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CAPEARGUS OPINION

As we approach the dry winter season, it is high time we use the available water wisely



'Water security is in our hands. We need to use the available water wisely, sparingly and in a more conservative manner, especially as water resources are shrinking and populations are growing.' Photo: Jason Boud



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The dry winter season is upon us in most parts of the country. Most of the country normally receives rainfall during summer except the Western Cape, which receives rainfall in winter.

As we approach the dry winter season, it is high time we use the available water wisely and sparingly, and prioritise water conservation in everything we do, especially as South Africa is a water-scarce and dry country.

As South Africa is one of the 30 driest countries in the world and receives about half the world average in terms of rainfall, we should prioritise the conservative and wise use of precious water and prevent water losses. Let us remember that every drop counts as water has no substitute.

We are also faced with the reality of climate change which has a major impact on water availability. Climate change has changed rainfall patterns. This has led to less rain and brought with it high temperatures that cause evaporation, leading to water loss in water resources. This calls for responsibility and behavioural change in our water use, to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change.

Water security is in our hands. We need to use the available water wisely, sparingly and in a more conservative manner, especially as water resources are shrinking and populations are growing. Population growth means the need for more water to cater to everyone. We need to be more water-savvy in our water use to ensure that everyone has access to the source of life.

Water conservation is everybody's business and if we work together, we can prevent the unnecessary wastage and losses that are threatening the water security of our water-scarce country. Working together, we can save more water and contribute to reliable water supply and security.

Advocacy is also important to build responsible and water-savvy communities that value every drop. It is important that we create awareness about water conservation and make it part of our culture. The more we talk about it, the more it will become entrenched in our daily lives and become part of our routine.

As responsible residents, we must also report leaks on the bulk water supply pipes. The municipalities and other authorities responsible for water supply must ensure they speedily fix the leaks.

Municipalities must also prioritise operations and maintenance to ensure that the water supply runs smoothly and prevent unnecessary water outages to communities. Leaks have been identified as major contributors to water losses, therefore, we need to ensure that they are sorted out as soon as they are identified.

We must always protect and prevent the pollution of our water resources as pollution is a major threat to water security. Pollution negatively affects water quality, leading to less water fit for use.

We all have a role to play in ensuring a reliable and sustainable water supply for all. All we need do is be responsible citizens and water users who prioritise water conservation and the protection of water resources.

Let us remember that water security for our generation and future generations is in our hands.

** Themba Khoza, Department of Water and Sanitation, Mbombela.*

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