

# Access to basic services key to women empowerment

**Gugu Myeni**

ACCESS to basic services such as water, proper sanitation and hygiene are crucial for women empowerment and development.

This is according to Mpumalanga Department of Water and Sanitation's (DWS) Themba Khoza, who believes violating these basic human rights negatively affects women's development and safety.

“Water is central to all aspects of life, therefore it is crucial that communities have access to water to relieve women of the challenges of walking distances and exposure to dangers to fetch water for their families.

“Government is doing its best to bring water closer to communities and this is helping empower and develop women in the country,” said Khoza.

“We must stand up as communities against water infrastructure vandalism as it stalls development and negatively affects women empowerment.

“Infrastructure vandalism takes communities and the country backwards and denies people access to water.

“Access to water is a human right, so let us not allow a few vandals to infringe our basic human right.”

This was also recently emphasised by DWS Minister Pemmy Majodina who said the department is exhausting all efforts to ensure more women participation in the



Access to water infrastructure crucial to relieve women of the challenges of walking distances to collect water

sector.

“This year, as we celebrate 30 years of freedom and democracy, the month also serves as an opportunity for the water sector to reflect on how women in particular are affected by a lack of access to clean water and safe sanitation.

“Normally, they bear the brunt of the burden of fetching water from afar when they do not have access to clean running water,” said Majodina.

She said they are working to ensure women are equally represented in the sector and have access to available opportunities.

“As a sector, we will ensure women’s emancipation remains one of our key focus areas, in line with the government’s constitutional responsibility and national priority to protect, promote and advance the rights of women in all areas of the economy.”