



## MEDIA STATEMENT

### Water accessibility is DWS' prime concern

10 September 2019

The key prerequisite for the accurate assessment of the status of water and the magnitude of water problems is the information which is based on well-organised monitoring programmes and reliable data.

The purpose of these monitoring programmes is to ensure water resources are protected, developed and managed well. The existing monitoring programmes have been reviewed with the intention to optimise monitoring and the implementation plan developed in order to address the future requirements for water resources monitoring for South Africa.

According to the Draft State of Water Report 2017/18 released by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), the country's water resources are impacted upon by a wide range of human activities. These activities degrade the quality of water in rivers, dams, estuaries and groundwater. These are potential threats to human health and riverine biota which are indicators for healthy river ecosystems.

It is therefore utterly imperative that water resources are monitored for quantity, quality and use at all spheres of government, that is national, regional and local, to ensure protection and sustainable availability. DWS has developed and implemented strategies that prevent and reduce pollution, and complements the monitoring of surface water to establish the quantity, quality and the health of rivers.

Therefore, monitoring of water quality and quantity are critical to enable the tracking of both spatial and temporal trends in surface and ground water systems. The challenge now is that very limited monitoring is taking place, resulting in gaps in data. Gaps in data could lead to wrong and/or incomplete assessments and decision-making.

As such the war against water pollution is also on DWS' radar. An anti-pollution task team is in the process of being established to lead the war against water polluters.

Another important factor towards ensuring water availability is water use regulation. Water use is regulated in terms of a system of permissions and authorisations as per the National Water Act (NWA), of 1998, namely: permissible use, General Authorisation, Existing lawful use and Licensed Water Use.

The NWA, Section 21, makes provision for the registration of water uses. It also prescribes that water use should be licenced unless it forms part of Schedule I, is an existing lawful use, is permissible under a general authorisation, or if a responsible authority waives the need for a licence. Water uses for all sectors are registered and captured in the Water Authorization Registration Management System (WARMS).

The DWS is implementing Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) and aims to achieve all the targets of water accessibility to all by 2030. This goal has six targets that focus on water services (including sanitation) and water resource management.





## water & sanitation

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In order to achieve this ideal, the implications of SDG 6 for the country are aligned to the National Development Plan (SA's Vision 2030), and the National Water and Sanitation Master Plan, which also looks at driving South Africa towards universal access by 2030.

**ENDS**

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

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