

# SANITATION

It's not all about flushing



**water & sanitation**

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**



## BACKGROUND

The Strategic Framework for Water Services (2003) defines sanitation services as “The provision of a basic sanitation facility which is easily accessible to a household, the sustainable operation of the facility, including the safe removal of human waste and wastewater from the premises where this is appropriate and necessary, and the communication of good sanitation, hygiene and related practices.”

In line with the National Development Plan, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Strategic Framework for Water Services and the Water Act (Act 36 of 1998), South Africa is accelerating the provision of water, hygiene and sanitation services for restoring dignity of all, thereby improving the health and safety of especially women.

There is still, silence and socially unacceptable stigmas related to feminine hygiene including menstruation; throughout the developed and developing world.

Drought is endemic to South Africa and presents a major challenge to the achievement of sustainable development. The impact of the current drought conditions result in water restrictions and cause substantial socio-economic hardships, a decline in public health, land degradation and bio-diversity loss. It exacerbates the challenges of especially women, as menstruating women and girls use more water for personal hygiene and washing of re-usable towels, access to toilets both at home, school and the places where they find themselves.





The Department of Water and Sanitation accordingly implement the following health and hygiene education programmes:

- Health and hygiene education (delivery as part of local health service programmes;)
- Health and hygiene in schools;
- Health and hygiene education in emergency situations (disasters and outbreaks); and
- Health and hygiene education to inform and provide understanding that will faster behavioral change.

This sanitation campaign is in support of the above approaches and will seek to elevate discussions, education and awareness around sanitation issues, focusing on the themes around health and hygiene, the impact on our environment and natural resources, as well as sanitation innovations and technologies.

The campaign will run from October to November 2016





## THE PILLARS OF THE CAMPAIGN

Health and hygiene, the environment and technology forms the pillars of the Sanitation campaign.

Basic sanitation is described as having access to facilities for the safe disposal of human waste (faeces and urine), as well as having the ability to maintain hygienic conditions, through services such as garbage collection, industrial/hazardous waste management and wastewater treatment and disposal.

Currently, the security of water supply and sanitation services is further threatened through environmental degradation and resource pollution. Poor sanitary habits impact health, education, the environment and industries such as tourism.

The efficient use of water is compromised as a result of the incorrect disposal of feminine hygiene products as well as other object such as nappies. These products end up in the Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTWs) that is operated by municipalities. At times, it is directly dumped into our rivers, streams, wetlands and other fresh water ecosystem. As a result these products end up in our fresh water system and it impacts the use of water and availability of water.





## HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Hygiene is a set of practices performed for the preservation of health.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "Hygiene refers to conditions and practices that help to maintain health and prevent the spread of diseases." Whereas in popular culture and parlance it can often mean mere 'cleanliness', hygiene in its fullest and original meaning goes much beyond that to include all circumstances and practices, lifestyle issues, premises and commodities that engender a safe and healthy environment.

As part of this campaign, health and hygiene education aims to increase knowledge, change attitudes and ensure behavioural change.





## ENVIRONMENT

The enormous volumes of sanitary towels and disposable diapers produced as well as the threat they pose to the environment; are real. Diapers and sanitary towels finally end up in a landfill since there is limited knowledge to dispose in a safe manner. Improper solid waste dumps and management system create serious negative environmental impacts like infectious diseases, land and water pollution, obstruction of drains and loss of biodiversity. Every sanitary towel or disposable diaper saved from a landfill will have a cascading effect and positively impact forests, water, air, the city and the entire environment.





## TECHNOLOGIES

In many parts of the country, girls can miss up to 5 days of school a month or drop out entirely due to insufficient access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities and menstrual hygiene products. Improving access to WASH facilities can actually increase girls' attendance at school.

There isn't a standardized way of disposing a sanitary towel at schools or households. Part of the discussions to be had during this campaign, will start to raise the issues around a humane way to handle this kind of waste.

The promotion of eco-friendly or biodegradable sanitary towels, reusable instead of only disposable nappies and alternative technologies will be discussed during the course of this campaign.

Given that South Africa is a naturally arid country, the application of dry household sanitation and the larger discussion around bucket eradication programme in formal areas will also find expression.





## OBJECTIVES OF THE CAMPAIGN

These objectives of the sanitation campaign are to strive through a collaborative effort and actively engage private companies, manufacturers and distributors of feminine hygiene products around water resources in the field as well as promoting on-going awareness creation and education.

The envisaged outcomes of the campaign seek to ensure the following:

- Pollution-free rivers
- Environmentally conscious communities
- Behavioural change
- Awareness creation and education on the need to effectively dispose feminine hygiene products as well as nappies, etc.





## CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

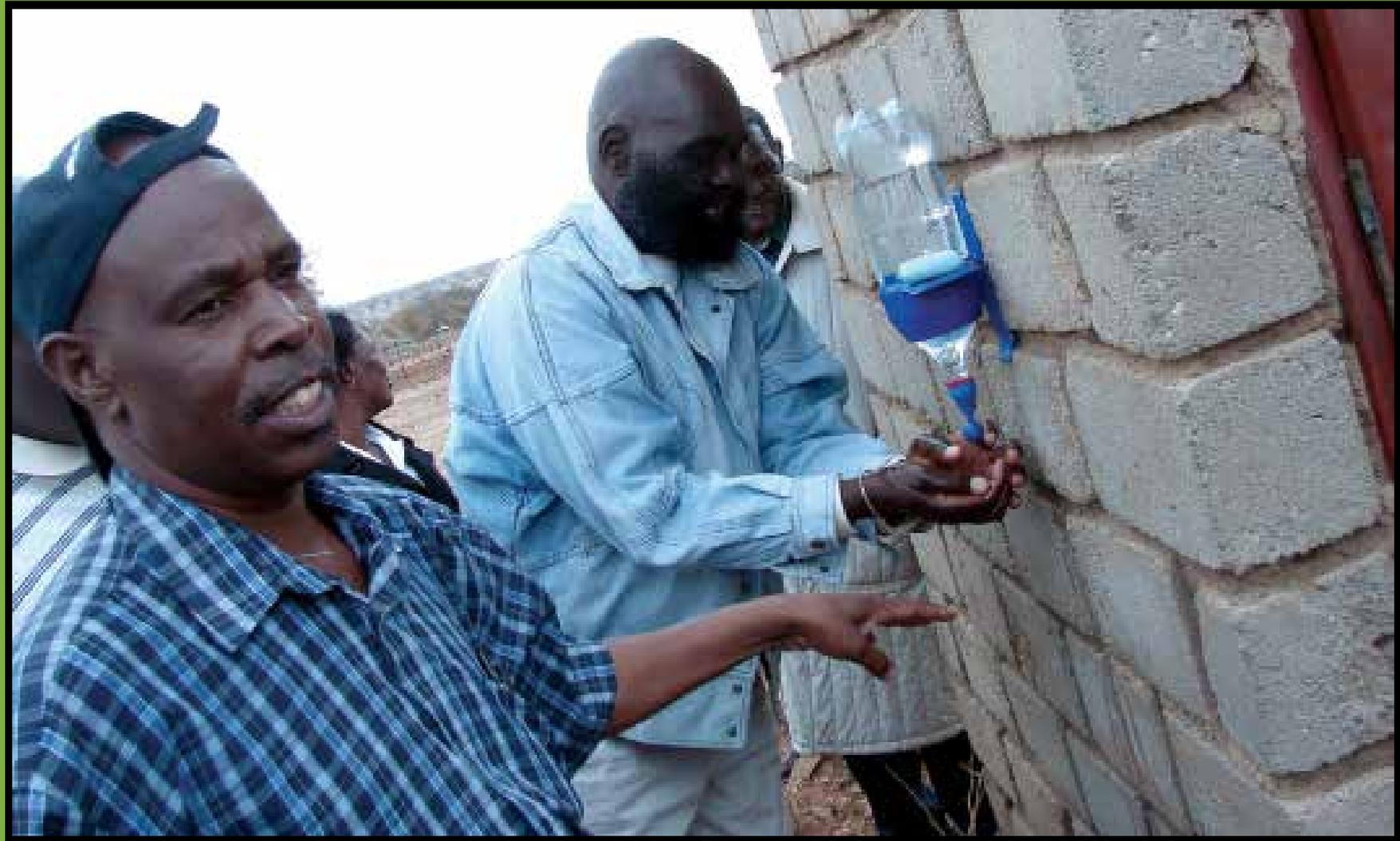
The activities will be linked to 2 major commemorative days namely:

1. Global Hand Washing day on 15 October 2016
2. World Toilet Day on 19 November 2016

There are several activities involved for the campaign including:

- Participation and by-in of manufacturers and distributors of feminine hygiene, beauty and health products;
- Developing partnership agreements around the environmentally friendly disposal of products;
- Creating awareness activities on safe environmental friendly disposal of products that impacts the country's water resources;
- Educating citizens around health and hygiene matters (hand washing) etc





## GLOBAL HANDWASHING DAY

Global Handwashing Day (GHD) is a campaign to motivate and mobilize people around the world to improve their handwashing habits by washing their hands with soap at critical moments throughout each day. It takes place on 15 October of each year. The campaign is dedicated to raising awareness of handwashing with soap as a key approach to disease prevention.

The campaign was initiated to reduce childhood mortality rates related respiratory and diarrheal diseases by introducing simple behavioural changes, such as handwashing with soap. This simple, accessible action can, according to research, reduce the rate of mortality from these diseases by almost 25 and 50 per cent, respectively.

The 2016 Global Handwashing Day theme is “Make Handwashing a Habit!” For handwashing to be effective it must be practiced consistently at key times, such as after using the toilet or before contact with food. While habits must be developed over time, this theme emphasizes the importance of handwashing as a ritual behaviour for long-term sustainability. Habit formation is currently a hot topic in behaviour change and the water, sanitation and hygiene sector. This theme taps into that interest and is also a gateway to discuss what the sector knows about how habits are formed.





## WORLD TOILET DAY

World Toilet Day (WTD) is a campaign to motivate and mobilise millions around the world on issues of sanitation. Originally established by the World Toilet Organization in 2001, this day draws attention to global sanitation issues and is marked each year on November 19. In 2013, the United Nations (UN) passed a resolution recognising WTD as an official UN international day.

South Africa is progressively realising the right of dignity through adequate sanitation provision. It is therefore important that as more households are provided with access to sanitary facilities like toilets; that

households are educated on how to maintain the facilities for sustainability. One of the areas that household are educated on is not to throw foreign objects in the toilets as it causes blockages in the case of technologies connected to the sewerage.

Providing access to basic toilets decreases disease twice as much as access to clean drinking water, however a clean and safe toilet ensures health, dignity and well-being. This campaign will therefore celebrate World Toilet Day, in a bid to profile sanitation and hygiene and celebrate the achievements in sanitation services delivery.





## MESSAGES

South Africa met the 2015 Millennium Development Goals of halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to improved sanitation as early as 2008. Health and hygiene education, as well as the provision of adequate sanitation services remains a priority to government. As part of continuous education, the following messages will be promoted during the 2016 sanitation campaign:

1. The provision of sanitation has restored dignity to millions of South Africans
2. Health and hygiene is important to everyone
3. Make hand washing a habit
4. Sanitation is dignity





