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Government's efforts to provide clean water

Washing of hands with soap for at least 20 seconds and to sanitise hands or surface to manage the spread of the new Covid-19 (coronavirus), is the government's main message.

Some have rightly asked: what about those struggling and without access to the very same water they are encouraged to wash their hands with?

The government is fully aware of

this fact and it acknowledges that it is still grappling with the problem of water supply in some parts of the country.

Notwithstanding the speed at which government is expected to move in supplying this basic need, the prolonged periods of drought in various provinces and fast changing rainfall patterns due to climate change has been an Achilles heel.

The Department of Water and Sanitation is doing the best it can despite the competing demands faced by government.

However, there is a genuine concern from areas which are in extreme distress because of non-availability of water supply. For instance, the community of Hammanskraal, north of Pretoria, has raised a concern that of a lack of clean water in their area will have a negative impact on government's message to people to wash their hands constantly.

Since the declaration of the country's lockdown by President Cyril Ramaphosa, the Department of Water and Sanitation has swiftly

taken measures to ensure the provision of water to areas which have been struggling with water.

Minister of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation Lindiwe Sisulu has worked tirelessly with her team to identify areas that are at high risk of contracting the virus.

A plan was developed to provide water at drought-stricken areas and to also increase access to water for residents at informal settlements and hard to reach rural areas. Communal water storage with water collection points will be supplied to struggling communities.

With a country entering into a national 21-day lockdown, anxiety and fear has heightened among South Africans, but the leadership has called on all of us to heed the call and adhere to the regulations during this time.

This highly publicised practice of hand-washing should go a long way to ensure that diseases are minimised and sanitation is prioritised among South Africans.

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