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**Immediate Release**

**Media Statement:**

**Issued by the Corporate Stakeholder Management Unit**

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**Umgeni Water Commissions Maphumulo Bulk Water Supply Scheme Phase 1**

Umgeni Water has ploughed R400 million into a massive Bulk Water infrastructure project, in ILembe District in KwaZulu-Natal that will end the hardship of thousands of households who have struggled without a sustainable supply of water for decades.

The project, Maphumulo Bulk Water Supply Scheme Phase 1, was officially commissioned this week by the Mayor of ILembe District Municipality, Councillor Welcome Mdabe, and will for the first time provide water to an estimated 158 000 people living in the Maphumulo, Kwa Sizabantu, Maqumbi and Ashville areas. Up until now, an estimated 158 000 people living in these areas have received an erratic supply of water from boreholes, rivers, streams and water troughs used by animals, which posed a health risk.

Shami Harichunder, Corporate Stakeholder Manager, commented "As an entity of State, we are delighted that we have been able to contribute towards the improvement of the quality of life of people living in these three areas. The Constitution of our country guarantees every citizen access to safe drinking water. The Maphumulo Bulk Water Supply Scheme is a manifestation of this inherent right."

An estimated 2000 people were present at a function for the commissioning of the Maphumulo Water Treatment Works held at the Velangezwi High School sports field, Maphumulo. There were visible signs of jubilation and excitement as the taps were turned on. Harichunder commented further that the reticulation networks of ILembe District Municipality will be connected to the newly constructed Bulk Infrastructure and the roll-out of the provision of water will peak to 158 000 recipients over the next three years, however, the availability of safe drinking water from the Maphumulo Bulk Water Supply Scheme becomes available immediately for areas that already have the reticulation infrastructure. Harichunder said the total cost of the Maphumulo Bulk Water Supply Scheme Phase 1 was R414 million. Phase 1 of the Maphumulo Bulk Water Supply Scheme comprises:

- Extraction of raw water from the Imvutshane River
- Rising main reservoirs and pump stations.
- Break pressure tank

There are two other phases to the Maphumulo Bulk Water Supply Scheme which will comprise the construction of the Imvutshane Dam and the upgrade of the existing supply system. Harichunder said the Maphumulo Bulk Water Supply Scheme in all three phases will make an important contribution to rural development in the vast ILembe District Municipality, where a large proportion of the population do not have convenient access to safe potable water. The entire project had been three years in the planning and construction began about a year ago in order to meet the increasing demand of the ILembe District Municipality. The Commissioning of Maphumulo Bulk Water Supply Scheme Phase 1 was commemorated within National Water Week and the United Nations International Year of Water Co-operation both of which have underlined the importance of access to potable water.

**Ends**