

Food & Water Security in South Africa WEEKLY MONITOR

20 May - 26 May 2017

Prepared by Augustus Consulting

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1.0 Key Weekly Trends, Themes and Issues

- **South Africa's Rural Development and Land Reform Minister Gugile Nkwinti says his department is working on transforming the Land Claims Commission into a Chapter Nine institution as the land crisis deepens**
- **Some analysts argue that General Motors' announcement that it will stop operating in South Africa is a clear indication that car manufacturers have lost confidence in the country's economic outlook amid growing socio-political uncertainty**
- **South Africa's Parliament expresses deep concern about the slow pace of land reform amid growing concerns about the impact of the stalling agrarian reform process on the country's food security in the medium and long-term**
- **Biggest land occupation in Cape Town in recent years is taking place as South Africa's unresolved land question takes centre-stage in the country**
- **Investors seek clarity on ANC policies amid slow growth and increasing political uncertainty in South Africa**
- **Economists warn that inflation drop unlikely to continue amid reports of another imminent drought in South Africa**
- **South Africa narrowly averts recession, despite the weaker than expected performance of the retail and manufacturing sectors, but consumers are still under strain**
- **South Africa Reserve Bank leaves repo rate unchanged at 7% as economic outlook deteriorates amid growing political uncertainty in the country**
- **South Africa's former president Kgalema Motlanthe says the country's political crisis is being caused by the absence of ethical, moral and just leaders**

- **City of Cape Town assures residents that municipal water is still safe to drink as the drought crisis deepens and threatens to be a major public health problem**
- **South Africa to test Israel's water saving technology amid reports that the country's infrastructure is not properly maintained, leading to 30% of water being lost**
- **South African Members of Parliament from across the political spectrum slam the Department of Water and Sanitation after its officials fail to explain how the department still owed contractors R1.5bn**
- **Western Cape Premier Helen Zille declares the province a disaster area as it battled its worst water shortage in 113 years amid reports that the provincial government might need as much as R3-billion to fund projects aimed at mitigating water shortages and other effects of the chronic drought**
- **City of Cape Town allocates R22 million to employ additional staff to attend to water-related faults and complaints as the municipality and provincial government are scrambling to mitigate the impact of the drought with dam levels having plummeted even further with water consumption 93 million litres above the target of 600 million litres a day**
- **City of Cape Town Mayor Patricia de Lille says the city plans to spend R315m in the next three financial years to deal with the ongoing drought in the region**
- **Water and Sanitation Minister Nomvula Mokonyane says her department needs to make sure that there is a strong monitoring and evaluation of water because the lack of water is a national challenge that requires a focus of water infrastructure development and promotion of water security**
- **Nelson Mandela Bay Executive Mayor Athol Trollip formally declares a disaster area after major storage dams dropped to 38.5 percent as the city faces a severe drought and has been exceptionally dry since July last year**
- **City of Cape Town Mayoral Committee member for Water and Waste Services Xanthea Limberg says the city has enough water to last until August or September at current consumption levels amid growing uncertainty over the rain forecast for June and July**
- **City of Cape Town seeks divine intervention as drought bites**

1.1 Food Security

1.1.1 South Africa's Rural Development and Land Reform Minister Gugile Nkwinti says his department is working on transforming the Land Claims Commission into a Chapter Nine institution as the land crisis deepens

1.1.6 Statistics South Africa announces that inflation dropped in April to 5.3%, from 6.1% reported in March while food and non-alcoholic beverages decreased from 1.5 percentage points in March to 1.1 percentage points in April.

On 19 May, *Eyewitness News* reported that Rural Development and Land Reform Minister Gugile Nkwinti says his department is working on transforming the land claims commission into a Chapter Nine institution.¹

1.1.2 Some analysts argue that General Motors' announcement that it will stop operating in South Africa is a clear indication that car manufacturers have lost confidence in the country's economic outlook amid growing socio-political uncertainty

On 19 May, *SABC News* reported that some analysts say General Motors' (GM) announcement that it will stop operating in South Africa is a clear indication that the car manufacturer has lost confidence in the country's economic outlook.²

1.1.3 South Africa's Parliament expresses deep concern about the slow pace of land reform amid growing concerns about the impact of the stalling agrarian reform process on the country's food security in the medium and long-term

On 20 May, *News24* reported that from across the political spectrum, the slow pace of land reform was lamented.³

1.1.4 Biggest land occupation in Cape Town in recent years is taking place as South Africa's unresolved land question takes centre-stage in the country

On 24 May, *Ground Up* reported that tensions simmered in Khayelitsha on Monday as residents flouted interdicts preventing occupation of open land at a number of sites.⁴

1.1.5 Investors seek clarity on ANC policies amid slow growth and increasing political uncertainty in South Africa

On 24 May, *Fin24* reported that as the ANC prepares for its National Policy Conference in June, analysts say that investors may have reservations over a few statements made by the party.⁵

