



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### MEDIA STATEMENT

#### **DWS and partners clean Molopo River as part of Mandela Month activities**

31 July 2018

As part of Mandela Day activities, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) – together with Mahikeng Local Municipality and Sedibeng Water – held Clear Rivers Campaign at the Molopo River on Tuesday, 31 July 2018, to mark the end of Mandela Month activities.

The clean-up of Molopo River is part of the Clear Rivers campaign which is an annual departmental initiative encouraging individuals, businesses and civil society organisations to roll up their sleeves and be part of the cleaning of water resources such as rivers, dams, streams and wetlands.

The clean-up was led by Mahikeng Local Municipality Mayor, Councillor Betty Diakanyo; DWS Provincial Head, Mr Chadwick Lobakeng; and Sedibeng Water Regional Manager, Mr Mpheteng Mokubung.

Giving key message during the clean-up, the Mahikeng Local Municipality's Executives Mayor, Councillor Betty Diakanyo who led the team that removed solid water from the river, highlighted that all of us have the responsibility to act as ambassadors in our communities and lead by example.

"We can do this by ensuring that we do not pollute the rivers, and speak up against those who do. Water is life, and if we do not start to preserve the little that we have, we will reach a stage where we will have no access to water. Let us use water sparingly", said councillor Diakanyo.

Diakanyo emphasised that the campaign envisages to see a decline in the rate of pollution that takes place in rivers as they are our main source of water that we provide to our communities.

"We also hope that we will see our people using water sparingly, which will ensure that our water is conserved for current and future generations", said councillor Diakanyo.

Mr Chadwick Lobakeng highlighted that the purpose of the campaign is to undertake a collaborative effort and actively engage communities, as well as promoting and creating ongoing awareness and education on protection of our water resources.

"Through the campaign, we try to encourage volunteerism among communities as part of a proactive approach to protecting our rivers, streams, wetlands and other water ecosystems, given the drought that still persists in large parts of the country and the fact that we are a water scarce country," said Lobakeng.

Lobakeng also highlighted that the Clear Rivers campaign is a catalyst for change and community members should be a change that they want to see in their environment. "It is the responsibility of every person to ensure that the environment is clean because the dirt that people throw around end up filling our rivers and streams, in turn contaminating our systems" said Lobakeng.

Addressing the clean-up team, Mr Mpheteng Mokubung also highlighted that pollution of rivers and dams has a negative impact in that it makes the process of cleaning to be expensive and longer. The



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processes increase because you may have to backwash twice and additional chemicals are required to treat the raw water to potable water standards.

“It is for this reason that we need to instil a sense of ownership in the communities towards our own rivers. It should not only be the responsibility of government to make sure that rivers are clean but each community member should be a watchman for those who pollute the environment on purpose,” said Mpheteng.

During the Campaign, there were two teams responsible for removing solid waste from the river and door to door campaign among households living next to the river to raise awareness about the need to keep our water resources clean.

Moreover, the Clear Rivers campaign is associated with the spirit of volunteerism which is promoted during the Mandela Month to clean rivers, streams, dams and wetlands.

**END**

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

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