



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### MEDIA STATEMENT

#### DWS to raise awareness of good hygiene on Global Handwashing Day

11 October 2018

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) will observe the annual Global Handwashing Day (GHWD) on Monday 15 October 2018, as part of its efforts to encourage people to wash hands with soap in order to reduce childhood mortality rates and other related diseases such as diarrhoea.

DWS officials in different parts of the country will visit schools and communities to raise awareness about the benefits of handwashing with soap, foster and support a culture of handwashing with soap and to put the spotlight on the state of handwashing in previously disadvantaged communities.

GHWD is this year celebrated under the theme **“Clean Hands- a recipe for health,”** and will focus on the links between handwashing and food, including food hygiene and nutrition.

Handwashing is an important part of keeping food safe, preventing diseases, and helping children grow strong. The tagline, “Clean hands – a recipe for health,” serves to remind the public to make handwashing a part of every meal.

In addition, according to research, hand washing with soap can reduce the rate of diarrheal infections by almost 50% and acute respiratory diseases by up to 25%. When practiced by mothers and birth attendants can reduce neonatal mortality rates by almost 40%.

This Global Handwashing Day, DWS urges members of the public to wash hands with soap as it is proven as the single most effective way to prevent diarrhoea and other hygiene related diseases as automatic behaviours performed in homes, schools, and communities.

Scaling up handwashing hygiene with soap, is estimated to prevent the deaths of many children, as well as to reduce substantially, the number of diarrhoeal incidences. Handwashing with soap offers the opportunity to have a real impact.

GHWD commemoration forms part of the department’s Sanitation Campaign marked from 01 October - 30 November 2018, including World Toilet Day that is commemorated on 19 November.

The main objective of celebrating the Sanitation Campaign is to raise the profile of sanitation and encourage local government and communities to prioritise sanitation, health and hygiene; and to highlight the work that the department is doing to ensure that all South Africans have access to sanitation services.



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

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