

Food & Water Security in South Africa WEEKLY MONITOR

30 September – 6 October 2017

Prepared by Augustus Consulting

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1.0 Key Weekly Trends, Themes and Issues

- **Black First Land First (BLF) warns that whites must return the land back to the black majority or they will take it back as the agrarian reform debate intensifies in South Africa**
- **Cabinet approves the Land Survey Amendment Bill for public comment amid a deepening land crisis in South Africa**
- **Two million birds dead in Western Cape's worst bird flu outbreak as South Africa struggles to contain the growing problem of the highly pathogenic avian influenza**
- **Pressure piles on South African household finances as their net wealth decreased in the second quarter of 2017 to levels last seen in 2014 amid deepening poverty, rising unemployment and a surge in fuel prices**
- **South African Poultry Association (Sapa) says that the industry may never recover from the highly pathogenic H5N8 strain of bird flu currently gripping South Africa that has already resulted in 4 million birds being culled and R800 million in losses for affected farms amid growing fears of job losses**
- **South African Reserve Bank says that the country is experiencing one of the worst growth periods in its history amid growing political and socio-economic uncertainty in the country**
- **South African Table Grape Industry (SATI) expresses concern about the impact of the severe drought in the Western Cape as climate change takes its toll in South Africa**
- **Bird flu hits Johannesburg as South Africa struggles to effectively address the deepening crisis**
- **Socio-political and policy uncertainty weigh on South Africa's economy amid reports that the economy is unlikely to reach 2% annual expansion in the short term**

- South Africa's Parliament begins the process to reopen window to lodge claims as the land issue continue to dominate policy debates in the country
- South African Institute of Civil Engineers (SAICE)'s report indicates that state-run infrastructure, including the national water infrastructure, is failing to cope with demand and is poorly maintained
- South Africa's Auditor-General Kimi Makwetu says that the Department of Water and Sanitation's interventions aimed at cleaning up its shambolic financial state has fallen apart and is inadequate to pull it into a clean audit
- South Africa's ailing water infrastructure struggles to meeting the challenges of a growing population and climate change
- Dam levels stagnant in Western Cape as the water crisis in the province deepens
- Department of Water and Sanitation orders the City of Cape Town to reduce water consumption by 40% as drought bites
- City of Cape Town Mayor, De Lille warns that the 'Day Zero' for Cape Town's municipal water supply is March 2018 as drought takes its toll
- South Africa's Members of Parliament (MPs) on the Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation express frustration at the conflicting annual reports from the Department of Water and Sanitation
- South Africa's Department of Water and Sanitation says that it will fast track Western Cape water schemes as the drought crisis deepens
- Members of Parliament wants the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) briefing on irregularities at the Department of Water and Sanitation as issues of governance and transparency continue to dominate South Africa's water sector
- South Africa's Water and Sanitation Minister Nomvula Mokonyane challenges Auditor General Kimi Makwetu's assessment of her portfolio

1.1 Food Security

1.1.1 Black First Land First (BLF) warns that whites must return the land back to the black majority or they will take it back as the agrarian reform debate intensifies in South Africa

On 29 September, *News24* reported that a protest march to Remgro in Stellenbosch on Friday was a warning to billionaire businessman Johann Rupert and others, Black First Land First (BLF) said.¹

1.1.2 Cabinet approves the Land Survey Amendment Bill for public comment amid a deepening land crisis in South Africa

On 29 September, *South African Government News* reported that cabinet has approved the Land Survey Amendment Bill and the Science and Technology Laws Amendment Bill for public comment.²

1.1.3 Two million birds dead in Western Cape's worst bird flu outbreak as South Africa struggles to contain the growing problem of the highly pathogenic avian influenza

On 2 October, *Fin24* reported that more than two million birds have died or have been culled since an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza - or bird flu - was confirmed in the Western Cape in August, Economic Opportunities MEC Alan Winde said on Monday.³

1.1.4 Pressure piles on South African household finances as their net wealth decreased in the second quarter of 2017 to levels last seen in 2014 amid deepening poverty, rising unemployment and a surge in fuel prices

On 2 October, *Fin24* reported that the real value of South African households' net wealth decreased in the second quarter of 2017 to levels last seen in 2014, according to the SA Household Wealth Index by Momentum and Unisa.⁴

1.1.5 South African Poultry Association (Sapa) says that the industry may never recover from the highly pathogenic H5N8 strain of bird flu currently gripping South Africa that has already resulted in 4 million birds being culled and R800 million in losses for affected farms amid growing fears of job losses

On 4 October, *The Citizen* reported that the bird flu outbreak has already resulted in R800 million in losses for affected farms.⁵

¹ 'Return land or we'll take it back' – BLF, Jenna Etheridge, *News24*, 29 September 2017, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/return-land-or-we'll-take-it-back-blf-20170929>

