KZN COGTA LEADING FIGHT AGAINST DROUGHT

KZN has since 2014 been ravaged by the worst drought in a generation. The drought has impacted negatively on communities, businesses and the farming sector, prompting water restrictions from the most affected municipalities.

Throughout this period, the province has seen two formal declarations of disaster; the first in December 2014 and the second in December 2015 after all district municipalities in KZN were severely affected.

KZN Cogta has led from the front by devising both short- and long-term interventions to the drought. The short-term measures have included emergency relief to communities and a public awareness campaign designed to educate the public about the drought and the need to conserve water.

The long-term measures consist of a multi-pronged drought relief programme for the province which involves borehole drilling, mobile package treatment plants, procurement of water tankers, desalination plants and bulk water storage facilities. The programme is being implemented as planned.

KZN's drought challenges are linked to the fact that currently 77% of the country's water comes from surface water rivers while only 14% comes from return water from water treatment plants and nine percent comes from ground water.

KZN Cogta's major priority has been to diversify these sources given the high risk of water shortages in the short to medium term. A renewed focus on water treatment in inland areas and on desalination in coastal areas is deemed necessary to adequately diversify water resources.

The current drought tightens its grip on KZN despite sporadic rainfall in the coastal areas of KZN and the most affected area of the province remains the north-eastern part of the province with several rivers in this region completely dry and reservoirs hitting critical levels.

KZN Cogta deems the current expenditure on water tankering unsustainable and encourages