



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### MEDIA STATEMENT

#### **Cleaning rivers and streams for water security on Mandela Day**

18 July 2018

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) in partnership with the Inkomati-Usuthu Catchment Management Agency (IUCMA), City of Mbombela, Bushbuckridge Local Municipality, Nkomazi Local Municipality together with sector stakeholders; Komati Basin Water Authority (KOBWA), Working on Fire, Crocodile Catchment Forum embarked on an intensive river and stream cleaning exercise as part of heeding the call for doing good on Mandela Day.

Water is life and rivers are the lifeblood that ensures reliable supply of this source of life. Pollution is having a serious negative impact on the water resources, as it affects the quality as well as the quantity of usable water. Pollution also negatively affects the flow of rivers in a way that the waste dumped in our rivers may block the flow of water resulting in lack of supply for the communities downstream. Pollution may also block the normal flow of rivers leading to flooding during heavy downpours.

The river cleaning campaign as part of the Clear Rivers Campaign was held in Mbombela, Nkomazi and Bushbuckridge under the theme ***“Be the Legacy: dedicate 67 minutes to cleaning rivers and stream”***.

As South Africa is a water scarce country and one of the driest in the world, the need for water security, particularly in the face of global climate change and a multitude of anthropogenic impacts affecting our rivers, calls for a national and unified approach to protect our rivers, wetlands and broader catchments. In this way all people can benefit from the value added products of healthy rivers and can have access to clean water for basic human needs. It is for this reason that DWS would like to connect South Africans to their sources of water and the natural infrastructure that are crucial for a water secure future.

The objective of the Clear Rivers Campaign is to undertake a collaborative effort and engage communities as well as promoting and creating awareness and education on protecting our water resources. Fostering volunteerism among communities is actively encouraged as part



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of a proactive approach to protecting our rivers, streams, wetlands, and other water ecosystems. The campaign aims to achieve well informed and environmentally conscious communities and pollution free rivers.

The incorrect disposal of feminine hygiene products, nappies remains a serious concern as they are directly dumped into our rivers, streams, wetlands and other freshwater eco systems, impacting on the water quality and ultimately affecting water security.

Rivers are key assets of the nation. Rivers, dams, wetlands and all freshwater ecosystems belong to all of us, therefore we all have the responsibility to play our part in ensuring that the water in our rivers and all other watercourses are clean and healthy at all times.

**END**

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

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