² Cabinet approves land, tech bills for public comment, *South African Government News*, 29 September 2017, <http://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/cabinet-approves-land-tech-bills-public-comment-0>

³ Over 2 million birds now dead in Western Cape's worst bird flu outbreak, James de Villiers, *Fin24*, 2 October 2017, <http://www.fin24.com/Economy/over-2-million-birds-now-dead-in-western-capes-worst-bird-flu-outbreak-20171002>

⁴ Pressure piles on SA household finances – index, *Fin24*, 2 October 2017, <http://www.fin24.com/Economy/pressure-piles-on-sa-household-finances-index-20171002-2>

⁵ Jobs on the line as more than 4 million birds culled, Yadhana Jadoo, *The Citizen*, 4 October 2017, <https://citizen.co.za/news/south-africa/1676317/jobs-on-the-line-as-more-than-four-million-birds-culled/>

1.1.6 South African Reserve Bank says that the country is experiencing one of the worst growth periods in its history amid growing political and socio-economic uncertainty in the country

On 4 October, *Business Day* reported that SA is experiencing one of the worst growth periods in its history, and if the forecasts prove correct, the current decade will be the second-worst in the post-war period, the Reserve Bank said on Wednesday, as it released its Monetary Policy Review.⁶

1.1.7 South African Table Grape Industry (SATI) expresses concern about the impact of the severe drought in the Western Cape as climate change takes its toll in South Africa

On 5 October, *News24* reported that the South African Table Grape Industry (SATI) is concerned about the impact of the severe drought in the Western Cape, but it still expects its 2017/2018 harvest to be in line with the five year average.⁷

1.1.8 Bird flu hits Johannesburg as South Africa struggles to effectively address the deepening crisis

On 5 October, *Times Live* reported that bird flu has been confirmed by City Parks in certain parts of Johannesburg.⁸

1.1.9 Socio-political and policy uncertainty weigh on South Africa's economy amid reports that the economy is unlikely to reach 2% annual expansion in the short term

On 5 October, *Reuters* reported that South Africa's economy is growing much less than it should be and is unlikely to reach 2% annual expansion in the short term because of political and policy uncertainty, the central bank said on Wednesday.⁹

1.1.10 South Africa's Parliament begins the process to reopen window to lodge claims as the land issue continue to dominate policy debates in the country

On 5 October, *News24* reported that the portfolio committee on rural development and land reform on Thursday began discussions on a private members' amendment bill to reopen the window for citizens to lodge land claims.¹⁰

⁶ Current decade could be second-worst in 70 years for SA's economy, Hilary Joffe, *Business Day*, 4 October 2017, <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/economy/2017-10-04-current-decade-could-be-second-worst-in-70-years-for-sas-economy/>

⁷ Table grape farmers worry about drought, *News24*, 5 October 2017, <http://www.fin24.com/Companies/Agribusiness/table-grape-farmers-concerned-about-drought-but-expect-fair-harvest-20171005>

⁸ Bird flu hits Johannesburg, Penwell Dlamini, *Times Live*, 5 October 2017, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2017-10-05-bird-flu-hits-johannesburg/>

⁹ Kganyago: Political & policy uncertainty weigh on SA economy, *Reuters*, 5 October 2017, <http://ewn.co.za/2017/10/05/kganyago-political-and-policy-uncertainty-weigh-on-sa-economy>

¹⁰ Land claims: Parliament begins process to reopen window to lodge claims, Paul Herman, *News24*, 5 October 2017, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/land-claims-parliament-begins-process-to-reopen-window-to-lodge-claims-20171005>

1.2 Water Security

1.2.1 South African Institute of Civil Engineers (SAICE)'s report indicates that state-run infrastructure, including the national water infrastructure, is failing to cope with demand and is poorly maintained

On 2 October, *Business Day* reported that South Africa's professional association of civil engineers has issued a damning report on state-run infrastructure, saying it is not coping with demand and that it is likely that the public will be subjected to severe inconvenience and danger unless prompt action is taken.¹¹

1.2.2 South Africa's Auditor-General Kimi Makwetu says that the Department of Water and Sanitation's interventions aimed at cleaning up its shambolic financial state has fallen apart and is inadequate to pull it into a clean audit

On 2 October, *Business Day* reported that the Department of Water and Sanitation's interventions aimed at cleaning up its shambolic financial state has fallen apart and is inadequate to pull it into a clean audit, says Auditor-General Kimi Makwetu.¹²

1.2.3 South Africa's ailing water infrastructure struggles to meeting the challenges of a growing population and climate change

On 2 October, *eNCA* reported that a large portion of the greater Soweto area will experience water outages for nearly three days, the City of Johannesburg confirmed on Monday.¹³

