

Let us teach our children to wash their hands too

By Marcus Monyakeni

According to health experts, washing of hands is one of the main fighting tool to curb the spread of COVID-19. Given this, the Department of Water and Sanitation has always been on the forefront, encouraging members of the public to wash their hands through their annual Sanitation Campaign.

The campaign, which is aimed to raise awareness about the benefits of handwashing, coincides with Global Handwashing Day (GHD) observed globally on the 15th of October each year. With the Coronavirus spreading like a wild fire across the world, we need to take it upon ourselves to actively prevent this by regularly washing our hands.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends 15-20 seconds of vigorous hand washing with soap and water to effectively kill and wash away viruses. However, a health study conducted by Michigan State University states that on average, men and women average just 6.27 to 7.07 seconds handwashing respectively.

Given the call by health professionals to improve

good hygiene practice, parents need to also inculcate this practise to their little ones. We need to start them young, especially as we are told that the pandemic is most possibly going to persist for over the next 12 months.

Proper handwashing, when practiced by mothers and birth attendants can also reduce neonatal mortality rates by almost 40%. In addition, handwashing with soap has been proven as the single most effective way to prevent diarrhoea and other hygiene related diseases as automatic behaviours performed in homes, schools, and communities.

Scaling up handwashing hygiene with soap, is estimated to prevent the deaths of many children, as well as to reduce substantially, the number of diarrhoeal incidences. Washing our hands with soap offer the opportunity to have a real impact. To help save our lives and of those around us, let us do what is right and teach our children to regularly wash their hands too.