¹ Nkwinti: Govt working to transform Land Claims Commission, Monique Mortlock, *Eyewitness News*, 19 May 2017, <http://ewn.co.za/2017/05/19/nkwinti-govt-working-to-transform-land-claims-commission>

² 'Car manufacturers have lost confidence in SA economy', *SABC News*, 19 May 2017, <http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/1a874f804131719387aeef1f01a2d31e/Car-manufacturers-have-lost-confidence-in-SA-economy-20171905Car-manufacturers-have-lost-confidence-in-SA-economy-20171905>

³ Parliament concerned about slow pace of land reform, Jan Gerber, *News24*, 20 May 2017, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/parliament-concerned-about-slow-pace-of-land-reform-20170519>

⁴ Biggest land occupation in Cape Town in recent years is taking place, Ashleigh Furlong, *Ground Up*, 24 May 2017, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/biggest-land-occupation-in-cape-town-in-recent-years-is-taking-place-20170523>

1.1.6 Statistics South Africa announces that inflation dropped in April to 5.3%, from 6.1% reported in March while food and non-alcoholic beverages decreased from 1.5 percentage points in March to 1.1 percentage points in April.

On 24 May, *Fin24* reported that inflation in April came down to 5.3%, from 6.1% reported in March. This is according to data released by Statistics South Africa on Wednesday.⁶

1.1.7 Economists warn that inflation drop unlikely to continue amid reports of another imminent drought in South Africa

On 25 May, *Eyewitness News* reported that despite April's inflation rate exceeding market expectations, some experts warn that the trend is unlikely to continue.⁷

1.1.8 South Africa narrowly averts recession, despite the weaker than expected performance of the retail and manufacturing sectors, but consumers are still under strain

On 25 May, *Business Day* reported that SA may just have avoided a technical recession, despite the weaker than expected performance of the retail and manufacturing sectors, but consumers are still under strain.⁸

1.1.9 South Africa Reserve Bank leaves repo rate unchanged at 7% as economic outlook deteriorates amid growing political uncertainty in the country

On 25 May, *TMG Digital/Business LIVE* reported that the Reserve Bank left interest rates unchanged on Thursday, as had widely been expected.⁹

1.1.10 South Africa's former president Kgalema Motlanthe says the country's political crisis is being caused by the absence of ethical, moral and just leaders

On 26 May, *Times Live* reported that South Africa is in a political crisis caused by "the absence of ethical, moral and just leaders", former president Kgalema Motlanthe said on yesterday.¹⁰

⁵ Investors seek clarity on ANC policies – research, Lameez Omarjee, *Fin24*, 24 May 2017, <http://www.fin24.com/Economy/investors-seek-clarity-on-anc-policies-research-20170524>

⁶ Inflation drops in April, Lameez Omarjee, *Fin24*, 24 May 2017, <http://www.fin24.com/Economy/inflation-drops-in-april-20170524>

⁷ Economists warn that inflation drop unlikely to continue, Ilze-Marie Le Roux, *Eyewitness News*, 25 May 2017, <http://ewn.co.za/2017/05/25/pundits-expect-trend-on-inflation-to-continue>

⁸ SA narrowly averted recession but consumers still wary, Sunita Menon, *Business Day*, 25 May 2017, <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/economy/2017-05-25-sa-narrowly-averted-recession-but-consumers-still-wary/>

⁹ Reserve Bank leaves rates unchanged as economic outlook deteriorates, Staff Writer, *TMG Digital/Business LIVE*, 25 May 2017, <http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/2017/05/25/Reserve-Bank-leaves-rates-unchanged-as-economic-outlook-deteriorates1>

¹⁰ 'Leaders to blame for sorry state of SA', Roxanne Henderson, *Times Live*, 26 May 2017, <http://www.timeslive.co.za/thetimes/2017/05/26/Leaders-to-blame-for-sorry-state-of-SA>

1.2 Water Security

1.2.1 City of Cape Town assures residents that municipal water is still safe to drink as the drought crisis deepens and threatens to be a major public health problem

On 19 May, *The Citizen* reported that the City of Cape Town has assured residents that the municipal water remained safe to drink and that water quality was being closely monitored.¹¹

1.2.2 South Africa to test Israel's water saving technology amid reports that the country's infrastructure is not properly maintained, leading to 30% of water being lost

On 22 May, *SABC News* reported that Israel's ground breaking water saving systems may soon be introduced to municipalities in South Africa.¹²

1.2.3 South African Members of Parliament from across the political spectrum slam the Department of Water and Sanitation after its officials fail to explain how the department still owed contractors R1.5bn

On 23 May, *News24* reported that MPs across the political spectrum slammed the Department of Water and Sanitation on Tuesday after its officials failed to explain how the department still owed contractors R1.5bn.¹³

1.2.4 Western Cape Premier Helen Zille declares the province a disaster area as it battled its worst water shortage in 113 years amid reports that the provincial government might need as much as R3-billion to fund projects aimed at mitigating water shortages and other effects of the chronic drought

