



REPUBLIC OF KENYA
MINISTRY OF WATER, SANITATION AND IRRIGATION
THWAKE MULTIPURPOSE WATER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
PHASE I

Nairobi, Thursday, July 1, 2021

MEDIA RESPONSE

RESPONSE TO MEDIA REPORTS ON ALLEGED POLLUTION OF WATER SOURCES FEEDING THWAKE RIVER

Following reports carried by a section of the print media; **Star, Newspaper, June 29, 2021**) and **Citizen TV Prime Time Bulletin, June 29, 2021**, based on a report from the Office of the Auditor General on ***Suitability of Waters Expected to Feed River Thwake;***

The Ministry would therefore like to clarify the following:

The Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation is committed to improve sanitation upstream of ongoing construction of Thwake Multipurpose Water Development Program Phase I by investing in a number of interventions – both long term, medium term and short term. This strategy is on course and already being carried out by an Inter-Agency Technical Committee on Athi River Protection and Pollution Control and Management

UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF WORKS AND BACKGROUND

Thwake Multipurpose Water Development Program (TMWDP) is designated as a Vision 2030 project by the Government of Kenya (GoK) to fulfill the long term country's development ambition in the areas of water, energy, agriculture and flood mitigation. The Program – expected to be done in four phases - is also

designated as an enabler of the Big-4 Agenda project by the Government of Kenya (GoK). The implementation of the dam project civil works and other related activities has been ongoing with overall progress of works at 54 per cent. The programme of works envisages completion of the Dam by November 2022.

The following are its Phases;

Phase I: Construction of 80.5m high multi-purpose dam with a storage of 688m m3 of water

Phase II: Development of hydro-power generating system with an install capacity of approximately 20MW.

Phase III: Development of water supply and sanitation infrastructure to supply an estimated 150, 000 m3 per day of treated water to serve approximately 1.3 Million people drawn from the rural areas of Kitui, Makueni and Konza Techno City.

Phase IV: Irrigation scheme development to ultimately irrigate 40,000 Hectares of land

NOTE: Only **Phase 1** of the multipurpose program is at the Implementation Stage while phases II and III are at detailed design stage. This means that construction of the dam has not been finished yet and it has not started holding any water from the feeder sources.

(i) SEWERAGE RETICULATION AND EXPANSION

Athi Water Works Development Agency is leading in collaborative efforts that will see expansion of Dandora Sewage Treatment Plant, building of other additional ablution blocks in informal settlements and increasing sewer reticulation. This will reduce pollution on the river that feeds the dam. We have plans in place on Expansion of **Reticulation of the Sewers** in Nairobi. The sewerage will be treated before discharge to the Athi River.

(ii) WATER QUALITY MONITORING

Through Water Resources Authority, the Ministry is already working to install **Telemetry Water Quality Monitoring Station** for Thwake Dam. The station will be mounted on the riparian reserve and within the premises of the dam to enhance data generation for proper monitoring of water quality. Water Quality Monitoring is being done by Water Resources Authority (WRA), National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) and the Contractor – China Ghezouba Group Company Limited (CGGC) and this exercise expected to continue throughout

the year. Water quality analysis is done by NEMA Accredited Laboratories and Parameter analyzed include Heavy Metals: Lead, Mercury, Cadmium and Chromium among others.

(iii) ROBUST CLEAN-UP OF WATER SOURCES (ONDIRI SWAMP IN KIKUYU, NAIROBI RIVER, ATHI RIVER)

A robust clean-up plan of Nairobi and Athi Rivers being funded by African Development Bank (AfDB) and the French Development Agency (AFD) to a tune of KES. 20 Billion, is on course. Athi Water Works Development Agency and the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) are constructing Ablution Blocks in the informal settlements of Mathare and Kibra in Nairobi. More ablution blocks are expected to be built as clean-up exercise along the Nairobi River progresses. Elaborate measures to clean the Nairobi and Athi rivers in order to make water fit for human consumption have commenced with a Multi-Agency headed by the Ministry. In collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and Nairobi Metropolitan Services, we have already initiated the process of clean-up of **Ondiri Swamp** in Kikuyu. This will go all the way to Thwake and Athi Rivers.

(iv) ATHI RIVER POLLUTION MANAGEMENT BY INTER-SECTORAL AGENCIES

The Ministry has carried out **Inspection and Monitoring** activities and developed Reports on Source Discharges for effluent dischargers in Upper Athi Sub-Basin with recommendations critical in ensuring the water sources feeding Thwake River are clean. Already, advanced deliberations on Upper Athi River Protection and Pollution Management with Proposed Intervention Measures/Strategies are taking place. Interventions expected to involve counties such as Nairobi, Machakos, Kajjado, Kiambu and Makueni.

(v) REHABILITATION OF RIPARIAN RESERVES

We are committed in implementing rehabilitation of **Riparian Reserves** in short, medium and long term basis, where our goal is to focus on continuation of removal of structures within riparian land along the river. This exercise involves the multi-agency teams drawn from key ministries.

(vi) ENFORCEMENT REGULATIONS AND MECHANISMS

The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources through NEMA has put **Elaborate Enforcement Regulations** to ensure industries along the basin pre- treat their effluents to the recommended standards before discharge to water bodies.

The agency is keen in ensuring that no amount of untreated and toxic waste gets into the river, in accordance to the requirements of Environmental Management and Co-ordination (Water Quality) Regulations, 2006 which apply to water used for domestic, industrial, agricultural, and recreational purposes; water used for fisheries and wildlife purposes, and water used for any other purposes.

(vii) SOLID WASTE CONTROL

Nairobi Metropolitan Services, NEMA and the Ministry are together working on **Solid Waste Management** in Nairobi to protect the Nairobi and Athi Rivers from solid waste pollution.

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