

WELCOME REMARKS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION DIRECTOR-GENERAL, DR SEAN PHILLIPS AT THE LAUNCH OF THE WATER SECTOR ANTI-CORRUPTION FORUM (WSACF)

THE BLADES, KAMEELSDRIFT, PRETORIA

05 MARCH 2026

Purpose of today's event

Today marks a historic milestone in the Water Sector through the launch of the Water Sector Anti-Corruption Forum (WSACF), a strategic platform to coordinate efforts to prevent, detect, investigate, and respond to corruption within the sector.

This Forum represents a proactive effort to protect public resources and guarantee that all communities have access to clean, reliable water. It is essentially about collaboration and coordination between the departments, its entities with SIU and other key law enforcement agencies, to strengthen our efforts to combat corruption.

The Water Sector Anti-Corruption Forum aims to:

- Raise awareness and support corruption-prevention initiatives in the water sector.
- Foster collaboration among public, private, civil society, academic, and community stakeholders.
- Coordinate law-enforcement efforts to strengthen investigative capacity.
- Ensure consequence management, including asset recovery, disciplinary action, and criminal prosecution.
- Implement preventive measures to mitigate risks in high-vulnerability areas, such as procurement and water licensing.

This Forum is part of a broader effort to strengthen ethical leadership, risk management, and transparency in the sector.

It aligns with:

- **The National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS)**, which promotes a multi-stakeholder approach to fighting corruption, which was approved as part of South Africa's National Anti-Corruption Framework under the administration of President Cyril Ramaphosa.
- National legislative frameworks include amongst others the Public Finance Management Act, the Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act, and the Public Sector Integrity Management Framework.
- International commitments, which include the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption.

A number of major cases of corruption and financial misconduct have occurred in DWS and its entities in the past.

The Department has thoroughly investigated all the cases through Internal Audit, sometimes utilising independent forensic investigators, working closely with the Special Investigation Unit. The outcomes of these investigations led to disciplinary measures against numerous officials and entities, as well as civil recovery processes and in some cases laying criminal charges with the police.

Over the past five years, the department has implemented various measures to combat corruption and prevent repeats of past incidents:

- Enhancing internal controls
- Strengthening internal audit and disciplinary processes, standard operating procedures for managing cases, and monitoring of progress with cases

These measures have resulted in a situation now where all findings or allegations of financial misconduct are thoroughly investigated by internal

audit, without any interference. In addition, all disciplinary processes are monitored to ensure that they are followed through to completion.