

# DMISA HOLDS DISASTER RISK REDUCTION 2018 CONFERENCE IN EKURHULENI

The Disaster Management Institute of Southern Africa (DMISA) held its annual conference at the Kopanong Hotel and Conference Centre situated in Benoni in the Gauteng Province. Themed ‘Mobilising future ready resilience: Sustainability reducing disaster risk and disaster impact, today and tomorrow’, the conference was held on 19 and 20 September 2018 and co-hosted by the City of Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality and supported by the South African National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC), the South African Weather Service (SAWS) and the Gauteng Provincial Disaster Management Centre.

The two-day conference provided opportunity for a diverse range of stakeholders in disaster management from across Africa to gather and share skills, knowledge and experience and was preceded by a workshop on the development of national guidelines for initial on-site assessment being developed by the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC).

Dr Mal Reddy presided over the opening of the conference with the traditional candle lighting ceremony and a minute of silent reflection for those whom had passed. Special mention was made to the loss of three fire fighters during the high rise fire in the Johannesburg CBD.

Ekurhuleni Metro’s Community Safety MMC, Vivian Chauke, welcomed dignitaries, delegates and sponsors and provided an overview of Ekurhuleni’s disaster management activities.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr Zweli Mkhize, National Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), who called on municipalities to prioritise disaster risk planning and mitigation.

Dikgang Uhuru Moiloa, MEC for CoGTA, Gauteng Province provided the status quo of disaster management in the Gauteng Province.

SAWS’ Mnikeli Ndobambi discussed ‘Towards a weather and climate informed disaster risk management’ saying that knowledge in disaster risk management is not only to communicate what we know

but also to recognise what we don’t know. “There is no doubt that all disaster risk management actors, scientific experts, policymakers and practitioners are confronted with the following key challenges ie partnerships, knowledge and innovation.

Dr Mmaphaka Tau, Head at the NDMC provided an extensive overview of the current status of disaster management in South Africa from the NDMC’s perspective. His presentation detailed South Africa’s climatic zones, fire services, regional and international collaborations and strategic partnerships and sector leaderships. Dr Tau furthermore discussed the some key drivers of disaster risks in South Africa ie: KPA 1: Integrated institutional capacity for DRM, KPA 2: Disaster risk assessment, KPA 3: Disaster risk reduction, KPA 4: Response and recovery and the enablers. He elaborated on the key challenges and provided feedback on the 2017 DMISA Conference resolutions.

Dr Johan Minnie provided a presentation on the future of resilient sustainability explaining how we influence future risk and how to mobilise future ready resilience that sustainably reduces disaster risk and the impact of disasters and enable sustainability in general. He detailed the critical requirements needed and said that the future of resilient sustainability depends on sustainability focusing wider than development and economics, an inclusive definition of resilience ie also future-ready, increased innovation in resource use and continued effective combined efforts to reduce direct losses. As accelerators he added digital twinning for improved exploration, simulation and learning and improved risk communication and information design.

Head of KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Disaster Management Centre, Jonty Ndlazi’s presentation focused on ‘Radical transformation for disaster risk management –a case of KwaZulu-Natal Province’. Ndlazi shared the intricacies in complying and the implementation of Disaster Management Act by various stakeholders at all levels saying that stakeholders at all levels must assess risks, plan and implement disaster risk reduction measures with the relevant communities from a ward level, for if we fail to plan we are planning to fail.

During the plenary sessions Francis Hoets, director of operations, DIMS NPC, discussed Strengthened early warning institutional arrangements for the enhancement of community resilience while Elisabeth Webster of SAWS’s presentation focused on ‘Impact-based severe weather early warning system: Experiences from the pilot phases as well as implementation in early 2019. A presentation on ‘Flood early warning for flood and climate resilient cities of the future’ was presented by Bongani Dladla of Royal Haskoning.

Mass fatality management: inclusion of forensic pathology services in disaster management was the topic of Jaco Louw of Forensic Pathology Services. He described the mandate, role and function of the Forensic Pathology Service and detailed the minimum forensic pathology mortuary standards vs mass fatality management. He said that the overall disaster preparedness for mass fatality management requires continuous planning, involvement and partnerships in line with the Disaster Preparedness Framework between Forensic Pathology Services and local DMCs and other stakeholders.

