains in the spring and summer months.

An additional plus factor of the emergency scheme is that it is there to mitigate the effects of the drought if the drought continues into the new rainfall season as well.

"An additional measure that will be adopted, if the drought continues into 2016, is that flow to the North Coast will be supplemented by the Lower Thukela Bulk Water Supply Scheme, which is expected to be operational in the first half of 2016," said Harichunder.