

With less than eight days before the start of the 9th Francophone Games, Kinshasa is now racing against time to prepare all the infrastructure including a shortage of water supply.

Lack of running water at venues has continued to be headlines on social media ahead of the games scheduled from July 28 to 6 August. This is in the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The country's troubled legacy of conflict, environmental degradation, rapid urbanization and under-investment in water infrastructure has seriously affected drinking water availability according to the United Nations Environment Programme.

Speaking about the problem of water supply which has been in the headlines for the past three days, the Director of the National Committee of the Francophone Games said on Wednesday July 19, that work is in progress and that water tanks are already operating at these sites.

More than 3,000 young athletes and artists from some forty countries are expected to take part in the event, which mixes sporting and cultural competition.

At least 200 athletes are already in Kinshasa to participate in the games.

"We have already received 200 athletes. By Wednesday, we expect to reach up to 300 athletes and their companions. They are housed at the UNIKIN site where everything is ready. The UNIKIN was almost uninhabited. That's why the work took so long," the director said.

The DRC has over 50% of the African continent's water reserves. However, despite this tremendous potential, 33 million people in rural areas still lack access to quality water.

Isidore Kwandja also assured the press that the entire infrastructure is almost ready and the DRC can host these games on the desired date.

For his part, the Minister of Sports and Leisure, Francois Kabulo Mwana Kabulo assured that the Congolese athletes' preparations are proceeding well.

Three sites have been selected by the Congolese government to host these games, namely: the Martyrs and Tata Raphael stadiums and the University of Kinshasa (UNIKIN).

Security, which is a concern for major stakeholders, has also been assured by the government. DRC intends to deploy at least 4500 security personnel during the competition.