

Water Partnership for South Africa Launched at the World Economic Forum on Africa

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- South African Government, Nestlé and the World Economic Forum announce [partnership](#)
- Water demand set to rise by 52% within the next 30 years in South Africa
- South Africa joins the governments of Jordan, Mexico and the State of Karnataka in India as a partner with the Water Resources Group

Cape Town, South Africa – At the World Economic Forum on Africa in Cape Town, Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs of South Africa Edna Molewa, Chairman of Nestlé and Chairman of the Water Resources Group Peter Brabeck-Letmathe announced today a [Declaration of Partnership](#). Recognizing the critical role that water plays as a catalyst for both economic growth and social development, the Department of Water Affairs (DWA) of South Africa forges a partnership with the Water Resources Group (WRG), an influential public-private global network on water supported by the World Economic Forum and the International Finance Corporation. This new public-private group, chaired by the director-general of the DWA, will oversee the activities of a partnership called “ South Africa Strategic Water Partners Network ” to address critical water issues in South Africa: water conservation, demand management and developing more sustainable management of groundwater resources.

"This new partnership between the Government of South Africa and the Water Resources Group will help identify how South Africa's plans for growth can be met with the water it has safely available. The foresight and leadership of Minister Molewa in this regard should be applauded" remarked Peter Brabeck-Letmathe, Chairman of Nestlé and Chairman of the Water Resources Group.

In South Africa, water demand is expected to rise by 52% within the next 30 years while the supply of water is sharply declining. If current trends of leakage from aged and poorly maintained municipal infrastructure and the loss of wetlands persist, this growth in demand will intensify competition for water resources across all sectors of the economy (agriculture, energy industry and domestic). Should status quo in management practices remain, a gap of 17% between water demand and supply is forecast by 2030. This gap will have serious social and political implications and strongly impact South Africa ' s plans for economic growth.

“ The Water Resources Group partnership will enable South Africa to access best practice economics, projects and policies in water management from public, private and civil society sectors around the world, enabling officials to field-test and replicate actions for implementation domestically, ” explained Dominic Waughray, Senior Director, Head of Environmental Initiatives at the World Economic Forum, and member of the Water Resources Group.

The group will focus on key areas:

- Water conservation and demand management: increasing water use efficiency (in agriculture, industry and households) and reducing leakage from distribution networks (municipal and others, including irrigation)
- Diversifying the water mix: increasing the reuse of effluent and desalination (sea water and acid mine drainage), and developing more sustainable management of groundwater resources, in particular for rural areas

The partnership will deliver two primary outputs: first, it will assist the Department of Water Affairs (DWA) in developing sector strategies (agriculture, energy, industry) related to the key areas. Each sector strategy will:

- Identify a pipeline of potential projects and assess its collective potential to close the water volume gap if implementation takes place
- Identify challenges for project replication
- Recommend a strategy to overcome challenges, including incentives for widespread adoption and contributions by each stakeholder to enable replication

Second, the partnership will provide expert support to help the NEPAD Business Foundation (NBF) consult with domestic stakeholders and design these pilot projects. Expertise provided from the WRG network will help NBF to:

- Develop joint public-private expert collaborations to structure and take forward the pilot projects
- Highlight the DWA-WRG partnership at COP 17 in Durban as a practical example of what South Africa is doing to manage its water security and adapt to climate change

Clear government ownership of the process is crucial to success and the inclusion of domestic public and private stakeholders. To this end, a public-private expert leadership group, chaired by the director-general of the DWA, will be formed to oversee the work. This new group will formally be called the “ South Africa Strategic Water Partners Network ” . Stakeholders to be invited will include:

- Department of Water Affairs (chairperson: the director-general)
- Industry (key economic sectors such as food/beverage, mining and metals, energy)
- Other governmental departments (national treasury, national planning commission, local government)
- Development finance institutions (Development Bank of Southern Africa, Industrial Development Corporation, International Finance Corporation)
- Business organizations (NEPAD Business Foundation (NBF), Business Unity South Africa (BUSA), Business Leadership South Africa (BLSA), National Business Initiative (NBI)
- Civil society organizations (including WWF South Africa)
- Multilateral and bilateral development agencies working in South Africa
- A senior representative of WRG

Key partners of the WRG include The Coca-Cola Company, International Finance Corporation, Nestlé, PepsiCo, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and Veolia Environment. The Water Resources Group (WRG) is a public-private platform for collaboration. It mobilizes stakeholders from the public and private sector, civil society, centres of academic expertise and financing institutions to engage in fact-based, analytical approaches and coalition building initiatives that help governments to catalyse sustainable water sector transformation in support of their economic growth plans. WRG engages with those governments who invite it to work on a comprehensive water sector reform strategy and then it provides a public-private approach to support them.

Notes to Editors

For more on Water Resources Group (WRG) go to <http://www.weforum.org/issues/water>

Read the [Declaration of Partnership](#)

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