





Water Polluters Must Be Held Accountable

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Pollution is a major problem affecting the environment, especially water resources, and it can no longer be allowed to continue on its destructive path. It must stop. South Africa being a dry and water-scarce country cannot afford the continuous pollution of water resources, as every drop counts, because water has no substitute.

The pollution of water resources is a man-made problem that is basically the result of irresponsible human behaviour and actions. This then calls for all those responsible for the pollution and destruction to be taken to task and held liable for their irresponsible actions. Polluters must be exposed, named and shamed.

Pollution poses a serious threat to water security. It simply means the loss of precious water, which a country like South Africa cannot afford. This calls for everyone to play a role in preventing pollution and contributing towards water security for the current and future generations.

The pollution of water negatively affects the health and socio-economic development of communities. It leads to water quality challenges, leading to waterborne diseases, poor quality or the loss of crops, the death of animals and aquatic species, and environmental degradation.

The major challenge currently facing South Africa is sewer spillages, which pollute the country's water resources. This is basically the result of blocked sewer pipes and dysfunctional wastewater treatment plants. The Department of Water and Sanitation, as the custodian of water resources and the National Water Act, is pushing hard to enforce compliance by issuing notices, directives and even opening criminal cases against all transgressors who pollute the water resources.

Recent court judgments and the continuing opening of criminal cases against some municipalities who contribute to the pollution of water resources reaffirms the regulatory role of the Department of Water and Sanitation. All water users need to comply with the prescripts of the National Water Act to help reduce the challenges of pollution. These recent judgments show that the pollution of water resources cannot be tolerated.

The department is doing its best to prevent the pollution of water resources and hold water polluters accountable, but it also needs the help of the public. They must report any water resource pollution incidents to the department. Let us all work together to hold polluters accountable. Polluters must pay.

Individuals also have a critical role to play. We need to stop using our water resources, especially rivers and streams, as waste dumpsites where we dump all kinds of waste, including disposable nappies and dead animals. This is no different from the spilling of raw sewage into the water resources. Let us report sewer spillages to protect our water resources and hold the relevant authorities responsible and accountable.

By Themba Khoza from Department of Water and Sanitation

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