

# Everyone has a right to clean water; don't pollute it

By **Themba Khoza**

Access to clean water is a basic human right. As we celebrate Human Rights Month and National Water Month in our country in the month of March, it is crucial that every person has sustainable access to clean and healthy water. Water is life and access to clean and healthy water leads to healthy communities.

People have a right to live in a healthy and sustainable environment. Rivers and all other watercourses are essential in providing the most precious resource which is also the source of life. It is therefore crucial to keep the environment, especially water resources, clean and healthy at all times.

It is heartbreaking to see that some communities have transformed our water resources into waste-dumping sites. The pollution of water resources has a

seriously negative effect of the availability of clean and healthy water and this violates the basic human right of access to clean and healthy water for the public.

People need to understand that it is everybody's responsibility to ensure a clean and healthy environment, especially when it comes to water resources because as much as it is everybody's right to clean water, it is also everybody's responsibility to ensure that everyone has access to clean and healthy water.

In as much as clean and healthy watercourses give life, there is one major threat which turns rivers, streams and other watercourses into death traps, and that is pollution.

Pollution is a major threat to clean, healthy and free-flowing rivers and it is a man-made problem that can be rectified by people becoming responsible in

their behaviour and actions and thereby upholding everyone's right to clean water.

Pollution of water resources makes them unsightly and negatively affects the water quality. The dumping of waste in our rivers reduces the water quality in our water ecosystems.

Pollution negatively affects the water quality thereby also affecting the quantity of water fit for use. This basically translates to the loss of precious water, denying people access to water.

Sewer spillages are another major risk to the provision of clean and healthy water to communities. It is therefore crucial for municipalities to ensure that their waste water treatment plants are always well maintained and function optimally at all times as sewer spillages are dangerous to the watercourses, the environment,

animals and humans.

Sewer spillages lead to the build-up of e-coli in water resources, making the water unhealthy and unfit for human consumption. This is dangerous and can lead to unnecessary deaths of people.

SA is water scarce and one of the driest countries in the world, which makes every drop of water count.

It is therefore important that we protect our water resources from all forms of pollution to ensure that every individual enjoys the basic human right to clean, healthy and sustainable water.

Let us respect our rivers, streams, dams and all other watercourses and always ensure that they are protected from pollution to ensure access to sustainable clean water for everyone in this water-scarce country.

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