water & sanitation
Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

World Toilet Day 2025: Deputy Minister Seitlholo encourages Water Services Authorities to consider innovative solutions to provide decent sanitation services to their communities

21 November 2025

In the third leg of Sanitation Month Campaign coinciding with World Toilet Day on 19 November in the province of KwaZulu Natal, Water and Sanitation Deputy Minister, Sello Seitlholo, encouraged Water Services Authorities to adopt technological innovations that will provide alternative sanitation solutions in order to improve water efficient basic sanitation services, particularly to the communities that do not have conventional waterborne sanitation systems.

Deputy Minister Seitlholo went on a two-day (19-20 November) oversight visit to assess innovative sanitation projects jointly undertaken by the Department of Water and Sanitation, Water Research Commission (WRC), the University of KwaZulu Natal and eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality, that are meant to provide improved and dignified sanitation services to the communities of eThekwini.

The *Sanitation Month* campaign, led by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) began on 15 October on Global Hand Washing Day to encourage safe hygienic practises by constantly washing hands, particularly after using the toilet. It concluded on 19 November 2025 with the commemoration of World Toilet Day, which focussed on breaking the taboo of talking about sanitation and to also raise awareness of the consequences of lack of sanitation.

World Toilet Day seeks to raise awareness of the 3.4 billion people living without access to safe toilets globally and to accelerate action to tackle the global sanitation crisis.

As part of World Toilet Day commemoration, Deputy Minister Seitlholo visited Shallcross informal settlement that has over 50 households which had existing community ablution blocks (CABs), which are equipped with flush toilets, hand-washing basins, showers, and external laundry facilities.

The ablution blocks use Water Efficient Sanitation System (WESS) known as Aquonic Sanitation System. This system does not use potable (drinking) water for flushing but uses recycled and treated water for sanitation facilities, thus saving water.

WRC Chief Executive Officer, Dr Jennifer Molwantwa explained that the WESS is a modular and decentralised Wastewater Treatment system that turns blackwater and greywater into pathogen-free reusable water that can be used for toilet flushing and irrigation, utilizing biological and electro-chemical processes. She further said the system provides flushing sanitation solutions to unplanned, informal, or remote/rural areas where municipal sewer sanitation networks are not available or overloaded.

“The system prevents the use of potable (drinking water) for flushing and but uses recycled, treated water which ultimately saves water. It is an ideal solution to retrofit with an existing septic tank to improve the quality of discharged water, and it is also climate resilient based on its modular design and its manufacturing approach and can be deployed rapidly to cater for sanitation when floods wash aways existing systems”, she said.

Deputy Minister Seitlholo further visited the two technological innovations led by the UKZN’s Water and Sanitation & Hygiene Research and Development Centre (WASH R&D CENTRE),

The first one is a Decentralised Wastewater Treatment Systems (DEWATS), a practical, community-level solutions for managing and treating wastewater. It is designed to treat wastewater closer to the community rather than transporting it to a centralised Waste Water Treatment Plant. DEWATS provides a viable path to improved sanitation in rural, peri-urban, and informal settlements where large-scale municipal infrastructure is neither feasible nor sustainable. It is off-grid and requires low energy and low maintenance as it often relies on gravity flow and natural processes.

The second one based at KwaMashu Waste Water Treatment Plant, is Latrine Dehydration and Pasteurisation (LaDePa) technology that is used to treat mainly faecal sludge from on-site sanitation systems to produce dry pellets that are safe to handle and can be used as a soil conditioner. This technology essentially turns a waste problem into a potential agricultural resource such as fertiliser while significantly minimising environmental pollution

Deputy Minister Seitlholo said such advanced faecal sludge management technologies can assist some municipalities as most of them are struggling to treat and dispose sludge as mandated by DWS’ Sludge Management Strategy and the compulsory Norms and Standards on basic sanitation services.

“Most municipalities are struggling to maintain sludge management in a sustainable manner at their waste water treatment plants and to manage faecal sludge from VIP toilets particularly in rural communities and this pose water pollution and public health concerns. These innovations provide efficient treatment of faecal sludge that can turn unsanitary waste product into valuable resources which offers both environmental and economic benefits”, said Deputy Minister Seitlholo.

Deputy Minister Seitlholo said DWS in collaboration with WRC is at the forefront of ensuring that alternative solutions to sanitation to South Africans.

“South Africa is a water-scarce country and has almost 17% of its population that sill do not have dignified sanitation. I therefore encourage municipalities to using these the decentralised systems to provide decent and cost-effective sanitation services to communities using very little water. These solutions demonstrate the power of collaboration between government and private institutions to provide equitable access to sanitation for South Africans”, he said.

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Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation For more information, contact DWS Head of Communications, Dr Mandla Mathebula on 083 235 8675/ MathebulaM@dws.gov.za

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