

OPINION



THEMBA KHOZA

ENJOY THE RIGHT
TO WATER IN A
RESPONSIBLE
MANNER

IT IS THAT week again when we put human rights and water in the spotlight. As a country, we celebrate Human Rights Day on 21 March and then join the world in celebrating World Water Day on the 22nd.

This week basically shows the interconnectedness between human rights and water. Water is life and a catalyst for socio-economic development and this makes access to clean and safe water a basic human right.

This year we celebrate these special days at the backdrop of full dams and swelling rivers as a result of significant rainfall across the country.

In as much as we have enough water in storage and in our water resources, it is important to remember that South Africa is a water scarce country in the top 30 of driest countries in the world.

It is therefore important that we all become responsible citizens and use the available water wisely and sparingly to ensure that everyone has access to the source of life and the water lasts longer, especially as we head into the dry winter season in most parts of the country.

This year World Water Day is celebrated under the theme “Glacier Preservation”, which aims to highlight the fact that glaciers are melting rapidly, disrupting water flows and affecting millions through floods, droughts, and rising sea levels.

For a country like South Africa, it raises the importance of adapting and mitigating the effects of climate change to protect communities and ecosystems for sustainable water supply.

World Water Day 2025 emphasises the need for global action to manage meltwater sustainably and other water resources by reducing emissions, and securing vital water resources for the future.

South Africa is a water scarce country and this water scarcity is exacerbated by an escalating demand due to economic and population growth, urbanisation and rising standards of living, unsustainable use and high levels of wastage and loss, as well as increasing pollution which renders water unfit for use.

This means that water must be used sparingly and water resources and infrastructure protected and safeguarded at all times.

We need to always remember that every human right is accompanied by responsibilities. Every drop counts to ensure water security for the current and future generations.

It is therefore our responsibility to ensure that no precious drop of water is unnecessarily lost by fixing leaks and reporting leaks in the bulk lines to the relevant authorities for urgent attention.

Local authorities have the obligation to ensure the enjoyment of the basic right of access to water for all residents. This then calls for the authorities to invest in infrastructure development, operations and maintenance to prevent unnecessary breakdowns leading to people without water.

As much as we all need our basic right to clean and safe water fulfilled, we have the responsibility to protect and safeguard our water supply infrastructure.