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Water Governance in Cape Town, South Africa

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Description / Abstract

In 2018, the city of Cape Town, South Africa, was close to the “Day Zero”, requiring all taps to be shut off and citizens to fetch a daily 25 litre per person. Though the day-zero was avoided, it is estimated that, at the current rate, South Africa will experience a 17% water deficit by 2030 if no action is taken to respond to existing trends. Lessons learned during that drought crisis have been valuable for the city to manage the short-term COVID-19 implications and design long-term solutions towards greater water resilience. As a result of a multi-stakeholder policy dialogue involving 100+ stakeholders from the city of Cape Town and South Africa, this report assesses key water risks and governance challenges in Cape Town, and provides policy recommendations towards more effective, efficient and inclusive water management building on the OECD Principles on Water Governance. In particular, the report calls for strengthening integrated basin governance, transparency, integrity, stakeholder engagement, capacities at all levels of government, financial sustainability and for advancing the water allocation reform to better manage trade-offs across multiple users.

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