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## Serving the dire need to wash hands

THE government's main message to manage the spread of Covid-19, is to wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and to sanitise surfaces.

Some have asked what about those struggling without access to water? They argued that water is a universal basic right that everyone is entitled to, therefore it is insensitive to say people must wash their hands.

The government acknowledges that it is still grappling with the problem of water supply in some parts. Prolonged periods of drought and fast-changing rainfall patterns due to climate change, have been an Achilles heel.

The Department of Water and Sanitation as a supplier of bulk water supply in the country, is doing the best it can despite the competing demands faced by the government.

Migration has stretched government resources.

The government has had to sensitise citizens on the cautious use of water. It has also intensified efforts to inculcate personal hygiene practices.

Many communities are distressed at the lack of access to water. For instance, the community of Hamman-skraal, north of Pretoria, is deeply concerned about the lack of clean water. This will affect their washing hands practice.

The Minister of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation, Lindiwe Sisulu has worked tirelessly with her



MINISTER of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation Lindiwe Sisulu at the water summit. She has worked tirelessly with her team on a plan to provide water for drought-stricken areas. | PHANDO JIKELO African News Agency (ANA)

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 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. Public places will also be targeted to heighten health and hygiene campaigns to

minimise the spread of the virus.

With the rapid spread of Covid-19; the country's drastic measures to contain the spread of the virus are welcomed. The households, communities and the government have shown commitment to adapt to this new reality.

The message of upholding good hygiene by washing hands is on every citizen's mouth, and is practised at supermarkets, public transport and

the workplace.

With a country entering into a national 21-day lockdown, anxiety and fear has heightened. The leadership has called on us to adhere to regulations during this time.

Let us hope that at the end of this hiatus, there will be a drop of infections to zero and a change in behaviour for all the citizens.

SANKU TSUNKKE | The Department of Water and Sanitation