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To All agricultural irrigation related water users abstracting from the Crocodile River Catchment (Main Crocodile river and its tributaries).

From Acting CEO: Dr Nicollete Mhlanga-Ndlovu

SUBJECT **NOTICE OF RESTRICTION ON THE ABSTRACTION OF IRRIGATION WATER IN THE CROCODILE RIVER CATCHMENT (MAIN CROCODILE RIVER AND ITS TRIBUTARIES) IN TERMS OF SECTION 6(1) OF SCHEDULE 3 OF THE NATIONAL WATER Act 36 of 1998**

Notice Purpose:

The purpose of this notice is to inform **all water users** to embark on immediate water use abstraction restrictions for all agricultural related irrigation activities abstracting from the Crocodile River including all of its tributaries. These tributaries include but are not limited to the following river systems: Alexanderspruit, Blinkwater, Buffelskloof, Elands, Gladdespruit, Gutshwa, Houtbosloop, Lunsklip, Nels, Nsikazi, Stads, Sand River, Sterkspruit, Valyspruit, Vissipruit, Kaap River, White River and Zongagskraal Rivers and their catchments.

This includes abstraction from any dam or surface water resource within the Crocodile catchment and related sub-catchments.

The Responsibilities of the Inkomati-Usuthu Catchment Management Agency (IUCMA)

The IUCMA is a water management institution established by the Minister of Water and Sanitation in terms of section 78 of the National Water Act, Act 36 of 1998, to perform water resource management at local level within the Inkomati-Usuthu Water Management Area (WMA). This entails the protection, use, development, conservation, management, and control of water resources as contemplated in the National Water Act.

The function relevant to this letter and delegated by the Minister of Water and Sanitation to the IUCMA, is Schedule 3 of the National Water Act, which includes the power to inter alia, **temporarily control**,

limit, or prohibit use of water during periods of water shortage [Section (6) 1 of Schedule 3 of NWA].

Low Dam Levels and Extremely low river flow levels in the Crocodile River as well as its tributaries

Due to significantly below normal rainfall and the extreme high temperatures we are currently experiencing in the Mpumalanga Lowveld region, river flow levels in the Crocodile River and its tributaries are extremely low. The environmental flow requirements and the needs of the water users are thus not being met in the lower portions of the rivers and further intervention is required. The IUCMA is attempting to rectify the situation through increased releases from Kwena Dam under its management as well as imposing water use restrictions 7.5 m³/s is being released from Kwena Dam as from 27 November 2024, hence the rapid dropping of Kwena Dam.

Restrictions Required

In terms of the operating rules in place for the Crocodile River (Figure 1), and in accordance with our duly delegated mandate, the IUCMA hereby imposes restrictions of **at least 35.0% on your lawful water use allocation with immediate effect.**

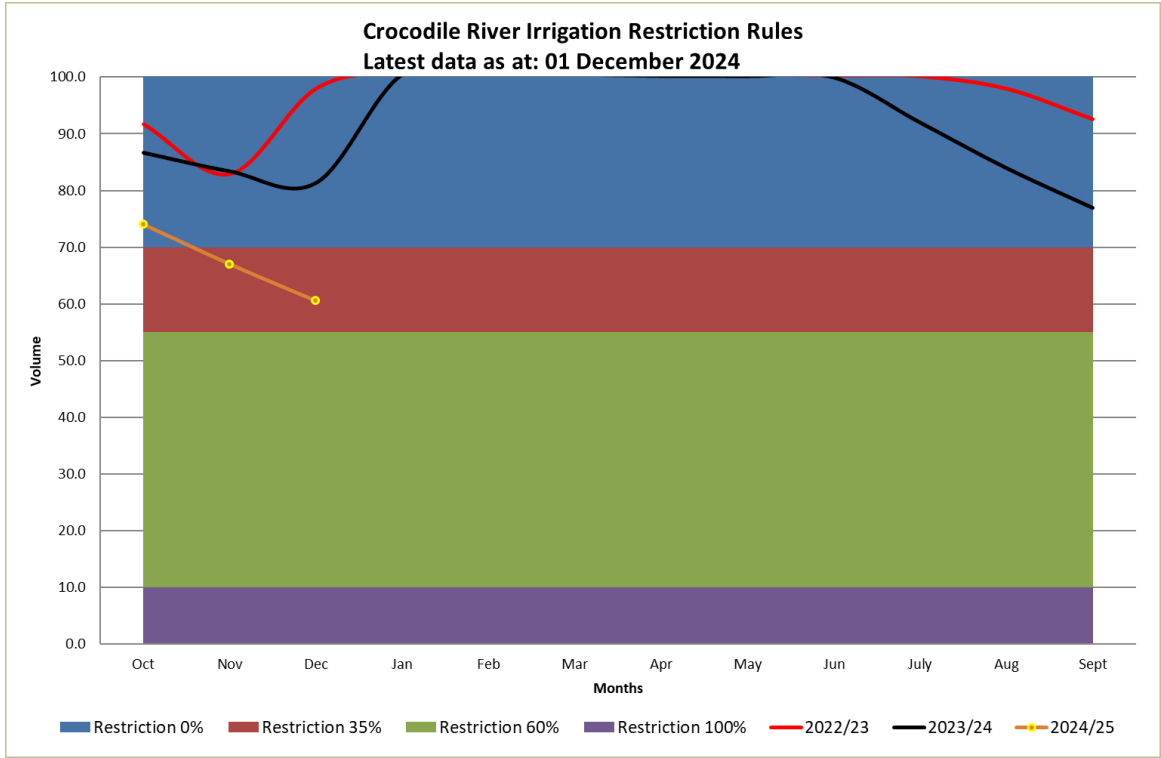


Figure 1: Operating rule curve for Kwena Dam: Restriction levels for irrigators.

Any higher restrictions enforced by any Irrigation Boards within these river catchments may override the gazetted restrictions to ensure the system balance is controlled.

Any unlawful water uses are not permitted to abstract or store any water whatsoever and may be subject to a legal process for their permanent removal. Any water use greater than your lawful water use allocation must be immediately reduced to an amount equivalent to 35% less than the allocation portion.

Furthermore, over and above the general restriction required above, no water user is permitted to completely stop the flow of water in a watercourse as a result of exercising their restricted abstraction or storage. A requisite flow sufficient for the ecological sustainability of the watercourse as well as the equitable use of all lawful water users downstream must be allowed to pass any abstraction point or storage dam at all times. This is determined on a case by case basis, but a general rule of thumb is to allow at least 30% of the flow arriving to pass downstream, and this could be much higher.

Lastly, all persons with lawful access to the storage in lawful dams must be allowed equitable use of the water in the dam by the owners of said dams, after any water for reasonable domestic requirements, stock watering and the ecology is kept in reserve (hereinafter collectively referred to as the Reserve). If the storage in any dam or water course is no longer able to supply water beyond the Reserve, then all other water uses out of that resource must stop until it recovers.

The restrictions will remain in place until further notice but will be increased to 60% if the volume of Kwena Dam drops below 55.0%.

These restrictions will be reviewed and may be amended at a later date.

Your Cooperation will be appreciated.

Yours Sincerely



Dr Nicollete Mhlanga-Ndlovu.

Acting Chief Executive Officer