



## INTERNET ARTICLE

### DWS Mpumalanga celebrates Global Handwashing Day with the community of Lekwa

24 October 2022

The Department of Water and Sanitation in partnership with Lekwa Local Municipality, Gert Sibande District Municipality and Seriti Resources reminded the community of the importance of regularly washing hands by celebrating Global Handwashing Day through a public educational and awareness creation event at the Standerton Community Hall on 20 October 2022.

The Global Handwashing Day is celebrated annually across the globe on 15 October. The campaign encourages people to wash hands with soap and is meant to inspire all partners to spread the gospel of washing hands with soap and water to prevent the spread of germs and viruses that causes diseases. This year, Global Handwashing Day was celebrated under the theme **“Unite for Universal Hand Hygiene”**, which is a call for collective action to ensure clean hands for everyone. Global Handwashing Day advocates for a culture of regular handwashing as hand hygiene is everybody’s business. Taking the theme further, DWS came up with a subtheme and key message **“Clean Hands, a Recipe for Health”** which promotes handwashing for a healthy nation.

Hands are important for survival in our lives, but they can also be deadly if not taken care of. We need to take care of our hands and ensure that they are always clean to prevent the spread of diseases. Clean hands prevent the spread of diseases and saves lives. That is the main reason we must regularly wash our hands with soap and water to always keep them clean and healthy. Handwashing with soap and water is an easy, effective, and affordable way to prevent the spread of diseases.

Mr Richard Mbambo, the manager of the Sanitation Unit in the Department of Water and Sanitation Mpumalanga Provincial Office outlined the purpose of celebrating the Global Handwashing Day. “Hands are said to be the main transporters of viruses. It is therefore important to regularly wash hands to prevent the spread of diseases. What you learn here today, take it home and share with families and friends and ensure a healthy society”, he said.

The Executive Mayor of Lekwa Local Municipality, Cllr DL Thabethe thanked the DWS for bringing the celebration to Lekwa and encouraged the audience to be ambassadors of proper handwashing to prevent the spread of diseases in their communities.

“Washing of hands is very important because we use our hands for a lot of things. Today is the day of reminding each other of the importance of washing hands. Today is the day of washing hands, but it does not start there. For us as the municipality is to ensure that all people have access to water, have taps and have toilets. We must also ensure that no sewer runs in our streets as this spreads germs leading to diseases. If people don’t have water, they are not able to wash hands”, he said.



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The Executive Mayor also emphasised the importance of toilets. “People must have access to toilets. Toilets are important, besides giving people dignity, toilets also help in waste management”, he stated.

Executive Mayor Thabethe also alluded to the importance of clean water and water conservation. “We thank the Department of Water and Sanitation for celebrating this day with us, but it must not just be a day of handwashing, it must also be a reminder about the importance of water. It is important for people to have access to clean water and people must also use the available water wisely and sparingly. Let this day be a reminder to the municipality that people must regularly wash hands and must also have clean water”, he concluded his address.

The audience included learners from surrounding schools which included Igugulabasha, Isifisosethu, Nyandeni and Shukuma primary schools who rendered different items emphasizing the importance of proper handwashing to prevent the spread of diseases and a healthy society.

Mr QR Madi from the Gert Sibande District took the audience through the steps of proper handwashing through an educational demonstration. He demonstrated the steps of proper handwashing and called on the learners who were part of the audience to come and demonstrate what they have learnt to show that they understand the handwashing steps and will be good ambassadors.

DWS, Gert Sibande District Municipality and Seriti Resources handed the participating learners and schools handwashing and sanitation promotion hampers to use in their households and schools to ensure proper handwashing and sanitation practices.

**Themba Khoza**

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