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SPEECH

MINISTER MACPHERSON SIGNS STRATEGIC MOUS TO REBUILD PILANESBERG AIRPORT AND STRENGTHEN MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE NORTH WEST

(Note to editors: The following address was delivered by the Minister of Public Works & Infrastructure, Dean Macpherson, at a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signing ceremony at the Pilanesberg Airport with the North West Premier Lazarus Kagiso Mokgosi, and Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipality Mayor Dinah Pitso to redevelop the airport, and support the municipality in infrastructure delivery. Renders of how the airport will look like after redevelopment can be found [here](#).)

- Public Works & Infrastructure Minister Dean Macpherson signed a strategic MoU to support the structured project preparation and redevelopment of Pilanesberg Airport, positioning the fire-damaged site as a symbol of infrastructure renewal, improved connectivity, tourism growth, and sustained job creation in the North West.
- A second MoU brings the Ramotshere Moiloa Local Municipality into Infrastructure South Africa's Presidential Adopt-a-Municipality Pilot Programme, providing targeted technical support over the next 24–36 months to strengthen delivery in water, sanitation, electricity, and waste management.
- Building on the creation of 35,000 construction jobs in Q4 2025, following 130,000 in Q3, the Minister emphasised that disciplined project preparation, stronger governance, and effective partnerships are essential to sustaining construction as a leading job-creating sector and turning the Department into South Africa's economic delivery unit.

It is a privilege to stand here today at Pilanesberg Airport, not in a boardroom, not in a conference centre, but here, on site, at the very place that symbolises both the setbacks we have faced and the possibilities ahead.

Earlier this week, we welcomed news that the construction sector created an additional 35,000 jobs in the fourth quarter of 2025, following the 130,000 jobs created in the previous quarter.

That makes construction the second-largest job creator in South Africa over that period.

Those are not abstract figures.

They represent real livelihoods restored, real families supported, and real dignity returned.

They tell us something important: when infrastructure moves, the economy moves.

When projects are prepared properly and delivered with discipline, confidence returns.

When governance improves, investment follows.

And that is why I am especially pleased to be in the North West today - because what we sign here will help ensure that those job numbers are not a temporary spike, but part of a sustained upward trajectory.

Standing here at Pilanesberg Airport is deeply symbolic.

In 2023, this airport suffered a devastating fire.

The damage was immediate and visible - but so too was the impact on connectivity, tourism flows, and investor confidence.

For many, it became a symbol of infrastructure vulnerability.

Today, we stand here to begin turning it into a symbol of infrastructure renewal.

If you look at the 3D printed render of the redesigned terminal - the cardboard model that shows what this airport will soon become - you are not looking at an artist's impression.

You are looking at intention backed by planning, backed by structured project preparation, backed by partnership.

That model represents arriving flights.

It represents passengers stepping into the North West through a modern, functional gateway.

It represents suitcases rolling, tour buses departing, hotel rooms filling, local restaurants thriving, and small businesses growing.

It represents confidence landing here again.

Just thirteen minutes from this airport sits Sun City Resort, one of South Africa's flagship tourism destinations and a critical employer in this region.

This partnership originated in the of North West Public Works MEC, Elizabeth Mokua, who first raised this idea with me to explore and develop.

If it wasn't for her inspiration, we wouldn't be here today.

Mr Bengtsson, thank you for joining us today.

Your presence signals something powerful: that when government commits to enabling infrastructure, the private sector stands ready to invest, expand, and grow alongside it.

I must also commend you and Sun International for your willingness to collaborate with us as well as your persistence to lobby us to support the North West and this project.

Connectivity is not a luxury in the tourism economy.

It is oxygen.

When access is easy, demand rises.

When access is uncertain, growth stalls.

A modernised Pilanesberg Airport strengthens the competitiveness of the North West as a destination - not only domestically, but internationally.

That is why this Memorandum of Understanding matters.

The agreement between the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, through Infrastructure South Africa, and the North West Provincial Government creates a structured programme of project preparation and packaging support for the North West Aviation Infrastructure Programme over the next 24 to 36 months.

This is not a rushed rebuild.

It is not a cosmetic upgrade.

It is a disciplined process to prepare projects properly, to strengthen business cases, to ensure governance standards are met, and to position the airport redevelopment to crowd in blended finance and private participation where appropriate.

One of the biggest barriers to infrastructure delivery in our country has not been a shortage of ideas.

It has been weak preparation.

Projects announced before they are ready.

Budgets allocated without bankable designs.

Implementation begins without risks being properly assessed.

