

DEBATE ON BUDGET VOTE NO 31: WATER AFFAIRS
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Water is a chemical substance that is composed of hydrogen and oxygen and is vital for all known forms of life. Clean drinking water is essential to human and other life forms. Water plays an important role in the world economy as it functions as a solvent for a wide variety of chemical substances and facilitates industrial cooling and transportation.

Each year more than 1 billion of our fellow human beings have little choice but to resort to using potentially harmful sources of water. This perpetuates a silent humanitarian crisis that kills some 3900 children every day and thwarts progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The consequences of our collective failure to tackle this problem are the dimmed prospects for the billions of people locked in a cycle of poverty and disease.

The United Nations Millennium Project Task Force on Water and Sanitation recently recognized that integrated development and management of water resources are crucial to the success or failure of all the MDGs, as water is central to the livelihood systems of the poor.

It is reported that in developing countries, South Africa included, 80 percent of all waste is being discharged untreated, because of lack of regulations and resources. And population and industrial growth add new sources of pollution and increased demand for clean water to the equation. Human and environmental health, drinking and agricultural water supplies for the present and future are at stake, still water pollution rarely warrants mention as a pressing issue.

UCDP feels that the issues around water should not only be a lip service but we need political willingness and commitment that would address the issues holistically and not isolate or reduce problem relating to water only to being access to clean water and when we look at access, also be able to look at meaningful access to water and all services related to it.

Nonetheless, the UCDP accepts the Budget Vote for Water Affairs.