



## INTERNET ARTICLE

### **Mandela's Legacy: Gauteng schools get hand washing facilities in fight against coronavirus**

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As part of Mandela Day celebrations, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) in Gauteng has joined forces with WaterAid South Africa, Unicef, Water and Sanitation Community Forums to provide hand hygiene facilities to four schools in Gauteng Province. These facilities will assist in the fight against COVID-19, among the learners who have been encouraged to constantly wash their hands with soap and water.

Mandela Day resonates with people globally. It is an opportunity to honour Madiba's legacy and vision with a commitment to 67 minutes of community service. Inspired by Nelson Mandela's example, the call is simple: take action and inspire change, in a way that acknowledges his 67-year struggle for social and economic justice in our country.

Former President Nelson Mandela was a thought leader in education and inspired millions around the world to value education. He inspired change in society and encouraged people to empower themselves through education.

"Freedom alone is not enough without light to read at night, without time or access to safe water, without the ability to catch fish to feed your family." These are the immortal words of our former president Nelson Mandela, whose life's work will be celebrated this Mandela Day.

Ms Reshoketswe Malepe, from Gauteng DWS's Water Services Support said we are responding to the spread of COVID-19 in the most vulnerable health centers and communities in the province. As the pandemic continues, we need to do more right now to protect as many of those at risk as possible, particularly in places with already fragile health systems.

"Working together with organisations like WaterAid and Unicef is important. Together we can provide people with clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene. Without all these three, people can't live a dignified, healthy lives. With all three, the deprived people can unlock their potential, break free from poverty, and change their lives for good," said Ms Malepe.

Mrs Malepe communities with good sanitation and hygiene practices thrive, even during difficult situations. "Children that are born in communities with clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene, grow up healthier. They get the chance to go to school and grow up to become adults that are healthy. Women and men also get to earn a living and their lives become sustainable", she pointed out.

She further reiterated that the Department is proud to support these schools and this in turn brings about change and transformation in the community for generations to come. She said no one should be denied access to clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene.

"The global pandemic has touched everyone, but the impact has been most felt in under-resourced communities. Our children need us now more than ever. The devastating impact of COVID-19 has threatened children's basic rights. In light of lockdown levels, restrictions and social distancing. The department (DWS), WaterAid and Unicef South Africa has realised that our individual commitment to '67 minutes' will need to look a little different this year," concluded Ms Malepe.

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