We are changing that model.

Infrastructure South Africa exists to strengthen preparation, to improve coordination across spheres, and to ensure that projects entering the pipeline are capable of being delivered.

I want to thank Ms Masemola and the ISA team for the work they have been doing - not only in the North West, but across the country - to professionalise infrastructure planning and move us from aspiration to execution.

The North West already has 38 infrastructure projects within the ISA pipeline.

That is not insignificant.

But pipeline alone does not create jobs.

Prepared, funded, and implemented projects create jobs.

That is why today's aviation MoU is important.

It ensures that Pilanesberg Airport and related aviation assets are not left as dormant plans, but are structured for delivery.

And the impact of that delivery will be tangible.

Construction jobs during redevelopment.

Supply chain opportunities for local businesses.

Tourism expansion once connectivity improves.

Logistics improvements that support mining and agriculture.

Investor confidence strengthened through visible action.

But today is not only about aviation infrastructure.

The second Memorandum of Understanding brings Ramotshere Moi-loa Local Municipality into Infrastructure South Africa's Presidential Adopt-a-Municipality Pilot Programme.

When I first conceptualised this idea with the Head of ISA, I did so understanding the severe limitations in local government to implement complex infrastructure projects while also understanding the incredible difference they can make in communities across the country.

This programme was then taken to and approved by the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission because we must confront a hard truth: too many municipalities struggle to translate budgets into functioning infrastructure.

When water does not flow, when sewage systems fail, when electricity networks collapse, the consequences are immediate and deeply personal.

Service delivery is where trust in government is either strengthened or eroded.

This programme is about strengthening the capacity of municipalities to plan, package, fund, and implement infrastructure properly.

Over the next 24 to 36 months, Ramotshere Moi-loa will receive targeted technical support focused on water and sanitation, electricity and energy, and waste management.

The aim is not to take over municipal responsibilities, but to strengthen delivery capability so that projects are completed, assets are maintained, and services improve in measurable ways.

Seven priority projects have already been identified, projects that residents will recognise and feel.

This intervention is rooted in structured preparation using the Five-Case Model methodology.

That means projects must demonstrate strategic alignment, economic value, commercial viability, financial sustainability, and deliverability before implementation begins.

This may sound technical, but its impact is simple: fewer stalled projects, fewer incomplete sites, and more infrastructure that works long after the ribbon is cut.

For a province with roughly 3.8 million people and unemployment hovering around 40 percent, this matters enormously.

When we improve local infrastructure reliability, we do more than fix pipes and substations.

We create an environment where businesses can operate confidently.

Where investors can plan.

Where communities can grow.

And that links directly back to the job numbers I mentioned earlier.

The 35,000 construction jobs created in the fourth quarter did not happen by accident.

It happened because of the targeted interventions we have been leading nationally and provincially.

But we cannot rely on momentum alone.

We must deepen it.

The MoUs signed today will help ensure that construction remains a major job creator in South Africa - not as a temporary rebound, but as a sustained engine of growth.

Because when infrastructure delivery accelerates in provinces like the North West, the national numbers follow.

Premier Mokgosi, I want to thank you again for your leadership and partnership.

These agreements signal that the North West is serious about collaboration, and serious about unlocking growth through infrastructure.

To the officials and teams in the province and municipality who have worked on these agreements - thank you.

Preparation is not glamorous work.

It requires detail, coordination, and discipline.

But without it, delivery falters.

To Infrastructure South Africa, thank you for continuing to raise the standard of project preparation and oversight in our country.

The professionalism you bring to the pipeline is essential to restoring credibility and attracting investment.

Standing here today, at an airport that burned down just three years ago, looking at a 3D model that shows what it will soon become, we are reminded of something simple: infrastructure decline is not destiny.

With leadership, partnership, and discipline, it can be reversed.

Soon, aircraft will land here again with greater frequency.

Passengers will step into a facility designed for efficiency and growth.

The North West will be more connected, not only physically, but economically.

And alongside that, communities in Ramotshere Moiloa will begin to see the benefits of improved water systems, strengthened electricity infrastructure, and better waste management - practical improvements that restore dignity and improve daily life.

This is how we turn the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure into the economic delivery unit of South Africa.

Not through slogans.

Through delivery.

The message from Pilanesberg Airport today is clear: partnerships deliver results that create jobs and grow the economy.

And as we build here, we contribute to a broader national mission: turning South Africa into a construction site once more, where opportunity is visible, jobs are created, and infrastructure becomes the platform for growth it was always meant to be.

Thank you.

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