



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### OPINION *PIECE*

#### HAVEN'T THEY HEARD THAT OUR WATER RESOURCES ARE LIMITED?

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**Water is life** – *take away water and you take away life.*

*Deny people water and you deny people life. That is how paramount water is in our lives. Many seem to overlook this important fact as demonstrated by water wastage. President Jacob Zuma in the State of the Nation Address (SONA) alluded to this fact that we are losing just over “R7 billion worth of water losses”. This is unacceptable, considering that we are a water scarce country, ranking the 30th driest in the globe and the Northern Cape in particular is a semi-arid province.*

*Ladies and gentlemen, I do not need to remind you my fellow South Africans, about the role that water plays in agriculture and our socio-economic development.*

*The mineral rich Northern Cape relies on water for mining activities. If we are to preserve this finite water resource, to ensure that future generations are not robbed of life, for water is life, we need to do more to save water.*

*Allow me to highlight the following: research shows that only ~1% of the entire water in the world is fresh and fit for human use. 97.5% of all water on Earth is salt water, leaving only 2.5% as fresh water and nearly 70% of that fresh water is frozen in the icecaps of Antarctica and Greenland.*

*Now I ask the question – have people not heard that our water resources are limited? The answer is a resounding yes, they heard it! Like the gospel, the message has gone out to the ends of the earth.*

*Consider the following efforts from the Department of Water & Sanitation.*

*We celebrate National Water Week every year focusing on education and awareness around issues of water conservation, pollution and infrastructure vandalism. We have partnered with the Department of Education to include water education as part of the school curriculum. We have through the 2020 vision programme, partnered with learners and the youth to convey water awareness through poetry, drama, public speaking and music. Through the Women in Water Awards, the department recognises women who are performing exceptionally in using our water resources with prudence. The list just goes on and on...Blue Bus campaign, Rain Water Harvesting programme, World Water Monitoring Day, World Water Day. In her Budget Vote speech, the Minister of Water & Sanitation indicated that her department is looking into reusing treated acid water.*

*Once again I ask the question – have they not heard that our water resources are limited? O yes they heard it, for like the gospel, the message have gone out to the ends of the earth.*

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