**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO 2164**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 21)**

**2164. Mr B N Herron (Good) to ask the Minister of Water and Sanitation:**

(1) In light of the recent statement by the President, Mr M C Ramaphosa, that the water of the Republic is of high quality and noting the recent cholera outbreak in Gauteng, as well as multiple other water sources being tested and failing their purity tests in areas such as the Vaal Dam, what is his department’s current plan for testing and grading the Republic’s water sources to ensure this high quality status;

(2) whether, with most of the water testing being exclusive to Gauteng, the specified tests will be focused locally or extended nationally; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details;

(3) what steps are being taken by his department to ensure that persons are educated on the dangers of drinking unsafe water, as cholera can be deadly;

(4) what safety measures and/or upgrades are currently being developed in conjunction with the Gauteng governance to ensure that water sources do not have the potential to be contaminated?

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**MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION**

1. The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) conducts Blue Drop assessments for all Water Services Authorities (WSAs) in the Republic by measuring all aspects contributing to a sustainable Water Services Business, and provision of safe water to citizens.

Water Services Authorities (WSAs) are obliged to ensure that their residents have access to safe drinking water that is compliant with the required standards of SANS 241. The Department is strengthening its role as the regulator of water services, by developing more comprehensive and more stringent norms and standards for water service and standardising its regulatory processes so that it is more consistent with its regulatory actions. It is also intensifying its support and intervention in municipalities. In addition, DWS is drafting amendments to the Water Services Act to separate the roles of Water Services Authorities more clearly (ensure that water services are provided to required standards) and Water Services Providers (provide the services) and to enable the Minister to intervene more effectively as the Regulator.

(2) The Department is intensifying monitoring of drinking water as well as water resources across the country in order to detect any failures and alert WSAs to implement recommendations or instructions.

(3) The Department is in collaboration with the World Health Organisation, and the Departments of Government Communication and Information Systems (GCIS), Basic Education (DBE), and local councillors executing health promotion programmes in the Hammanskraal area and across the Republic. During the release of the Green Drop and Watch Reports, and the media briefing on Hammanskraal, the emphasis was also placed on preventive measures of good hygiene practices and sourcing safe water.

(4) The Department is strengthening its support and regulatory intervention at municipal level based on actual data which ensures that interventions are proactive, consistent, and systematic in their approach.

The DWS funds certain refurbishment and upgrading projects that meet the criteria of the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant (RBIG) and Water Services Infrastructure Grant (WSIG), depending on availability of funds. WSAs, through their Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) allocation for water and sanitation, also have funding allocated for refurbishment of water systems.

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