



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### MEDIA STATEMENT

#### Sanitation Month to kick off

08 May 2018

The Department of Water and Sanitation will be celebrating the Sanitation and Hygiene month in May 2018 under the theme: *"It is not all about flushing"*. The main objective of the celebration of Sanitation and Hygiene Week is to raise the profile of sanitation and encourage local government and communities to prioritise sanitation, health and hygiene. Access to adequate sanitation is fundamental to personal dignity and security, social and psychological well-being, public health, poverty reduction, gender equality, economic development and environmental sustainability.

The department strives to make sure that all South Africans have access to sanitation and also give guidance in terms of looking after these facilities. Communities are well informed of the need to practice good hygiene practices, like washing hands after using a toilet and before preparing food.

Communities and stakeholders are well informed and updated of the progress made in sanitation provision and health & hygiene promotion programmes. South Africa is amongst many countries faced with the global challenges affecting the eradication of sanitation backlog and has committed itself to joining the globe towards enhancing and fast-tracking programmes and developments for eradication of sanitation backlogs.

Reasons hampering progress on eradicating existing backlogs, include the fact that sanitation has from the past not been regarded as a priority, thus the need to raise the profile of sanitation in order to change the mindsets of ordinary citizens, decision makers, all spheres of government and all stakeholders through advocacy programmes and campaigns. The other reason is the supply of raw bulk water for flushing purposes seeing that South Africa is a water scarce country.

Worldwide, lack of sanitation is a pressing challenge and more than 40% of world's population (that is approximately 2,4 billion people) still have no access to basic sanitation. Globally, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 1.8 million people die each year from diarrheal diseases, mostly related to poor sanitation and hygiene. It is estimated that 5 500 children across the world die every day from diseases caused by contaminated food and water.

**END**

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



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