Gauteng PDMC’s Lindokuhle Ngubane discussed ‘Mainstreaming climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in the Gauteng Province’. “Successful implementation of this framework will depend on executive and political ownership”, said Ngubane. The mainstreaming of climate change adaptation into disaster risk reduction in the province should theoretically allow for the gradual implementation of climate change response measures within existing budgets balancing incremental costs with the economic, environmental and social values produced, realising no-regrets interventions, rather than necessitating additional dedicated climate change budgets in an already resource scarce municipal context.

Western Cape PDMC’s chief director Colin Deiner discussed integrated fire and disaster response during the Western Cape storm disaster on 7 June 2017. Deiner described the provinces fire risk, its preparedness and response to the incident, storm warnings, incidents and response, PDMC activities and multi-agency command. He also detailed the wildfire incidents and operational

response and post-incident burn scars and rebuild programme.

Charissa da Costa of Aurecon provided information on 'Climate change adaptation: subsistence agriculture in Genadendal, Western Cape' while A-aihash Modack and Daniël Brink of Aurecon discussed urban and regional planning for a resilient future.

Alize le Roux of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) discussed 'The Green Book: planning support tool for identifying and adapting South African settlements at risk to the impacts of climate change'. Le Roux said the Green Book was commissioned with the aim of supporting municipal planning on the development of climate-resilient cities and settlements through research in climate adaptation, ultimately facilitating the mainstreaming of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction into local government planning instruments.

DiMTEC's Prof Andries Jordaan provided a report on disaster management in South Africa he compiled on request from Southern African Development Community (SADC). Prof Jordaan provided background on his research methodologies and reported on the disaster risk reduction activities different departments. He also

shared a detailed SWOT analysis and said that the study focused on the disaster risk management system and therefore governance was under spotlight.

Schalk Carstens discussed the Western Cape Drought Disaster Preventing Day Zero - What if? Carsten's said that the 'Blame Game' arises because there is currently lack of clarity of what and when the National Department of Water and Sanitation (National Water Act) and municipalities and water authorities (Water Services Act) and where the responsibility is vested in the National Department of Agriculture. The development of a directive of emergency procurement in declared disasters will remove any obstacles and ensure appropriate response to declared disasters.

Jurgens Dyssel of the NDMC discussed the Guidelines on contingency planning saying that this guideline provides a structure (template) to draft a contingency plan and lists preparedness and response as the two main components of a contingency plan. It specifies various sub-components for each component to be put in place by an organ of state to adequately prepare for and respond to an occurrence.

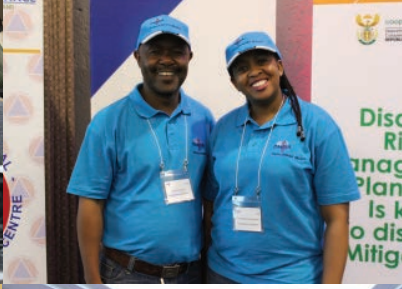
Nabeel Rylands shared the Western Cape's experience on drought risk

information management. Rylands said that there is a need to establish a Spatial Information Forum, which will ensure that credible data sets are available to stakeholders to inform decision making. The structure must include all stakeholders who are addressing water security, economic security, humanitarian relief, safety and security as well as communications. Various data sets must be combined in the development of the risk profiles and risk registers for the different disasters that can occur in municipalities, provinces and nationally, so that informed risk reduction interventions could be developed.

Dr Roman Tandlich of Rhodes University discussed 'Social unrest, business continuity and resilience of public services in South Africa while Dr Johannes Belle of DiMTEC's presentation focussed on an exploratory assessment of water scarcity and economic impact thereof on businesses in a small town of Senekal in the Free State Province. Manelisi Ndaba discussed the 'Pilot resilience programme in the uMgungundlovu District.

A panel discussion followed, which focussed on mobilising future ready resilience – sustainably reducing disaster risk and disaster impact, today and tomorrow.







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