



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### MEDIA STATEMENT

#### **A proper and safe toilet is needed when nature calls**

13 November 2018

South Africa, led by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), will join the world in putting attention to the importance of having a proper, clean and safe toilet for human dignity on World Toilet Day on 19 November 2018. World Toilet Day, celebrated annually on 19 November, strives to bring the attention of the masses towards a number of sanitation issues with an aim to resolve such issues. This Day acknowledges that everyone should have access to safe toilets and that sanitation is an international development priority.

This year, the theme for the World Toilet day is ***“When Nature Calls”***, highlighting the serious importance of a proper toilet when nature calls. The theme also emphasises the importance of proper and adequate sanitation, especially a clean and safe toilet, for human health and a healthy environment.

Toilets play a very important role in enhancing the health and safety (and preserving the dignity) of people. Access to adequate sanitation has been proclaimed as a human right, but billions of people throughout the globe are still without proper, clean and safe toilets for human dignity. Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) talks about ensuring availability and sustainable management of sanitation and water for all by 2030, which makes the availability of proper toilets critical for the attainment of this key developmental goal.

Access to proper, hygienic and safe toilets is crucial to prevent the spread of diseases and ensure a healthy society. Toilets save lives because human waste spreads killer diseases. The lack of proper toilets, unsafe and unclean toilets lead to the spread of a number of diseases such as typhoid, cholera and diarrhea. This calls for people to be responsible and keep public toilets clean and safe for others so as to prevent the spread of diseases.

The lack of proper toilets also leads to people using open spaces to relieve themselves – which poses danger, especially for women and girls who are exposed to the risk of being raped and even killed. Defecating in the open also has a serious negative impact on human dignity and self-confidence. It also impacts negatively on the environment and contaminates the soil and our water resources. As we say, water is life, but contaminated water is deadly as the water resources become transmitters of water borne diseases.



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The poor and most vulnerable must always be prioritised in the provision of toilets to ensure that no individual lacks the basic requirement for a dignified and healthy life. Community members who are beneficiaries on the other hand must always take care and keep the facilities in good conditions for their own health and the health of their communities.

It is therefore critical that people have access to proper and safe toilets to ensure a safe and healthy livelihood and environment for all.

**ENDS**

**Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation**

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