



## MEDIA STATEMENT

### Join the Clear Rivers campaign and keep our rivers clean and healthy 11 July 2019

July is one of the most important months in the South African calendar as we honour the former statesman, former President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.

Madiba, as our international icon is affectionately known, once said ***“We can change the world and make it a better place. It is in our hands to make a difference”***. This was a crucial call to action for all of us to play a role in making the world a better place for the current and future generations. Making the world a better place basically means contributing in the development of our communities.

In heeding the call to action, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) and Inkomati-Usuthu Catchment Management Agency in partnership with other sector stakeholders and community members will be cleaning rivers and streams in the Inkomati and Usuthu areas. This is to ensure that our rivers are protected and the required quality standard for water in our rivers is maintained.

As South Africa is a water scarce country and one of the driest in the world, The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) came up with the Clear Rivers campaign during the Nelson Mandela Month to engage and encourage South Africans to clean rivers and strive to keep them healthy and free-flowing at all times for the security of water supply. 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





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approach to protect our rivers, wetlands and broader catchments. This annual campaign basically is a way of connecting people to their sources of water and calls on all citizens to dedicate 67 minutes of goodwill to clean up rivers and water ecosystems.

The Clear Rivers Campaign will continuously promote collaborative efforts together with the communities to keep our rivers clean. It will also heighten awareness and educate them to protect their water resources. Fostering volunteerism among communities is also actively encouraged and will conscientise communities about their environment and to keep their rivers free from pollution.

Rivers, dams and wetlands are key assets of the nation. All freshwater ecosystems belong to all of us and we all have the responsibility to ensure that the water in our rivers is clean at all times.

The major threat to our rivers is pollution which negatively affects the quality of water and compromise the quality of water, thereby affecting the quantity of water use. River pollution is as a result of littering into the rivers by dumping all sorts of waste. The Department of Water and Sanitation discourages river pollution because of its adverse consequence it has on the quality of water, and its ability to promote water borne diseases to the communities. Municipalities should also discourage sewage contamination of the rivers as it also affect quality of our rivers, and also leads to high e-coli levels which negatively affect the health of people and animals and aquatic life.

DWS encourages members of the public to join the Clear Rivers campaign and adopt rivers and other watercourses in their communities and protect them from pollution. Communities should keep the rivers clean at all times because they provide us with a source of life [water].





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