

Proposal to the Government of South Africa: Promoting Spring Water Use and Ending Chemical Drainage into Natural Ecosystems

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Dear Esteemed Officials,

On behalf of the Dika-Moka Youth Development Forum, I am submitting a formal proposal for your urgent attention and collaborative action. This proposal outlines a comprehensive, solution-driven response to South Africa's escalating water contamination crisis—caused by chemical drainage, unregulated industrial and healthcare waste, and deteriorating municipal water systems. It recommends an immediate shift toward public access to natural spring water, the strict control of chemical pollutants, and the protection of aquatic and human life.

We respectfully request your leadership in:

- Enabling nationwide access to clean, bottled spring water.
- Ending chemical and pharmaceutical pollution via drainage.
- Enforcing accountability and sustainability for companies extracting natural spring water.
- Promoting eco-conscious household and industrial practices.

1. Comparison: Natural Spring Water vs. Tap Water Treatment

A. Natural Spring Water

- **Source:** Emerges naturally from underground aquifers.
- **Treatment:** Minimal (filtration, UV disinfection); retains natural minerals.
- **Packaging:** Bottled at the source in sterilized, sealed containers.
- **Quality:** Naturally filtered by geological layers; free from chemical treatment.
- **Benefits:** Maintains beneficial minerals; free of chlorine, fluoride, and industrial contaminants.

B. Tap Water

- **Source:** Surface water (dams, rivers) or groundwater, often contaminated by runoff and industrial waste.
- **Treatment:**
 - Coagulation and flocculation.
 - Sedimentation.
 - Filtration.
 - Chemical disinfection (e.g., chlorine, chloramines).
 - Possible fluoridation.
- **Distribution:** Sent via aging municipal infrastructure, often subject to pipe contamination.
- **Risks:**
 - Exposure to residual chlorine, disinfection by-products, heavy metals (from pipes).
 - Fluoride overexposure (linked to thyroid and bone issues).
 - Microplastics and pharmaceutical traces.

2. Dangers of Tap Water Contamination

- **Chemical Waste:** Home cleaning products, cosmetics, and industrial solvents enter the water system.
- **Healthcare Waste:** Pharmaceuticals flushed into drainage systems accumulate in aquatic life.
- **Plastic and Microbeads:** Found in tap water, impact hormonal systems.
- **Environmental Impact:**
 - Fish, amphibians, and microorganisms suffer mutations and population collapse.
 - Coral reefs and marine food chains collapse due to toxicity.
- **Human Health Crises:** Hormonal disruptions, cancers, antimicrobial resistance.

3. Proposal for Government Action

A. Spring Water Access for All Citizens

- **Goal:** Provide safe, minimally processed spring water through community kiosks or bottled supply.

- **Implementation:**

- Identify and protect viable natural springs across provinces.
- Establish bottling facilities near sources to reduce transport emissions.
- Offer subsidies for low-income households.

B. Reform of Drainage and Waste Disposal Systems

- **Prohibit:** Discharge of household chemicals, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and industrial effluents into drainage.
- **Mandate:**
 - Eco-friendly product alternatives.
 - Industrial wastewater pre-treatment before release.
 - Hospital pharmaceutical waste recovery systems.
- **Enforce:**
 - Penalties for pollution.
 - Incentives for green business certifications.

C. Environmental and Public Health Education

- National campaign to raise awareness of water pollution impacts.
- Promote use of natural, biodegradable household products.
- Empower schools and community groups to test and report on local water quality.

D. Accountability of Private Spring Water Companies

- Require transparency on extraction volumes, treatment processes, and source sustainability.
- Impose community benefit-sharing measures for companies profiting from natural springs.
- Monitor and limit over-extraction from key springs such as:
 - Cradle of Humankind (Aquamine).
 - Fricona Valley, KZN (Valpré / Coca-Cola).
 - Paarl Mountain (Sublime, The Spring Water Company).
 - KwaZulu-Natal hills (aQuellé / Ekhamanzi Springs).
 - Cornwall Hill, Pretoria.
 - Waterberg, Drakensberg, and Eastern Cape rural springs.

E. Disclosure and Regulation of Chemical Use in Bottling Plants

- **List of chemicals and substances commonly used:**
 - UV and ozone sterilization agents.
 - CO₂ (for sparkling water).
 - Peracetic acid and steam for bottle sanitation.
 - Microfilters and reverse osmosis systems.
- Ensure all plants use certified food-grade materials with proper disposal and effluent management systems.

F. Ban or Strictly Control the Following Chemicals in Drainage Systems

- **Home:** Bleach, ammonia, artificial fragrances, phosphates, synthetic dyes.
- **Industry:** Heavy metals, PFAS ("forever chemicals"), solvents, detergents.
- **Healthcare:** Unused pharmaceuticals, hormone treatments, antibiotics.
- **Agriculture:** Pesticides, fertilizers, animal pharmaceuticals.

4. Benefits to Nature and Society

- Healthier drinking water for all citizens.
- Restoration of aquatic ecosystems.
- Preservation of biodiversity (fish, microorganisms, plants).
- Long-term savings on healthcare and environmental clean-up.
- Economic empowerment through community-based water enterprises.

Conclusion

South Africa must act urgently to reverse the tide of chemical pollution and water degradation. Making spring water accessible and banning harmful waste from entering drainage systems will protect both human health and the natural world. All life, from microscopic organisms to humans, depends on clean water. Multinational and private entities benefiting from natural water extraction must be regulated for public and environmental interest.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss its practical implementation, legislative implications, and community benefit programs at your earliest convenience.

Contact Information

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Thank you for your service and leadership in protecting the people and environment of South Africa.

Warm regards,
Frans Ramoba