



MEDIA STATEMENT

Department of Water and Sanitation celebrates National Water Week 2019 during the Water Month

28 March 2019

Water issues will be on the spotlight in March as the Department of Water and Sanitation will embark on its annual Water Month activities to highlight the importance of water in the livelihoods of the general public and the country's economy.

The discussions on water issues will be more streamlined during National Water Week 2019, from 18 – 24 March when the department will have various activities across the country to mark United Nations' World Water Day on 22 March.

This year's campaign is held under the theme; "**Leaving no one behind; water for all**" and is set to bring to the fore government's obligation to ensure that all citizens have access to clean water. National Water Week and World Water Day come at an opportune time during Human Rights Month, because water is a basic right that everyone must have access to.

The theme for this year's Water Month is in line with the National Water and Sanitation Master Plan, a guiding framework towards the attainment of service delivery of basic services such as water and sanitation by 2030 and beyond. The successful implementation of the Master Plan will also fulfill government's National Development Vision 2030 as well as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals set target of water of and sanitation for all by 2030. This will be done through a collaborated water sector investment planning for the development of water resources.

The plan is based on five key objectives that define the 'new normal' for water and sanitation, and seeks to achieve:

- Resilient and fit-for-use water supply
- Universal water and sanitation provision
- Equitable sharing and allocation of water resources
- Effective infrastructure management, operation and maintenance
- improved raw water quality management

Water security is one of the biggest challenges facing South Africa and the world, especially the developing world in the 21st century. Water security will further be threatened as supply decreases due to negative impacts on yield arising from climate change, degradation of wetlands and water resources, siltation of dams, water losses and escalating demand due to population and economic growth, urbanization, inefficient use, and changing lifestyles.

South Africans currently consume more water per capita at approximately 237 litres per day than the world average of approximately 173 litres per day. Further, South Africa has a semi-arid climate, with an average annual rainfall of 465 mm, compared to the world average of 860 mm. As a result, South Africa's water resources are scarce and extremely limited.





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Against this background, the department calls on all South Africans to continue saving water, bearing in mind that the country is heading for a dry winter season when access to clean drinking water will be a challenge for all of us.

End

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