

# PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABILITY FOR WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES IN THE NEW NORMAL

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN THE NEW NORMAL

3rd September, 2020



# LESSONS FROM COVID-19

The following **fundamental** issues can be discerned in the water services provision arising from the challenges presented by Covid-19:

- Areas with utilities were better cushioned from the effects of Covid-19 when compared to those with none;
- There is poor service, inequality and discrimination in water service provision especially within our low-income areas;
- This poor state of water and sanitation services in low-income areas exacerbates the disease risk and burden especially in a public health emergency;
- Compliance with the regulatory framework bestows on the utility some form of competitive advantage;
- Data from regulators is a basis for any interventions by any financiers – government or non-government;
- Utilities with clear vision and plans have better opportunities compared to those with none;
- There is a strong rationale for public financing of interventions against any public health pandemic.



# REQUIRED ACTIONS – DUTY BEARERS

To ensure business continuity and minimal interruption in such emergencies, Utilities must endeavour to put in place post covid strategies. To realise this the following need to be done:

- Improve Utility Performance – with better performance WSPs can better respond to any challenges;
- Ensure there is coordinated planning – The WSPs need to have a clear plans on expanding access including to vulnerable populations within their service areas – this should focus on removing these consumers from exposure to informal service provision and focusing on public health;
- Expand access - adopt a strategy of serving different consumers including those low-income areas through a stepwise approach, which also promotes low-cost outlets (yard taps and water kiosks);
- For rural areas, focus should be on access as a priority and water resource protection - quality issues being addressed on an incremental basis.



# POST COVID ERA

**Sustainable services provided by regulated utilities is key in any public health pandemic emergency. In a post-Covid-19 era this situation must change and Government at both levels must lead the change**

**Improve public and self financing of water services – persisting financing gap in a market with tremendous growth of demand**

**County governments should delegate authority for service provision to a utility accompanied by the duty to give account for results – including in the rural areas**

**The desire of the poor is to move to formalized service provision and acceptance of the first step in the ladder of service provision**

**More investments do not necessarily increase access – need for a technology paradigm shift and finding the right mix of (social) household connections, yard taps and kiosks**

-ENDS-