On 23 May, *Times Live* reported that Western Cape Premier Helen Zille yesterday declared the province a disaster area as it battled its worst water shortage in 113 years.¹⁴

1.2.5 City of Cape Town allocates R22 million to employ additional staff to attend to water-related faults and complaints as the municipality and provincial government are scrambling to mitigate the impact of the drought with dam levels having plummeted even further with water consumption 93 million litres above the target of 600 million litres a day

¹¹ City of Cape Town assures residents municipal water still safe to drink, Citizen Reporter, 19 May 2017, <http://citizen.co.za/news/news-national/1518975/city-of-cape-town-assures-residents-municipal-water-still-safe-to-drink/>

¹² SA to test Israel's water saving technology, Maryna van Wyk, SABC News, 22 May 2017, <http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/a1e66b00413a44f8b0c8be08c3fad33b/SA-to-test-Israelis-water-saving-technology-20172205>

¹³ MPs fume as water dept fails to explain R1.5bn debt, Paul Herman, News24, 23 May 2017, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/mps-fume-as-water-dept-fails-to-explain-r15bn-debt-20170523>

¹⁴ Western Cape faces worst water shortage in 113 years, Aphiwe Deklerk and Aron Hyman, Times Live, 23 May 2017, <http://www.timeslive.co.za/thetimes/2017/05/23/Western-Cape-faces-worst-water-shortage-in-113-years1>

On 23 May, *Eyewitness News* reported that the City of Cape Town has allocated R22 million to employ additional staff to attend to water-related faults and complaints.¹⁵

1.2.6 City of Cape Town Mayor Patricia de Lille says the city plans to spend R315m in the next three financial years to deal with the ongoing drought in the region

On 23 May, *News24* reported that City of Cape Town Mayor Patricia de Lille says the city plans to spend R315m in the next three financial years to deal with the ongoing drought in the region.¹⁶

1.2.7 Water and Sanitation Minister Nomvula Mokonyane says her department needs to make sure that there is a strong monitoring and evaluation of water because the lack of water is a national challenge that requires a focus of water infrastructure development and promotion of water security

On 23 May, *SABC News* reported that Water and Sanitation Minister Nomvula Mokonyane says her department needs to make sure that there is a strong monitoring and evaluation of water. Mokonyane.¹⁷

1.2.8 Nelson Mandela Bay Executive Mayor Athol Trollip formally declares a disaster area after major storage dams dropped to 38.5 percent as the city faces a severe drought and has been exceptionally dry since July last year

On 24 May, *ANA* reported that Nelson Mandela Bay was formally declared a water disaster by Executive Mayor Athol Trollip.¹⁸

1.2.9 City of Cape Town Mayoral Committee member for Water and Waste Services Xanthea Limberg says the city has enough water to last until August or September at current consumption levels amid growing uncertainty over the rain forecast for June and July

On 25 May, *News 24* reported that the City of Cape Town has enough water to last until August or September at current consumption levels, an official has said.¹⁹

1.2.10 City of Cape Town seeks divine intervention as drought bites

¹⁵ City of CT allocates R22m for extra staff amid water crisis, Shamiela Fisher, *Eyewitness News*, 23 May 2017, <http://ewn.co.za/2017/05/23/city-of-ct-allocates-r22m-for-extra-staff-amid-water-crisis>

¹⁶ Cape Town to spend more than R300m over 3 years to tackle drought, James de Villiers, *News24*, 23 May 2017, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/cape-town-to-spend-more-than-r300m-over-3-years-to-tackle-drought-20170523>

¹⁷ Lack of water is a national challenge: Mokonyane, *SABC News*, 23 May 2017, <http://www.sabc.co.za/news/a/06e8a200413dd90ea3d5af08c3fad33b/Lack-of-water-is-a-national-challenge:-Mokonyane-20172305>

¹⁸ Nelson Mandela Bay water crisis drops to disaster status, *ANA*, 24 May 2017, <http://citizen.co.za/news/news-national/1524245/nelson-mandela-bay-water-crisis-drops-disaster-status/>

¹⁹ Cape Town water supplies will last until August - city official, James de Villiers, *News24*, 25 May 2017, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/cape-town-water-supplies-will-last-until-august-city-official-20170525>

On 25 May, *IOL Business* reported that on Thursday afternoon, religious leaders made their way to Table Mountain for an inter-faith gathering to prayers for rain.²⁰

2.0 Weekly Infographics: South Africa's Western Cape Province has declared a drought disaster as it faces its worst water shortage in 113 years



Figure 1. South Africa's Western Cape Province has declared a drought disaster as it faces its worst water shortage in 113 years (Source: 350 Africa)

3.0 Overall Assessment

- ❖ **Food and Water Security in South Africa is under increasing threat from an imminent drought, slow economic growth and increasing socio-political uncertainty in the country.**

²⁰ De Lille, religious leaders on Table Mountain to pray for rain, Yasmine Jacobs, IOL Business Day, 25 May 2017, <http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/de-lille-religious-leaders-on-table-mountain-to-pray-for-rain-9342731>