

# Let us play our part to ensure every citizen enjoys access to water

**Themba Khoza writes:**

March is an important month in South Africa as we celebrate Human Rights Day as well as National Water Month. It is the month in which we remind one another of our human rights and also the importance and centrality of water to life, especially as South Africa is a water-scarce country that ranks among the driest in the world.

Governments have the responsibility to provide access to clean and sufficient water to citizens. It is also the responsibility of the public to ensure everyone has access by using the available water wisely, efficiently and in a more conservative manner. We must also monitor water supply projects to ensure



they deliver.

To ensure undisrupted water supply to communities and to prevent unnecessary breakdowns, operations and maintenance must be implemented. Lack of maintenance also leads to major water losses, meaning clean and purified water goes to waste.

As community members, we must also protect our water infrastructure and prevent vandalism, as this denies communities access to this most precious resource. Illegal connections are a major problem as the pressure is negatively affected which leads to communities in high-lying areas being without water. Another major problem related to vandalism is the tampering with bulk valves. Vandalism happens in our midst, so let us stop turning a blind eye; let us protect the infrastructure and report culprits to the authorities.

As not all communities in South Africa have access to tap water in their households or within immediate reach, some people are provided water through tankers. Municipalities and all other authorities that contract water tankers must do thorough monitoring of the services, as some tankers sell the free water to community members.

The basic right of access to water is more important now than ever before, as we are faced with the deadly Covid-19 which requires the regular washing of hands as one of the key preventive measures. This requires reliable water supply, meaning access to water for everyone is crucial.

Universal access to water for everyone depends on working together, therefore, let us as communities and government work together to ensure the reliable supply of quality water for everyone. Our behaviour and actions will ensure reliable water access for every citizen.

Water is life, so let us all play our part to ensure that every citizen enjoys the basic human right of access to this precious resource.