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Let's save the little water we still have left

The Department of Water and Sanitation last week announced that it will implement an Emergency Drought Mitigation Plan of approximately R97 million in areas affected by drought in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

The announcement came as locals in areas such as uThukela, uMzinyathi, Amajuba, Zululand, uThungulu and uMgungundlovu continue to bear the brunt of drought. The plan contains long, medium and short term interventions which aim to mitigate drought effects. It is expected to be implemented in the next three to six months, beginning early next month.

Adding to the emergency plan, Deputy Minister David Mahlobo announced late last year during a mini-plenary debate in Parliament that Mhlathuze Water had embarked on major infrastructure upgrades. This included the commissioning of a 40-mega litre per day Water Treatment Plant to service the uMkhanyakude District with portable water.

This was done as an interim measure. The water utility also installed bore holes in those areas of uMkhanyakude, which were reported to be the worst affected by water scarcity. As high temperatures soar, drying out our water sources, the situation calls on all of us to become responsible water users

and save the little water we still have left.

With the department rolling up its sleeves to mitigate drought, each one of us should also play our role. It is the small changes everyone can make that can go a long way to contribute to the preservation of water and help minimise the dire effects of drought.

To save on the little water that we have available, these are some of the things that we can do:

- Harvest rain water when possible.
- Use grey water--used water from baths, washing machines and other safe sources to flush your toilet.
- Use a bucket rather than a hose to wash your car. If you have to use a hose, use a sprayer that can be turned off in-between spraying the car.
- Farmers must ensure that they keep toxic insecticides away from water sources and streams.
- Factories should take care of how they discharge mercury and other heavy metals into waste water.
- People living in rural areas should be careful not to use the river or river bank as a toilet.

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