



INTERNET ARTICLE

Mpumalanga Water Indaba emphasizes public-private partnerships and implementation to tackle water and sanitation challenges

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The Mpumalanga Water and Sanitation Indaba held in Secunda on 07- 08 October 2025 brought water and sanitation experts, municipalities, policy makers, private sector, researchers and academia, under one roof to discuss critical water and sanitation management issues in the province of Mpumalanga.

The Water and Sanitation Indaba was a provincial water sector gathering organised by the private sector, Paradigm Shift Holdings with the support of government, and its focus was on the importance of public-private partnerships and their implementation to address water and sanitation challenges within the province.

Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation, Mr David Mahlobo has reiterated the importance of public private partnerships in resolving long standing water and sanitation challenges in the Mpumalanga province.

Deputy Minister Mahlobo further encouraged the delegates attending the Indaba to come up with clear cut out declarations that will detail financial, and implementation plans to improve water and sanitation in Mpumalanga province.

“In as much as this provincial conference is based on the resolutions taken at the National Water and Sanitation Indaba held earlier this year, it is important that you come up with your localised resolutions to address water and sanitation challenges facing the province. This is not the time to talk, but to implement resolutions for the benefit of the people of Mpumalanga”, said Deputy Minister Mahlobo.

Deputy Minister Mahlobo also called for the establishment of a working committee to deal with issues emanating from the Indaba and consolidate activities into an integrated action plan for the province.

In his address, Mr Speedy Mashilo, Mpumalanga MEC for Human Settlements, Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs and also acting as the Premier of the province has alluded to the challenges faced by municipalities in the delivery of water and sanitation services and emphasised on the issue of implementation and sharing of resources to address those challenges. He also commended the organisers for a positive attempt to bring about a lasting solution to the water and sanitation issues in the province.

“Earlier this year, we came out of the National Water Indaba with resolutions but this one should deal more with the implementation of those resolutions. To achieve that requires

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resources but now that we have a meeting with businesspeople here, we hope that the resources are now closer. Together we can do more but we need more resources to address water and sanitation challenges”, stated MEC Mashilo.

During the deliberations, stakeholders from different sectors shared best practices to find identify opportunities, technological innovations and solutions to resolve water and sanitation related challenges within the province of Mpumalanga. The deliberations also sought to address the five (5) resolutions adopted at the National Water and Sanitation Indaba in March this year.

The adopted resolutions were to establish delivery/implementation models; increase investment through finance options and ensuring financial viability of the sector; enhancing and strengthening technical and operational capacity and efficiency; building partnerships through building water sensitive and resilient communities; and fighting criminality and corruption in the water and sanitation sector.

Dr Mduduzi Sibeko, the Executive Director of Paradigm Shift Holdings said that the engagement was meant to look at ways to move the five resolutions as adopted in the National Water Indaba into the implementation stage and to foster collaborations and partnerships between private and public sectors to address the water and sanitation challenges in the Mpumalanga Province,

The resolutions were indeed taken following the conclusion of the Indaba, and the following declarations were made:

Resolution 1: Delivery and or implementation Model

Section 78 assessments, separation of functions between WSA and WSPs to solve water provision challenges, ringfencing water services within WSAs, the emerging SPVs to be considered by Municipalities, in view of their financial viability, and temporary water provision (water tankers) should be owned by Municipalities

Resolution 2: Increase Investment and ensure Financial Viability

Budget to address operation and maintenance (O&M), ring-fencing of maintenance funds, plan to address gaps on investments and funding, mechanisms to implement strategy to recover state funds wasted through corruption and re-invest, irregular appointments – money to be recovered and re-invested, and different funding sources which can be explored by Municipalities (rant funding, traditional funds, blended financing, private sector funding, and green, blue bonds)

Resolution 3: Enhancing and Strengthening Technical and Operational Capacity and Efficiency

Invite professionals to bring forth solutions to water purification, capacity and skills shortage, inadequate technology on groundwater purification, attraction and retention of technical skills, asset management, capacity assessment of regulations 3630 – to get the right skills,

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and collaboration with the private sector, EWSETA, TVET colleges for training of water and sanitation staff and recognition of prior learning

Resolution 4: Partnership and Collaborations (Water sensitive and resilient communities)

Integration with Intergovernmental forum and private sector and civil society, effective functioning of structures, and monitoring and evaluation

Resolution 5: Criminality and Corruption

To have a strategic and integrated approach to curb theft, vandalism, water mafias and construction mafias – Anti-corruption strategy, apply technology implementation, signing of agreements with strategic partners such as SIU (SAPS), improved public education awareness campaigns, establishment of water committees, and ensuring this resolution to be elevated to be highest offices.

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