



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE

DWS in Gauteng rolled up sleeves as part of World Cleanup Day 2021

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On Saturday, 18 September 2021, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) in Gauteng joined the Alexandra community, Alexandra Ambassador Greater Alexandra Tourism and Heritage, to clean-up Juskei River in Alexandra.

World Cleanup Day is an annual global social action program aimed at combating the global solid waste problem, including the problem of marine debris. It is coordinated by the global organization *Let's Do It! World*.

According to the World Cleanup Day website, last year's campaign saw more than 11 million people from 166 countries gather at beaches, along rivers, on the streets and in forests to help clean up the world.

DWS's Senior Communication Officer, Mr Khulekani Ngcobo, said littering and dumping of waste has become one of the environmental issues contributing to pollution and poor water quality in rivers, dams and oceans.

"Poor waste management practices lead to the rise of illegal dumping sites in residential areas and vacant open spaces. Without effective waste collection, an avalanche of debris ends up in rivers and oceans", said Mr Ngcobo.

Mr Ngcobo said the goal is to clean up as much (plastic) litter as possible and raise awareness of the impacts of plastic pollution. A significant amount of waste and litter, especially plastics, ends up in rivers and flows out into our oceans polluting ecosystems and food chains, and harming wildlife.

The Alexandra Forum Ambassador, Mr Thabo Mopasa, said today's water challenges call for cooperation and the exchange of knowledge and expertise. At the end of the day, being able to give back and have a positive impact on something bigger is the most important thing to do.

"As advocates for clean water and water management, the Alexandra is committed to working together to create a water-secure and sustainable world, of which healthy rivers and oceans are a vital component", said Mr Mopasa.

Mr Mopasa highlighted that, recycling reduces waste that is deposited into water sources, which pose risks to ecosystems. Waste is no longer trash that needs to go to dumping sites but it is a resource that can be income generating.

"Despite the apparent success of the clean-up campaign, many people ask us why we continue to organize cleanups when most likely, waste will go back to where it was after a couple of weeks, sometimes even a couple of days. I confess that I used to ask myself the same question when I started. World Cleanup Day allows us to open people's eyes to the need of their participation when it comes to ensuring that solid waste management works in their communities. It is an open door to conversations about community-based zero waste models," concluded Mopasa.

Khulekani Ngcobo