



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE

Everyone should have a flushing toilet by 2030

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Today toilets are everywhere whether on the sea, air, rail or land; they continue to be part of our lives. Despite that, some people still walk a long distance to access toilets and water; in fact 2.4 billion people worldwide still relieve themselves on an open field.

Mr Lala Motsumi, an unemployed father of four in Boitumelong Township, Bloemhof is overjoyed by the many changes he has experienced in his life since the bucket system was eradicated in his home.

“For ten years I have been collecting water very far from the house or else knock on people’s doors asking for water and sanitation facilities. As a father and husband I felt embarrassed and people would get irritated when I asked to use the toilet, but today since I have water and sanitation facilities in my own yard, my kids and wife are happy and safe, they have since learnt to practice safe hygiene. It was also bad when I had visitors and I had to ask neighbours for sanitation facilities for them” he said

According to the Sustainable Development Goals target number six, everyone should have access to toilet or sanitation facility by 2030 because the reality is that human waste pollutes and endangers our environment, water resource and our health. Serious waterborne diseases such as cholera and diarrhea occur when open defecation or poor sanitation is disregarded because of desperation of people. Currently a total of 621 bucket toilets in LekwaTeemane LM and Matlosana LM were replaced with waterborne toilets by the Department of Water and Sanitation. South Africa has accelerated the provision of water, hygiene and sanitation services for restoring dignity for all. The Department of Water and Sanitation in collaboration with Department of Health has elevated discussions and awareness around sanitation issues.

In Bloemhof I met Ms Pulane Motsweneng who is a pensioner, suffering from arthritis and she has been without sanitation facilities in her yard for a long time. She lived in fear because she didn’t have a safe clean flushing toilet. Most women suppress urination for a long time in a bid to access a clean and safe toilet which normally leads to kidney and bladder diseases. Women have different needs than men hence their need to locate a private and clean public sanitation facility but unfortunately they normally face the risk of being abused and raped; this also applies to people with disability and children.

As we are commemorating 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children campaign, the Department of Water and Sanitation has joined the dialogue in creating a safer South Africa for everyone particularly women and children. Let us start talking about the importance of toilets and break the stigma associated with it. While it is our responsibility to provide clean water and dignified sanitation services, you can also play role in creating a clean environment around you to prevent the spread of diseases.

Today, most of our sanitation facilities have baby diaper changing areas and bins for disposing sanitary pads. Of course our sanitation facilities should be kept clean at all times and children shouldn’t be left to defecate anywhere in their yards, with the notion that children poop is clean or is germ free, it is wrong! Children should learn from an early stage about the



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importance of using the toilet and why it should be kept clean always. When cleaning toilets, it is important to also do the same for children's toilet seat/potty No one likes to clean toilets but we still have to do it, germs love a humid environment to breed in, and this task is not for women alone, men are able to do it as well.

Recently South Africans celebrated Global Hand Washing Day and as part of DWS' Sanitation Campaign, where members of the public were encouraged to make washing of hands with soap and water a habit. This goes a long way in preventing the spread of diseases to those around us.

By Katlego Mokaila