



MEDIA STATEMENT

DWS recommits to ensuring sustainable water and sanitation services for all South Africans

03 October 2025

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) has reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring that all South Africans have access to sustainable water and sanitation services, as deliberations continue at the Local Government Indaba taking place at the Gallagher Convention Centre in Midrand.

The two-day gathering brought together leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders to reflect on the past 25 years of democratic local government and to chart a bold agenda for the next 25 years.

Addressing the commission on Policy Review and Legislative Reforms on behalf of Deputy Minister David Mahlobo, Deputy Director-General Dr Risimati Mathye emphasised the Department's vision for the next 25 years. He emphasised that water is not only a basic human right but also the cornerstone of health, dignity and economic growth, and must therefore be managed and delivered with long-term sustainability in mind.

Dr Mathye highlighted the Department's future plans, which include the professionalisation of local government, legislative reforms to strengthen oversight, the establishment of an independent water sector regulator and the development of a national water action plan.

These measures will be complemented by Phase 2 of Operation Vulindlela, which focuses on accelerating structural reforms to drive sustainable and inclusive growth. Within the water and sanitation sector, Phase 2 seeks to streamline regulatory processes, enhance infrastructure investment through public-private collaboration, and establish efficient institutions such as the National Water Resources Infrastructure Agency (NWRIA) and Catchment Management Agencies (CMAs). These reforms are designed to improve efficiency, ensure better management of water resources and secure long-term water sustainability for all.

"The Department remains steadfast in its mission to close existing service gaps while preparing for the future. By working together with municipalities, business and



communities, we can ensure that every drop counts and that no South African is left behind when it comes to access to water and sanitation,” Dr Mathye said.

The Local Government Indaba set out to reflect on past achievements and shortcomings, identify policy and legislative reforms to stabilise governance and service delivery, and build a local government system that is ethical, accountable, capable and resilient. It also sought to prioritise urgent interventions ahead of the 2026 elections, while shaping a long-term reform agenda that addresses financial sustainability, cooperative governance, climate resilience and inclusive spatial development. The Indaba brought together key stakeholders to strengthen collective responsibility and reimagine the future of local government.

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Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation

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