

World Water Day – 22 March

According to the United Nations:

- 2.2 billion still live without safely managed drinking water, including 115 million people who drink surface water ([WHO/UNICEF, 2023](#)).
- Roughly half of the world's population experiences severe water scarcity for at least part of the year (IPCC, 2022).
- Water-related disasters have dominated the list of disasters over the past 50 years and account for 70 per cent of all deaths related to natural disasters ([World Bank, 2022](#)).
- Transboundary waters account for 60 per cent of the world's freshwater flows, and 153 countries have territory within at least 1 of the 310 transboundary river and lake basins and inventoried 468 transboundary aquifer systems (UN-Water, 2023).
- Only 24 countries report that all their transboundary basins are covered by cooperation arrangements (UN-Water, 2021).

ASSAf Statement

ASSAf issued a Statement on Water Security in South Africa in March 2023 to highlight current undesirable water security status in South Africa and propose solutions to reduce associated risks. The Statement made the following key recommendations:

- Enforcing Water Conservation and Demand Management approaches.
- Better coordination of water and sanitation planning by utilising the DDM platforms considering local municipality level is the focal service delivery point.
- Incentivise proper integrated asset management and operations as well as maintenance through innovative public-private partnerships .
- Ensure appropriate service level choices to avoid wasteful and irregular expenditure.
- Prioritise urgent water supply options as part of public-private partnerships to manage water security and water access goals.

ASSAf, in acknowledging the importance of managing this scarce resource has endorsed the establishment of the ASSAf Water Security and Sanitation Sustainability Forum, to amongst others:

- Promote Science-based policies and innovation for practical and implementable solutions in strengthening the water sector and decision-making through Consensus Studies, Statements and Policy briefs.
- Provide platform for academic and non-academic stakeholders, government institutions, private companies, NGOs, and civil societies in fostering information exchange and addressing collective water-related challenges.
- Enable Transboundary and cross sectoral water cooperation for improved coordination of existing resources including innovative financing models.



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Department:
Science and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

