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MEDIA STATEMENT

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LOAD SHEDDING IMPACT ON THE PROVISION OF OTHER MUNICIPAL SERVICES EG. WATER SUPPLY

SALGA KZN notes with deep concern the impact of loadshedding on other municipal services such as water and sanitation. We have seen Eskom (power utility) plunge the country into stage 6 blackouts. Not only this has devastating effects on households, communities, and businesses but also on economic growth. Load shedding by power utility places Local Government in a very unfavorable position as this has impact on other services rendered to communities.

Water and electricity are intrinsically linked, where one cannot be supplied without the other. In south Africa 85% of country's electricity is supplied by coal power stations and water supply especially in our province KwaZulu Natal necessitates high lift pumping systems over great distances. Noting the geographical landscape of our province, where it has very high and low-lying areas.

How does an interruption in electricity supply impact water supply? Electricity is used in the water sector for pumping, treatment of raw water, distribution of potable water, collection and treatment of wastewater and water discharge. At reservoirs, some pumps push water into tower, which then provides enough pressure to feed the water supply network especially high lying areas.



The pipelines in the network deliver this water to the taps at home, hospitals, schools, and businesses. Pumps require electricity to work.

Until recent years the electricity supply by Eskom was considered safe and risk of electricity supply failure did not play a significant role in the design and operations of water supply and distribution systems. However, with the high prolonged electricity supply disruptions are proving to be a challenge for the water supply sector particularly municipalities.

Load shedding related electricity disruptions has severe consequences for the continuous treatment and supply of water services. The consequences of electricity outages for potable water are so severe that in extreme cases disrupting water supply completely and compromising water quality.

Eskom inefficiencies are plunging municipalities on a deep hole, we are witnessing various service delivery protests, where communities are expressing dissatisfaction of not having electricity and subsequently due to loadshedding water services. This impact of load shedding has huge negative financial consequences for municipal revenues as more and more municipal customers are looking for alternatives not linked to Eskom generated Electricity. Prolonged electricity outages are resulting in high revenue losses.

Municipalities are trying their level best to mitigate this challenge by installing backup generators in some of their water infrastructures mobile and permanent, but even these generators are not to assist in situations of prolonged electricity outages. These generators also require ongoing servicing and maintenance, which comes at a cost. Not all municipal key water infrastructure have backup generators.

In the mist of that there is lack of guidelines, frameworks and government policies in place to aid Local Government which is charged with the responsibility



of water supply by the constitution of south Africa in mitigating the impact of electricity disruptions on water supply to communities.

We appeal to KZN communities to give LG a chance to look at alternative energy sources which will result in gradually transitioning away from Eskom coal generated electricity.

END

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