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Title of the Article Reviewed: **Water Supply and Sanitation in South Africa**

Quality of Summary

The article provides a full summary of the broader water and sanitation situation in South Africa. The article is correct in indicating that there has been significant progress recorded since 1994, especially with regard to water services, and much less with sanitation. However, it is important to note that despite these improvements, there are still a lot of challenges around both water and (especially) sanitation services in both rural and poor urban neighbourhoods. Some of the key challenges, in this regard include widespread and frequent protests throughout the country, low capacity in most municipalities, water pollution from mining, and the growing water scarcity issue. It is important to state this clearly in the summary to provide a balanced view on the topic. Further, the suggestion that South Africa has achieved “universal access to an improved water source” can be misleading and needs to be qualified.

Structure

The article is well-structured and it is easy to follow, though some sections like the Wastewater Treatment(3.2), Management Contract (Section 6.3), Tariff Level (8.1), Free Basic Water((8.2), Financing (8.6) could be reduced to basic facts. The section on Human Resources (section 5) can be either shortened or removed entirely.

There are certain terminologies which might need explanation and a bit of context for readers who are not familiar with this topic. For instance, terms like cost recovery, bulk water supply, brain drain, water boards, semi-pressure service, etc., need a bit of explanation.

Content

The article has comprehensive content on the topic. However, the article needs to provide a broader context to the discussion mainly the historical facts about the apartheid policy of segregated residence and unequal provision of services including water and sanitation. This is missing in the article. It is also important to indicate that South Africa is a water stressed country and the situation is getting more serious. Further, an outline of the water services sectoral arrangement (structure or institutional set up) would be helpful to most readers. For instance it is essential to note that the water sector is organised in 9 Catchment Management Areas(CMA or river basins), which are further arranged in 13 water boards, which are subsequently sub-divided into water authorities and water service providers. This outline can help the readers understand the way the water sector is organised and operates.

Sections 4.1, 6.1, 6.4 and 6.5 can be condensed into one section under the heading Regulatory or policy Framework, because this is what these sections are. Similarly, sections 6.2 and 8.3 can be combined into one section. The entire section 6 can come early in the paper to provide the background to the discussion in the article. The article can also include more recent literature and information on this topic beyond 2012.

International and Local Dimension

The local dimension is adequately covered, while the international dimension is largely missing. In this regard, the water privatisation experiences and trends in other parts of the world can provide a broader context to the South African experience, and there is a lot of literature on this.

References

The references are fine except that they need to include more recent and international literature