Rwanda’s national water utility has announced new steps to address delays in water service connections, promising quicker installations and improved service delivery. The Water and Sanitation Corporation (WASAC) says it now has more than 11,500 water meters in stock and has ordered 33,000 more to meet growing demand.

The update was shared by WASAC Chief Executive Officer Prof. Omar Munyaneza while appearing before Parliament’s Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Thursday. He said the corporation had recorded over 7,100 applicants for new household water connections by June 21. Of those, about 4,000 had already completed the requirements and were waiting for service.

Prof. Munyaneza acknowledged the long-standing issue of delays and attributed some of the setbacks to supply chain problems and a shortage of technicians to install the meters. To speed up installations, he said WASAC has begun working with licensed private plumbers to assist in meter deployment across the country.

He also addressed concerns about non-payment of water bills, saying unpaid services have contributed to financial losses for the utility. Starting in July, customers who delay payment will face a 5% penalty on overdue bills, a measure intended to promote timely payments and prevent revenue leakage.

In addition to the penalty system, WASAC is piloting a prepaid water system, similar to the one already used for electricity. Under this system, customers can load money onto a smart card and use it to draw water automatically, even if an operator is not present at the water point. The pilot has already been launched in Nyagatare, Gatsibo, Kayonza and Rwamagana districts, as well as in the City of Kigali. WASAC says that if the pilot proves successful within six months, it will expand the program nationwide and make it available to households.

Another major focus for WASAC is upgrading the Nzove Water Treatment Plant, which was built in 2006 with a daily production capacity of 25,000 cubic meters. Today, the plant produces only about 10,000 cubic meters due to aging infrastructure. Prof. Munyaneza said the plant will be fully rehabilitated with support from a $25 million loan from the African Development Bank. The upgrade is expected to be completed by 2028.

The improvements are part of broader efforts to address water supply gaps in Kigali. The city currently receives about 130,000 cubic meters of water per day from Nzove, Kanzenze and other plants, but WASAC estimates that the city needs at least

140,000 cubic meters per day to meet demand. Officials hope that once Nzove’s capacity is restored, the supply will better match the city’s growing needs.

A recent report from the Office of the Auditor General revealed that while some water treatment plants are operating at more than 80% of their capacity, others are underperforming, with some running at less than 30%. The report also noted ongoing losses from leaking pipes, overflow, theft and broken meters.

WASAC says it is investing in modern technology and infrastructure repairs to reduce waste and improve reliability. According to government data, about 90% of Rwandans currently have access to clean drinking water, but the utility says it is committed to reaching 100% through continued reforms and investments.