



# WATER MONTH 2021

## VALUING WATER



**water & sanitation**

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



# Department of Water & Sanitation NATIONAL WATER MONTH CAMPAIGN 2021

The Department celebrates the National Water Week (NWW) annually in March which is actually commemorated throughout the month. This year the NWW takes place from 15 to 22 March, against the backdrop of the World Water Day on 22 March.

This year's theme is:

## “Valuing water”

# 1. BACKGROUND

According to the South African Constitution, Section 27(1)(b) the right to access to sufficient water is accorded to everyone. Water is a basic Human Right for all as entrenched in the South African 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, the government has been hard at work in ensuring that all South Africans have access to water.

In 1993, the United Nations designated 22 March as the World Water Day with a focus on the importance of fresh water and to raise awareness of the billions of people living without access to clean and safe water. This day is about taking action to decisively deal with water challenges facing the globe.

The Department of Water and Sanitation takes this opportunity of the United Nations' World Water Day to embark on a month long awareness campaign annually on activities that seek to educate the general public and stakeholders about the importance of water and conservation.

The Department does have a special focus for a week on the National Water Week activities from 15 – 22 March with activities that build up to the World Water Day. The focus is about taking action to tackle the global water crisis and achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030.

The theme of the World Water Day 2021 is 'valuing water'. This theme aims to understand how people value water whether it is economically, socially, culturally or in other ways as well as how it plays a role in their lives.

South Africa is a water scarce country and named one of the 30 driest countries in the world; with a rapidly increasing population. South Africa'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. 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.

The National Development Plan launched in 2012 provides a detailed blueprint for how the country can eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by the year 2030. The national blueprint articulates that all South Africans will have affordable, reliable access to sufficient safe water and hygienic sanitation by 2030. The NWW Campaign also seeks to push this agenda forward.

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.

This year's Water Month campaign comes during a difficult period in our country and the world in general, when we are facing the second wave of the novel Coronavirus pandemic. While water plays an important role in fighting the virus, the devastating effects of the virus have made the world to change the way things are done and a new normal is now in place.



UN WATER  
22 MARCH  
WORLD  
WATER  
DAY

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How does water  
play a role in your  
cultural practices?



## 2. RATIONALE

Some parts of the country such as areas of the Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, Free State and Limpopo continue to face acute water challenges as a result of drought phenomenon elsewhere and inadequate infrastructural challenges elsewhere. This has resulted in certain communities facing serious water challenges. Thus, the Department has intervened in some of these areas by allocating funds for procurement of water tanks and tankers, drilling of boreholes and maintenance of the existing water infrastructure to ease the burden on communities.

Therefore, the National Water Week comes at an opportune time, when the country and the globe is still faced by the deadly coronavirus pandemic. This pandemic has asked serious questions about the state of water infrastructure in many countries, including South Africa. Water, as declared by the World Health Organisation plays a major role in fighting the pandemic, with the regular washing of hands seen as the most effective way of reducing the spread.

This talks to the importance of water in our lives and the value attached to water and whether are we as governments, civil society, businesses, industries and as individuals valuing water?

The National Water and Sanitation Master Plan is very explicit about the state of our infrastructure, that it is inadequate and it needs total overhaul. Last year, the Department presented a report before the Portfolio Committee in Parliament that South Africa loses billions of rands due to water leaks as a result of infrastructure that is a state of decay. The Master Plan has further noted that South Africa uses more than the world average.

All these are at the heart of the manner in which we treat water, are we valuing water?

The campaign therefore needs to advocate for a cultural change in which we see water from government in all spheres and other sectors of the society.



UN WATER  
22 MARCH  
WORLD  
WATER  
DAY

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What role does water play in  
your home, workplace or school?

### 3. LEGISLATION GOVERNING THE WATER SECTOR

#### The Constitution of South Africa

Section 27 (1) (b) of the Constitution of South Africa clearly articulates that everyone has the right to have access to sufficient food and water.

#### National Water Act (NWA) of 1998 and the Water Services Act of 1997

The Acts are complementary and provide a framework for sustainable water resource management while enabling improved and broadened service delivery. The NWA is founded on the principle that all water forms part of a unitary, interdependent water cycle, and should thus be governed under consistent rules. It contains comprehensive provisions for the protection, use, development, conservation, management and control of the South African water resources.

#### National Water and Sanitation Master Plan

Sets out the critical priorities to be addressed by the water sector until 2030. It also sets out annual measurable outcomes inclusive of roles and responsibilities, time frames and associated estimated costs.

#### National Development Plan

The plan was launched in 2012 and provides a detailed blueprint for how the country can eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by the year 2030. The national blueprint articulates that all South Africans will have affordable, reliable access to sufficient safe water and hygienic sanitation by 2030.



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22 MARCH  
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What role will water play in  
your future?



## 4. OBJECTIVES

The 2021 National Water Month campaign's objectives are to:

- To highlight the importance of water
- To encourage communities to value and save water
- To actively engage stakeholders to find solutions to water challenges facing South Africa

## 5. KEY MESSAGES

- South Africa is a water scarce country with below than normal rains
- Water users must save water to ensure water security
- Vandalism of water infrastructure leads is a criminal offence and it must be reported
- Development and maintenance of water infrastructure is government's priority
- Efficient water use ensures a reliable supply, which in turn improves the quality of life of all South Africans, and promote economic development
- Water is life and it needs to be valued



UN WATER  
22 MARCH  
WORLD  
WATER  
DAY

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What do you use  
the most water for?



## 6. WATER MONTH PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN COMMUNITIES

This campaign will have a focus on creating awareness about the value of water within the communities through all possible means while adhering to the COVID-19 protocols. Communities with water need to be guided on water saving tips while communities without water need to be informed of water delivery progress in their area.

## 7. WATER MONTH MEDIA PLAN

During the commemoration of the National Water Week, communication will be rolled out on various media platforms including print, broadcast and social media. In addition to this, adverts, media engagements, media briefings and interviews will also be held.

Regions will hold their respective media activities/briefings to highlight their plans, successes, state of infrastructure as well as current water levels and usage patterns by water users. The messaging should be able to ensure that even those without water are assured that they will have reliable access to safe water in the future.

All platforms will be exploited in a bid to ensure maximum profiling of the thematic areas including online, print and broadcast. With Lockdown regulations in place, communicators will be encouraged to explore virtual platforms to host media briefings/breakfast networking sessions to commemorate and raise awareness during the National Water Week.



[www.worldwaterday.org](http://www.worldwaterday.org) #Water2me

How does water affect the food  
you eat?



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