



INTERNET ARTICLE

Developing and encouraging water ambassadors in celebration of National Water Month

24 March 2023

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), Mpumalanga Provincial Operations in partnership with the Inkomati-Usuthu Catchment Management Agency (IUCMA) celebrated the National Water Month by encouraging learners of The Gem Combined School in Msukaligwa Local Municipality to be responsible water users and water ambassadors in their communities on 17 March 2023.

This educational awareness celebration was held under the theme of the National Water Month “**Accelerating Change**” which seeks to inform policy and decision- makers, inside and outside of the water community of how improvements in water resources management as well as access to water supply and sanitation services are essential to overcoming poverty and addressing various other social and economic inequities.

The National Water Month is an important month in the DWS and South Africa’s calendar as it incorporates the National Water Week and is an expansion of World Water Day which is observed annually on 22 March, and focuses its attention on the importance of freshwater and advocating for the protection and sustainable management of freshwater resources.

The audience, which included learners, educators and other staff members in the school were educated about the relevance of observing the National Water Month and World Water Day, the importance wise water use and water conservation, and the protection of the water resources, especially as South Africa is a water scarce country.

Mr Themba Khoza from DWS Mpumalanga outlined the importance of the National Water Month and water conservation. “The National Water Month is an important month in the South African calendar as it includes Human Rights Day and World Water Day. Water is life. We all need water for all aspects of our lives. As the world observes World Water Day on 22 March, the Department of Water and Sanitation declared the whole month of March as the National Water Month to spread the message and create awareness on the importance of water for life. We must also remember that access to water is a basic human right therefore we need to put water advocacy on top of the agenda”, he said.

He further called on the audience to play an active role in water conservation taking into account that South Africa is a water scarce country. “South Africa is one of the driest and water scarce countries in the world and this makes wise and sparing water use important. Water

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conservation is critical for water security for the current and future generations. Always remember that water has no substitute therefore it is important to be responsible water users as every drop counts and a drop lost will never be recovered. Let us be ambassadors of water conservation, go home and share the message of using water wisely and sparingly with our families and friends”, he said.

Mr Thabiso Nkosi from the IUCMA called on the audience to protect water resources. “Please do not use our water resources as dumping sites as the waste you dump pollutes the water and negatively affects the water quality. Also don’t dump waste anywhere as that waste ends up in the water resources. Let us work together to protect our water resources and ensure reliable safe water supply for all”, he stated.

The foundation phase learners were given glasses to use when drinking water as a way to promote water conservation and to prevent water wastage.

High school learners were also introduced to careers and opportunities in the water and sanitation sector. The DWS/IUCMA team also engaged the Grade 12s on a motivational talk.

The school principal, Mr MP Nzima thanked the DWS/IUCMA delegation for considering his rural school for the awareness. He called on the learners to put special attention to the “**Water has no substitute**” message on the banner and to think about it every time they open tap.

Themba Khoza

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