



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

INTERNET ARTICLE

Water and Sanitation Minister Nomvula Mokonyane rolled up sleeves at Jukskei River for Mandela

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The Minister of Water and Sanitation, Ms. Nomvula Mokonyane, was joined by people from all walks of life who thronged the Jukskei River in Alexandra to clean up an assortment of waste from the river that has over the years become notorious for being a dumping site.

Minister Mokonyane spent her 67 minutes as a tribute to the spirit of selflessness of the apartheid icon, Nelson Mandela on his birthday on 18 July as part of the Department of Water and Sanitation's Clear Rivers Campaign.

To many communities living on the banks of the river, the debris has become a permanent feature of the river, choking the life out of it.

The Jukskei River passes through Alexandra and is one of the most polluted rivers in Gauteng.

Minister Mokonyane said the cleaning of the Jukskei River was a fitting tribute to Tata Mandela as he spent part of his life in Alexandra, living and sharing in the life of the community.

“President Nelson Mandela was part of the community of Alexandra. He lived here with the people and was a vital part of this community. It is therefore a wonderful thing that we are here where he was living to work with community to ensure that the river which runs through this place is clean and safe,” said Minister Mokonyane.

The Department of Water and Sanitation has embarked on a Clear Rivers Campaign to clear rivers, wetlands and other freshwater ecosystems as part of the celebration associated with Mandela Month. This is important in the backdrop of the persistent drought which is currently affecting the country.

Minister Mokonyane lamented the state of the river, saying it has turned into a dumping site for all sorts of unwanted things. Urging the community to make it a daily habit to clean up the



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river, Minister Mokonyane praised the efforts of Shomang Sebenzani Development Initiative, a group of local residents who are volunteering to clean up the river.

She said it was important that everybody in the community made it their responsibility to clean the areas in which they live, saying water was life and communities must begin to see a link between the water that comes out of their taps and the river.

Shomang Sebenzani Development Initiative's Director Francina Rammabi said Mandela Day provided a good platform for the community and the department to work together to benefit the dignity of the community.

Rammabi said: "The country is facing serious water challenges and we must work hand in hand to make sure that our environment is clean. The contamination of rivers is affecting us as a community and this is shown by the response we got from community members who are participating in this Clear Rivers Campaign today."

She added that the 67 minutes should not be a once-off event but as a community they should continue and work to keep the river clean, saying the cleaning campaign should be part of their daily lives.

"The lives that are affected by the pollution of this river are our own lives. We cannot leave this to anybody. We have to take charge of the situation because it is our environment and our lives that are at stake," she said.

Zingile Cawa, a community member was delighted that on the day Nelson Mandela was born, everyone was able to come and assist with the cleaning.

She said cleaning the river every day and not dumping rubbish would go a long way to a healthy environment. She praised Alexandra as a nice township adding that the community members can play an important role to make the rivers clean.

Minister Mokonyane was joined by several other teams that have been at it since the beginning of the month through Clear Rivers Campaign spearheaded by the Department of Water and Sanitation.

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