

## SA Heading For Water Crisis: Researcher

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Polluted water, poor management of dams and deteriorating infrastructure could lead to a major water crisis in South Africa, a Durban-based water researcher warned on Friday.

"South Africa is currently experiencing a threat with regards to polluted water sources, poor management of dams, sewerage works and treatment plants.

"These problems are paving the way for a major water crisis," said Durban University of Technology (DUT) water researcher professor Faizal Bux.

He was speaking ahead of World Water Day on March 22.

"A number of provinces within South Africa are currently looking into ways of averting this," he said.

"Water authorities and government need to address this issue urgently. Adequate clean water supply is a backbone of a successful economy and therefore should be regarded as a priority area of funding by government."

Bux commended the Ethekewini municipality for imposing strong penalties on industrial companies that discharged effluent into the natural water resources.

"This has proved to be an effective measure as companies are battling to curb expenses due to the current financial meltdown.

Companies are now seeking alternative treatment measures to avoid such penalties," said Bux.

He also noted the South Africa lost huge amounts of water due to poor maintenance of pipes and delivery systems.

"Although our average annual rainfall in South Africa is lower than the global average, our primary problem lies with sustaining good water quality rather than a limitation at the source."

It was also unfortunate, said Bux, that some poor communities still relied on rivers as a water source as this gave rise to water-borne diseases.

Bux, who was from the DUT's centre for water and wastewater technology, was assisting some companies with developing and optimising cost-effective and environmentally-friendly on-site treatment technologies.

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