



MEDIA STATEMENT

DWS celebrates Water Month

3 March 2021

The 1 March 2021 marks the beginning of the annual Water Month celebrations in major parts of the country by the Department of Water and Sanitation. The highlight of the virtual celebrations will be the National Water Week (NWW) which takes place from 16th to 22nd March 2021.

The awareness week also includes the celebration of World Water Day on the 22nd of March that enables South Africans to join the international community to commemorate this historical day in the water sector. The theme of the day is “valuing water” to conscientise water users about the value of water from the economic and social points of view.

The awareness campaign is aimed at educating the public about their responsibility in water conservation initiatives, as well as raising awareness around the need to protect and conserve the country’s water resources.

However, this year’s celebration of Water Month comes against the background of the outbreak of the deadly COVID-19, a pandemic that has claimed many lives here and abroad since the beginning of 2020. The pandemic has increased the demand for water as everyone is expected to wash their hands frequently to minimize its impact.

South Africa is a water scarce country and named one of the 30 driest countries in the world; with a rapidly increasing population. The country’s rainfall is unpredictable and common periods of drought limit the water resources even further. This is also due to the impact of Climate Change. According to water scientists, years from now the demand for water might exceed the amount of available water in our country. This means that we must use and share our water more effectively.

In South Africa water is a basic human right for all and it is entrenched in the country’s Constitution. The South African water resources are managed by the Department of Water and Sanitation to improve the quality of life of all South Africans. Since 1994 government has been hard at work to ensure that all South Africans have access to water.

The 2021 campaign raises among others the challenges noted in the National Water and Sanitation Master Plan, such as insufficient water, infrastructure maintenance and investment, recurrent droughts caused by climate change, inequities in access to water and sanitation plus water quality. Through the NWW, the Department strives to cooperate and actively engage with stakeholders to find solutions to these.

Against this background, the Department of Water and Sanitation would like to urge all South Africans to continue saving water as a precious and scarce resource.

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water & sanitation

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Water and Sanitation
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