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SPEECH

MINISTER MACPHERSON CALLS FOR FASTER IMPLEMENTATION AND VISIBLE MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY AT SIDSSA 2026

(*Note to editors:* *These remarks were delivered by the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Dean Macpherson, during the ministerial welcome at the SIDSSA 2026 opening plenary at the Century City Convention Centre in Cape Town on Tuesday, 25 August 2026.)*

- Public Works and Infrastructure Minister Dean Macpherson outlined progress across South Africa's infrastructure pipeline, including 37 completed projects worth approximately R69 billion and 82 projects worth R502.7 billion currently under construction.
- The Minister highlighted Infrastructure South Africa's work to prepare bankable projects, remove regulatory obstacles and connect major opportunities with development finance institutions and other funders.
- Macpherson called for faster implementation and greater investment in municipal infrastructure, emphasising that national infrastructure ambitions must translate into functioning services and visible delivery in communities.

Today, it is a privilege to welcome you to the opening plenary of the Sustainable Infrastructure Development Symposium South Africa 2026.

Thank you to our guests who ate joining us and have travelled from across the African continent.

Welcome to the Ministers, Premiers, Mayors and officials who have travelled from every part of South Africa.

Your presence reflects the importance of the work before us.

After the South African Investment Conference, SIDSSA is South Africa's second most important economic summit.

It is where government, investors, financiers, project sponsors and technical experts come together around one common purpose: to turn infrastructure plans into functioning infrastructure.

This year, as you have now heard, our particular focus is local infrastructure delivery.

It is at the local level that people experience infrastructure most directly: water from a household tap, roads connecting communities to opportunity, electricity supporting local businesses and sanitation protecting public health.

If infrastructure delivery does not succeed locally, our national plans cannot succeed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is why when I became Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure just over two years ago, I set a clear objective: to turn this portfolio into an economic delivery unit and help turn South Africa into a construction site.

Today we can show that progress can be measured.

South Africa now has 81 Strategic Integrated Projects comprising 263 individual projects, with an estimated value of close to R2 trillion.

Thes projects include high-value and high-impact infrastructure investments which are led by both the public and private sectors.

Over the past 18 months alone, 37 projects worth approximately R69 billion have been already been completed.

Eighty-two projects worth R502.7 billion are currently in construction.

And, a further 54 projects worth R206 billion are in documentation and procurement.

Furthermore, Infrastructure South Africa has processed more than 500 regulatory facilitation cases and resolved approximately 87 per cent of them, which has helped projects move through critical approval and permitting processes.

Ladies and gentlemen,

These are important achievements.

But the lesson of the last two years is clear: South Africa does not suffer from a shortage of infrastructure ideas.

Too many projects fail because they are not adequately prepared.

This includes feasibility work which is incomplete, funding models which are uncertain, regulatory approvals which are delayed, and projects which are not packaged in a form that investors and financiers can support.

That is exactly why we launched South Africa's first-of-its-kind project-preparation bid-window initiative.

Through our R600 million commitment to project-delivery support, Infrastructure South Africa is helping public institutions transform promising concepts into bankable and investment-ready projects.

The first bid window received 277 submissions with an estimated combined capital value of roughly R322 billion.

Infrastructure South Africa is now providing preparation support to more than 26 projects with an estimated capital value of approximately R148 billion.

Of those, fifteen supported projects have already completed their preparatory work.

In addition, the projects selected through Bid Window II represent a potential capital investment value of approximately R57.8 billion.

Bid Window III opened in July and created another opportunity for national and provincial departments, public entities and municipalities to bring forward high-value projects requiring preparation support.

The strength of this programme lies in its bespoke approach.

Infrastructure South Africa can provide technical feasibility work, financial modelling, legal and commercial structuring, environmental and regulatory studies, governance support and transaction advice according to the needs of each project.

Thereafter, prepared projects are taken directly to potential funders.

Earlier this month, Infrastructure South Africa's Development Partners Forum presented four live opportunities in housing, aviation, bulk water and energy to local and international development finance institutions and multilateral development banks.

Taken together, these four opportunities require more than R53 billion in debt finance.

At the South African Investment Conference, Infrastructure South Africa furthermore helped secure a pledge of approximately $1 billion, or R17 billion, for a large-scale bioethanol production facility.

This is exactly the model we are building: prepare projects properly, take them to the market and support them towards financial close and construction.

Later today, alongside the Head of Infrastructure South Africa, Mameetse Masemola, I will announce the priority infrastructure projects selected through Bid Window II and release the next edition of the Infrastructure South Africa Construction Book, setting out projects expected to enter procurement during the next 12 to 18 months.

The proportion of planned tenders which were subsequently advertised has improved from approximately 42 per cent to 58 per cent.

While that is progress, it is simply not yet good enough.

From now on, quarterly performance reporting will identify which projects are advancing, which are falling behind and where intervention is required.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This same discipline is now being applied to local infrastructure.

Over the past 18 months, Infrastructure South Africa has committed R131 million to supporting local government infrastructure.

This includes R9.39 million to package strategic water projects in Gauteng and the Eastern Cape with a combined estimated investment value of approximately R7.3 billion.

In Matjhabeng Local Municipality, approximately R1.8 million invested in preparing a non-revenue water programme helped unlock an R800 million debt-financing facility from the Development Bank of Southern Africa.

Through the Presidential Adopt-a-Municipality pilot programme, Infrastructure South Africa is supporting four municipalities across four provinces.

The programme is preparing projects that seek to unlock approximately R7 billion in water, sanitation, energy and waste-management investment.

These figures demonstrate the multiplier effect of quality project preparation.

A relatively small investment in technical preparation can unlock hundreds of millions, and sometimes billions, of rand in infrastructure investment.

Progress is also being made across the wider Public Works and Infrastructure portfolio.

During the first 22 years of the Construction Industry Development Board, only two contractors were removed from its register for fraudulent conduct.

In the last 22 months, 52 contractors have been removed with more on the way.

These achievements show the direction in which we are moving stronger institutions, better-prepared projects, greater accountability and a relentless focus on delivery.

The approval to formalise Infrastructure South Africa as a public entity is central to the next phase of this work.

We are building a permanent institution capable of serving as the central point for major infrastructure projects, maintaining a credible national pipeline, coordinating approvals, mobilising finance and supporting implementation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we all know, South Africa has committed more than R1 trillion to public infrastructure over the next three years.

Our responsibility is now to translate that commitment into properly prepared projects, credible procurement processes, active construction sites and functioning infrastructure.

Our infrastructure programme must be judged not by the value of its announcements, but by what is financed and built, and delivered to communities.

SIDSSA 2026 must take us from stronger preparation to faster implementation; from national ambition to visible local delivery.

We have strengthened the pipeline.

We have expanded project-preparation support.

We have brought credible projects together with financiers.

We must now convert that progress into financial close, procurement, construction and finally, functioning infrastructure.

As we gather here in Cape Town, it is fitting that we now hear from our host city and reflect on the important role that municipalities must play in shaping South Africa's infrastructure future.

It is therefore my honour to invite the Executive Mayor of Cape Town, Geordin Hill-Lewis, to the stage to formally open the plenary and welcome us to the host city.

Mayor Hill-Lewis, the stage is yours.

Thank you.

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