



## INTERNET ARTICLE

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### Minister Sisulu calls for citizens to value water during the annual Stockholm World Water Week official opening

Minister Lindiwe Sisulu on Monday, 25 August 2020 joined several water ministers across the globe to officially open this year's session of the Stockholm World Water Week, which is being hosted virtually as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

Speaking during a Ministerial panel discussion with her counterparts from Colombia, Netherland, Sweden and President Macky Sall from Senegal, Minister Sisulu said the advent of the novel coronavirus put a strain on the country's already ailing water infrastructure.

She said that South Africa is still experiencing the imbalance of equal distribution of resources such as water and attributed this partly to the country's darkest years of apartheid.

"Our country has suffered an imbalance during the dark days of which many of you know of. The results are so embedded in infrastructure because those who historically had power benefited first, so it will take a bit of time to ensure the benefits reach every corner of the population," Minister Sisulu said.

She however said the new dispensation was doing its best to rewrite the wrongs and has improved its efforts to ensure water security for all.

Since 1994, access to water supply increased from only 55.1% of households having access to 88% in 2019.

"This is the basis that I relate the backlog that we are still trying to deal with, which currently remains a moving target. This is a remarkable feat noting the fact that the population increased from 40.56 million (1994) to 58.7 million in 2019," she added.

Minister Sisulu further noted that as part of the country's intervention to curb the spread of COVID 19, the Department of Water and Sanitation has establishment a National Command Centre which oversees the distribution of water tanks and tankers distributed to communities with dire water challenges.

She said this was an immediate measure to help address challenges posed by the virus. As part of the long-term interventions, Minister Sisulu said the Department would implement the National Water and Sanitation Master Plan, which spells out the country's plan to secure water for all by 2030 and beyond.

She also maintained that the Department is working with one of its entities, the Water Research Commission (WRC) to come up with innovative ways to improve the provision of water and sanitation services across the country.





## water & sanitation

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“The South African government is doing its utmost best to ensure that all its population has water. This is an opportune time for all of us to start valuing water, not only in a crisis, but even beyond,” she concluded.

World Water Week is an annual conference focusing on global water issues, presently underway from 24-28 August 2020. The World Water Week At Home initiative aims to fast-track action on climate change and start a new kind of global dialogue after Covid-19.

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