

Conserve water, it is the source of life

NATIONAL Water Week, which runs from March 21 to 27, is a reminder to use water wisely as South Africa is a water-scarce country. Water is central to all aspects of life – nothing survives without it, it is life and it has no substitute.

For a water-scarce country, National Water Week is a critical focus week that strengthens the call for responsible citizenry to conserve water and protect our water resources.

We need to use every available drop wisely as we cannot afford to lose it, especially due to irresponsible actions and behaviour.

Wise-water use and water resource protection are important to ensure reliable and sustainable water supply and lead to water security for current and future generations. This then calls for all of us to use the available water in a sparing manner and conserve as much as possible.

Water conservation is simply about using water wisely, preventing water losses by fixing leaks and reporting leaks in the bulk pipelines to the authorities, and preventing the pollution of water resources.

Everyone can conserve water, from individuals in households to businesses and industries. Water conservation means preventing water wastage and losses.

National Water Week also incorporates two important days – Human Rights Day on March 21 and World Water Day on March 22. These two days are crucial and intertwined with water, as access to water is a basic human right and World Water Day is a call to action, especially to governments, to prioritise water provision for all.

World Water Day is also a clarion call and reminder to ordinary people to respect water and ensure that everyone has access to the source of life.

The theme for World Water Day this year is “Groundwater – making the invisible visible”, to highlight the importance of groundwater as another vital source of water.

Groundwater is important to augment the surface water as a source of water, especially in a water-scarce country like ours, which receives less than the world average rainfall. We must therefore protect our environ-



WISE use is vital to conserve water.

ment to prevent the contamination of groundwater.

We must be responsible citizens and protect our water resources, as pollution is a major challenge to quality water supply.

Pollution negatively affects the quality of water, making it not fit for

use and at worst, deadly.

Pollution leads to the unnecessary loss of essential water, leaving communities with less and less water. Pollution is also deadly as it leads to water-borne diseases, kills aquatic life, is unsafe for humans, livestock and irrigation, and destroys the environment.

Being a responsible citizen means not turning a blind eye to water infrastructure vandalism, such as illegal connections, which leads to pipeline leaks, resulting in major water losses.

Vandalism happens in our communities and destroys lives.

Let National Water Week be a reminder that South Africa is a water-scarce country, and revive the responsibility in all of us to conserve water and protect our water resources to ensure the reliable and sustainable supply of quality, clean and healthy water for human, livestock, aquatic life and the environment at large.

The security of South Africa's water supply depends on us, so let us be responsible water users.

Themba Khoza works for the Department of Water and Sanitation

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