

Why you should quickly fix faulty taps

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Water shortage is a challenge in most parts of the country. FILE PHOTO | NATION MEDIA GROUP

In Summary

- The Mau water tower, critical as it is, has been severely compromised by illegal logging.
- There is no excuse for millions of Kenyans to travel long distances daily to access water.

Today, more than ever, we must not lose sight of some of the overarching economic and social challenges that politics is

supposed to resolve.

One, which sticks out like a sore thumb, is water — its availability, cost, use efficiency and quality. Kenya is classified as a water-stressed nation, with 41 per cent of the population, mostly in rural areas and urban slums, lacking access to adequate clean, and potable water.

The government has demonstrated commitment, particularly on the policy front, to improve water provision.

MAU WATER TOWER

From 2003, the water sector underwent wide-ranging changes, which saw the creation of 91 local water service providers (SPAs), eight regional water services boards (WSBs), which are in charge of asset management, and a national regulatory board in charge of approving SPAs and tariff adjustments.

The enactment of the Water Bill, 2014, transferred the functions of the WSBs to the 47 county governments.

In spite of the major improvements, the sector is still beset with challenges. We have not been very good at taking care of water catchment areas.

The Mau water tower, critical as it is, has been severely compromised by illegal logging, cultivation in the forest and illegal human settlements. If you destroy water towers, nature can only take it for so long. Ultimately, it starts to fight back with devastating results.

So, the first thing we have to do is to jealously protect water towers. On this, there can be no compromise, no sympathy and no political consideration. Guard it because our life depends on it. The second issue is conserving the water that flows to our homes.

Those who have piped water often think only about bills. But that water comes from some reservoir and the volume in that reservoir depends on availability of rains, which, in turn, depends on the health of water towers.

WASTE WATER

We are only jerked to reality when the water rationing begins because water levels have dropped.

Faulty taps should be repaired promptly, water your flower garden with waste water and showers should be used sparingly.

A lot of water is also lost in the distribution system when broken pipes are not repaired promptly or due to illegal connections.

We have also seen a lot of rivers, particularly those that pass through urban areas or major industrial concerns, turned into garbage dumps and sewers.

These are rivers that could provide clean water for many uses if everyone took care of their waste. Mind you, these rivers are used by communities downstream.

How about rain water harvesting? We must employ appropriate technology to harvest water. With water harvesting and distribution and cost management, accessibility to all will be enhanced. This could also prevent tampering and illegal tapping of water.

URBAN POOR

The other critical aspect is the role of business. This applies particularly to agriculture, horticulture, floriculture and food and beverage industry. Is irrigation done efficiently?

How do we guarantee business supply of water without disconnecting local communities and how is waste water managed?

There is no excuse for millions of Kenyans to travel long distances daily to access water or for the urban poor to be exploited by brokers.

We are a little late in meeting the water needs of citizens but as spelt out in SDGs; we have a responsibility to make clean, potable water available to all by 2030.

Kenya does not lack the insights and solutions. What we lack is a multi-stakeholder action plan to tackle this before we are too late.

Water is crucial for all and a responsibility of all.

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