



# public works & infrastructure

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## CLIMATE CHANGE IS NO LONGER A THREAT TO THE CONTINENT



### Article and Pictures by Noliwazi Ndhlovu

The Deputy Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Sihle Zikalala, delivered his keynote address during day-one of the two-day Built Environment Climate Change Indaba being held in Mandeni Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal.

"Climate change is not a threat in the future; it is a stark and current reality that we are facing." These were the words of DM Zikalala as he reflected on the devastating floods that affected the Mandeni Local Municipality, claiming lives and destroying infrastructure. The province of KwaZulu-Natal, in the last year has endured a vicious tornado and wildfires that further killed livestock and destroyed family homes.

The Built Environment Climate Change Indaba, is a direct response to these pressing climate challenges and has brought together stakeholders from the Engineering and the Built Environment sector, Disaster Management and the South African Weather Service.

The aim of the Indaba is to build a climate-resilient Built Environment for South Africa, while acknowledging and incorporating the Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in the entire construction lifecycle and processes and legislations of national, provincial and local government.

The recent adverse weather conditions in parts of the country including KwaZulu Natal have led to massive infrastructure damage costing the country billions of rands. "Although the country, and African continent at large, is the least contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, African nations are paying the heaviest price because the continent is warming faster than other regions and is less resilient to climate disasters," said DM Zikalala.

Furthermore, communities like Mandeni are a standing reminder that it is the vulnerable poor that suffer the most during adverse weather patterns. Such communities have limited means to be climate resilient, prepare for and recover from, devastating weather events. Also, local experiences also tell the story of the gap between policy makers and the lived experiences of communities which often hinder climate mitigation strategies and recovery efforts. Therefore it remains imperative for professionals and stakeholders within the Built Environment assist communities to create spaces that are that are climate resilient and mitigate environmental degradation.



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