1.2.4 Dam levels stagnant in Western Cape as the water crisis in the province deepens

On 2 October, *Sowetan Live* reported that the average level for dams across the Western Cape this week is 35.88%. In the corresponding period last year, dam levels were at 62.2%.¹⁴

1.2.5 Department of Water and Sanitation orders the City of Cape Town to reduce water consumption by 40% as drought bites

On 2 October, *News24* reported that the Department of Water and Sanitation has told the City of Cape Town to reduce overall water consumption by 40%, the city said on Monday.¹⁵

¹¹ Damning report by engineers on state-run infrastructure, Neels Blom, *Business Day*, 2 October 2017, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2017-10-02-damning-report-by-engineers-on-state-run-infrastructure/>

¹² Water affairs bid to fix finances 'has collapsed', Khulekani Magubane, *Business Day*, 2 October 2017, <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/national/2017-10-02-water-affairs-bid-to-fix-finances-has-collapsed/>

¹³ Big water outage for parts of Soweto, *eNCA*, 2 October 2017, <http://www.enca.com/south-africa/two-days-of-no-water-for-some-parts-of-soweto>

¹⁴ Dam levels stagnant in Western Cape, Staff Reporter, *Sowetan Live*, 2 October 2017, <http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2017/10/02/dam-levels-stagnant-in-western-cape>

1.2.6 City of Cape Town Mayor, De Lille warns that the 'Day Zero' for Cape Town's municipal water supply is March 2018 as drought takes its toll

On 4 October, *News24* reported that the City of Cape Town anticipates that its supply of municipal water will run out around March 2018, Mayor Patricia de Lille said on Wednesday.¹⁶

1.2.7 South Africa's Members of Parliament (MPs) on the Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation express frustration at the conflicting annual reports from the Department of Water and Sanitation

On 4 October, *Fin24* reported that MPs on the portfolio committee on water and sanitation were left frustrated on Wednesday after receiving two conflicting reports on the department of water's leaking financials.¹⁷

1.2.8 South Africa's Department of Water and Sanitation says that it will fast track Western Cape water schemes as the drought crisis deepens

On 4 October, *News24* reported that Minister of Water and Sanitation Nomvula Mokonyane met with Cape Town Mayor Patricia de Lille on Wednesday to discuss efforts to avoid "day zero" during the current drought.¹⁸

1.2.9 Members of Parliament wants the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) briefing on irregularities at the Department of Water and Sanitation as issues of governance and transparency continue to dominate South Africa's water sector

On 5 October, *Eyewitness News* reported that Members of Parliament (MPs) overseeing the debt-ridden Water and Sanitation Department say they want to hear from the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) about irregularities at the department.¹⁹

1.2.10 South Africa's Water and Sanitation Minister Nomvula Mokonyane challenges Auditor General Kimi Makwetu's assessment of her portfolio

¹⁵ Cape Town ordered to reduce water consumption by 40%, James de Villiers, *News24*, 2 October 2017, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/cape-town-ordered-to-reduce-water-consumption-by-40-20171002>

¹⁶ De Lille warns 'Day Zero' for Cape Town's municipal water supply is March 2018, Jenna Etheridge, *News24*, 4 October 2017, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/de-lille-warns-day-zero-for-cape-towns-municipal-water-supply-is-march-2018-20171004>

¹⁷ Water dept frustrates MPs with conflicting annual reports, Paul Herman, *Fin24*, 4 October 2017, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/water-dept-frustrates-mps-with-conflicting-annual-reports-20171004>

¹⁸ Water department to fast track Western Cape schemes to beat 'day zero', Paul Herman, *News24*, 4 October 2017, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/water-department-to-fast-track-western-cape-schemes-to-beat-day-zero-20171004>

¹⁹ MPs wants SIU briefing on irregularities at Water Dept, Rahima Essop, *Eyewitness News*, 5 October 2017, <http://ewn.co.za/2017/10/05/mps-wants-siu-briefing-on-irregularities-at-water-dept>

On 5 October, *Business Day* reported that Water and Sanitation Minister Nomvula Mokonyane, whose department is the worst offender for irregular expenditure for the second year in a row, is contesting the auditor-general's assessment of her portfolio.²⁰

2.0 Weekly Infographics: What are the causes of land and soil pollution?



Figure 1. What are the causes of land and soil pollution? (Source: UN Environment)

²⁰ Defiant Mokonyane challenges audit findings, Khulekani Magubane, *Business Day*, 5 October 2017, <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/national/2017-10-05-defiant-mokonyane-challenges-audit-findings/>

3.0 Overall Assessment

- ❖ **The solution to the financial, technical and operational challenges in South Africa's water sector is to create a National Water Authority of South Africa because the current legislation places the burden of providing water services on the Department of Water and Sanitation but does not give it adequate authority for oversight on municipalities as stewards of water services**
- ❖ **The increasing socio-political and economic uncertainty in South Africa is increasing the levels of food insecurity in low-income households**