



A FISHERMAN tries his luck underneath the bridge on the polluted Vaal Dam, near Vanderbijlpark. Residents complain that the water coming from the Vaal River stinks. | **BONILE BAM** African News Agency (ANA)

Water is key to SA's economic recovery

THE National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) confirmed the first Covid-19 case on March 5. Ever since, we have witnessed the spread of the pandemic across South Africa.

While the collateral damage is yet to be assessed, there are suggestions that the economy is expected to contract by 7%-10% this year. It is estimated 1 million jobs will be shed. The question is, how will different sectors contribute to post Covid-19 recovery?

There are two discussion documents on how to turn around economic growth. In both, water is a flywheel by which Department of Water and Sanitation will assist South Africa in growing the economy.

In one of the plans, it is suggested that there is a need to implement measures to increase water availability and prevent wastage, as well as the construction of new dams and related water infrastructure. Linked to this is the implementation of programmes for water resource protection. Across the country, an overloaded and poorly maintained sanitation system calls for massive expansion and maintenance.

Judging from the discussion documents, it is clear the government and other sectors have concluded that water infrastructure is a key enabler of inclusive growth. | **SPUTNIK RATAU** Acting chief director, spokesperson: Department of Water and Sanitation