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## Media Release

For Immediate Release

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### WATER RESOURCE AVAILABILITY STATUS IN THE INKOMATI-USUTHU WATER MANAGEMENT AREA

This is an overview of the drought and rainfall status for October 2019 issued by the Inkomati-Usuthu Catchment Management Agency (IUCMA), an entity responsible for managing water resources in the Inkomati-Usuthu water management area (WMA)

The water availability situation in the Crocodile and Sabie-Sand Catchment is still below normal when compared to previous hydrological years, while Komati and Usuthu catchments is normal.

Drought severity is worsening in the Inkomati-Usuthu Water Management Area as major dam levels continue to drop rapidly following the very dry winter in the region. Consequently, the river flow levels in the main rivers (Crocodile, and Sabie Sand) and its tributaries are extremely low. At the same period last year, Kwena Dam in the Crocodile Catchment was at 57.0%, the volume of water in Kwena dam has rapidly dropped since the start of the 2019 winter season from 60.0% in June 2019 to 36.4% in October 2019 (Figure 1).

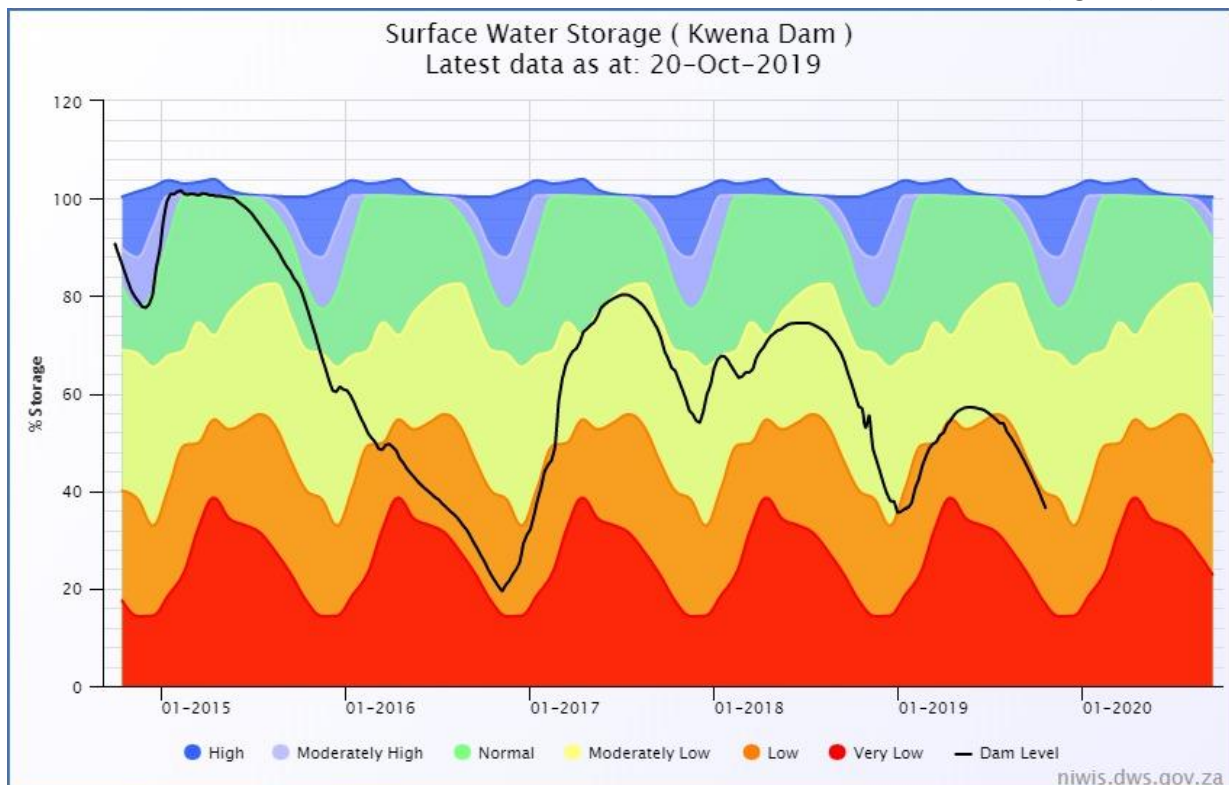


Figure 1: Kwena Dam Volume

The water level in all dams, which supply the major towns, irrigation, and strategic water users are currently dropping rapidly. The drawdown rate is likely to increase further as the dam's releases are increased in response to the summer conditions.

The impact of below normal rainfall received during the 2018-2019 summer rainfall season in the Crocodile and Sabie-Sand Catchment can still be felt (particularly where Kwena, Lomati, Klipkopjes, Primkop and Inyaka Dam levels are concerned) (Table 1).

Table 1: Dam levels in the Inkomati Usuthu WMA 21 Oct 2019

Dam Name	21 Oct 2019 % FSC	Areas Supplied
Da Gama Dam	53.4%	Keipersol
Driekoppies Dam	66.2%	Nkomazi South
Inyaka Dam	51.6%	Bushbuckridge
Klipkopjes Dam	24.2%	White River
Kwena Dam	36.4%	Nelspruit, Matsulu, Kanyamazane, Malelane
Longmere Dam	66.1%	White River
Nooitgedacht Dam	73.9%	Upper Komati
Primkop Dam	14.4%	Karino Area
Vygeboom Dam	91.4%	Upper Komati
Witklip Dam	72.8%	White river

4Key: % FSC: Full Supply Capacity Percentage.

Domestic and Irrigation water use restrictions are in place in the Crocodile, Sabie-Sand, White River, and Lomati catchments as per systems operating rules since February 2019. In the Crocodile catchment restrictions are 20% and 60% restriction on domestic and irrigation use respectively, Sabie Sand catchment restrictions are 10% and 40% restriction on domestic and irrigation use respectively, Lomati catchment restriction has increased from 30.0% to 50.0% for domestic use, and the White River catchment restriction is 65.0% on irrigation use.

All efforts to improve the situation must be implemented by affected and responsible parties, and the restrictions are to remain in place until further notice. Irrigation Boards and Municipalities are still encouraged to ensure that these restrictions are adhered to by water users, whilst the IUCMA continues to monitor usage and ensuring compliance and enforcement where necessary.

## Projected Weather

According to the latest South African Water Services (SAWS) Seasonal Climate Watch report for September 2019 to January 2019; indicates that El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is currently in a neutral state and the forecast indicates that it will most likely remain in a neutral state for the coming seasons.

The uncertainty in the ENSO forecast seems to be reflected in the rainfall forecast for the summer rainfall areas as well. The late spring (Oct-Nov-Dec) period indicates confident forecasts that below-normal rainfall is more likely over the central and north-eastern parts of the country. Early-summer (Nov-Dec-Jan), however, indicates that above-normal rainfall is more likely for the same areas, but it is uncertain, if above normal rainfall will occur, hence we are required to be conservative in our planning.

The IUCMA appreciates the water user's efforts to continue saving water and adherence to the restrictions. And to further stress, there is a probability that more severe restriction will be imposed during 2019 summer to late summer (December to February 2019).

**End**

*Issued by the Inkomati-Usuthu CMA: -*

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