





# NATIONAL WATER WEEK 2018 CONCEPT DOCUMENT

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18 – 24 MARCH 2018







## RATIONALE

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The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) will be marking the World Water Day from 18 – 24 March under the national theme of 'Access to safe water by 2030 – possible through nature'. The national theme incorporates the Sustainable Development Goals with the aspirations of the Constitution of South Africa, whilst keeping the international theme.

During the 2018 celebrations of National Water Week, the Department takes note of the global climate change challenges which are reshaping the way in which one thinks about themselves, the societies as well as humanity's place on earth. Climate change is the environmental phenomenon, which has exacerbated the drought engulfing the country with at least three provinces namely Northern Cape, Eastern Cape and Western Cape recognized as provinces that require urgent drought support and intervention.

Climate change is one of the leading environmental conundrums faced in the 21st century. Its effects on the environment and human health are beyond imagination. Climate change also adds stress on the water sector, by affecting the quality of water and further reducing the availability of the already limited resource.

Climate change is a global problem requiring global solutions, achieved through the concerted and cooperative efforts of all countries. As a result, in 2011 the National Climate Change Response (NCCR) White Paper was approved by cabinet, which sets out the overall National Government response to the challenges of climate change. The NCCR decreed that all government departments to review their policies, strategies, legislations, regulations and plans within two years of its adoption.

In response, the Department of Water and Sanitation as the custodian of South Africa's water resource took a cue from COP17 and the National Climate Change Response White Paper in responding to this global phenomenon, by drafting the Water and Sanitation Sector Policy on Climate change.

This Policy advocates four different policy positions for the sector, which include:

- Adaptation;
- The role of Water and Sanitation in Mitigation;
- Mainstreaming Climate Change into the Sector and
- Reviewing costs and subsidies.

These policy positions seek to respond to the impacts of climate change on water and sanitation sector and are informed through the amalgamation of the country's Constitution, the National Environment Management Act (NEMA); the National Water Act (NWA); the National Water Resource Strategy 2 (NWRS 2) and the SDGs. Since the impact of climate change is global in scope, the Department of Water and Sanitation believes that global solutions must be found, with due consideration to regional and national conditions.

Taking this into account as well as the theme for 2018 National Water Week, the department will focus on the Nature Based Solutions (NBS) to the water challenges faced in the 21st century. The central message is that NBS such as planting trees to replenish forests, reconnecting rivers to floodplains, and restoring wetlands, is a sustainable and cost-effective way to help rebalance the water cycle, mitigate the effects of climate change and improve human health and livelihoods.

*Through this campaign a call is made to all South African to participate in this programme. The campaign highlights the importance of saving water, the protection of fresh water ecosystems and most importantly the exploration of nature based solutions for the water challenges.*

## LEGISLATION GOVERNING THE WATER SECTOR

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### **The Constitution of South Africa**

Section 27 (1) (b) of the Constitution of South Africa clearly articulates that everyone has the right to have access to sufficient food and water.

### **National Water Act (NWA) of 1998. and the Water Services Act of 1997**

The Acts are complementary and provide a framework for sustainable water resource management while enabling improved and broadened service delivery. The NWA is founded on the principle that all water forms part of a unitary, interdependent water cycle, and should thus be governed under consistent rules. It contains comprehensive provisions for the protection, use, development, conservation, management and control of South African water resources.

### **National Water Resource Strategy 2:**

The second edition of the National Water Resource Strategy bases its premise on sustainable, equitable and secure water for a better life and environment for all.

### **National Development Plan**

The plan was launched in 2012 and provides a detailed blueprint for how the country can eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by the year 2030. The national blueprint articulates that all South Africans will have affordable, reliable access to sufficient safe water and hygienic sanitation by 2030.





## OBJECTIVES OF THE NATIONAL WATER WEEK

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The objectives of the National Water Week are to strive through a collaborative effort and actively engage government departments, private companies, academia, community members and stakeholders in the sector in order to find solutions to water conservation, pollution, climate change including floods and droughts.

**The envisaged outcomes for National Water Week are as follows:**

- Advocate for the protection of water sources and the conservation of water resources
- Encourage behavioural change towards the use, management, conservation, development and protection of water resources.
- Foster dialogue within the sector of how the different players can work together to create solutions.
- To mitigate natural disasters such as droughts, floods, etc.



## APPROACH TO PROFILING IN THE MEDIA

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During the commemoration of National Water Week, communication will be rolled out on various media platforms including print, broadcast and social media. In addition to adverts, media engagements including media briefings and interviews will be held.

The Department will work with partners in local government, private sector as well as community members in elevating the discussions and thematic areas.

All platforms will be exploited in a bid to ensure maximum profiling of the thematic areas including online, print and broadcast.







## WAY FORWARD

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- To encourage entities, partners and stakeholders to participate in a new orientation around the country's water resources;
- The WWD 2018 campaign messages, materials and approaches will be available on the DWS website for downloading;
- To register community activities and events on water saving online on the website of the Department;
- Take and share photographs and other media from communities who are actively involved in saving water;
- To work with coporates on profiling their innovations in becoming more efficient water users.



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