



communications  
& digital technologies

Department:  
Communications & Digital Technologies  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**ADDRESS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR INFORMATION SOCIETY & CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT, MR. MLINDI MASHOLOGU AT THE DIGITAL GOVERNMENT WORKSHOP AT MICROSOFT CAMPUS, JOHANNESBURG, 05 SEPTEMBER 2023**

Programme Director,

Representatives of DCDT, DPSA and Presidency

Ms Lydia Sebokedi, Executive Director of Centre for Public Service and Innovation

Mr Ntutule Tshenye, SITA

Ms Lerato Mathabatha, Microsoft SA

Mr Wandile Mcanyana and Mr Mr Dave Ives of PWC

Members of the Government IT Officers Council (GITOC)

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for joining us today at this important event, where we gather to discuss a topic of great significance for our nation's progress – the digitization of our government. I am honoured to stand before you as a representative of the South African government. In particular, the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies led by our Director General, Ms Nonkqubela Jordan-Dyani.

South Africa, like the rest of the world, is experiencing a rapid shift towards a digital future. Our ability to embrace and harness this transformation will not only define our success as a nation but will also have a profound impact on the well-being of our citizens. The public

sector, being the cornerstone of governance and service delivery, must lead the way in this journey of change.

## **The Digital Imperative**

We live in an era where digital technologies have the power to revolutionize the way we govern, the way we deliver services, and the way we engage with our citizens. The COVID19 pandemic accelerated this shift, demonstrating that digital tools are not just convenient but, at times, indispensable. Remote work, and virtual education, to name a few, became lifelines for many, underscoring the urgency of digital transformation.

Our government's digital transformation journey is not an option but a necessity. We must reimagine how we interact with our citizens, deliver public services, manage resources, and make data-driven decisions. In doing so, we can improve efficiency, transparency, and accountability while meeting the ever-evolving needs of our diverse population.

## **The Pillars of Transformation**

**Digital Infrastructure:** To truly advance, we need a robust digital infrastructure that connects every corner of our nation. We must bridge the digital divide, ensuring that even remote communities have access to high-speed internet. This infrastructure is the foundation upon which all other digital initiatives are built.

**Data as a Strategic Asset:** Data is the lifeblood of the digital age. We must treat it as a strategic asset, responsibly collected, managed, and leveraged to inform decision-making. In South Africa, we have an opportunity to unlock vast potential by harnessing data for improved governance and public service delivery.

**Cybersecurity:** As we embrace digital technologies, we must also fortify our defences against cyber threats. Cybersecurity is not an afterthought; it's a prerequisite for trust and reliability in the digital era.

**Capacity Building:** Our public servants and society as a whole must be equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the digital landscape. Continuous training and development are essential to ensure that our workforce remains adept at utilizing the latest technologies effectively.

**Innovation Culture:** Cultivating an innovation culture within the public sector and society is paramount. We must encourage experimentation, reward creative problem-solving, and embrace a mindset that welcomes change.

### **Collaboration and Inclusivity**

No one entity can drive this transformation alone. Collaboration between government, private sector partners, academia, and civil society is essential. We need to co-create solutions, share expertise, and leverage resources to achieve our goals.

Moreover, inclusivity is key. Our digital transformation efforts must consider the needs and aspirations of all South Africans, leaving no one behind. We must address issues of accessibility, affordability, and digital literacy to ensure that the benefits of technology are accessible to everyone.

Our journey towards a digitized government is an embodiment of our commitment to improve service delivery and meet the evolving expectations of our people. As Minister Mondli Gungubele often reminds us, we are not about technology for the sake of technology. What matters is how we harness these technologies to meet the needs of the person in Mqanduli, in Galeshewe, in Botshabelo and in KwaDukuza, for example.

The significance of this endeavour is underscored by the fact that the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) commemorates the Public Service Month every September. This is a time for us to reflect on the critical role that digital transformation plays in enhancing service delivery.

Today, on this fifth day of September, we gather here to focus specifically on digital government, an area that holds immense potential to reshape the way our government operates. The DCDT's collaboration with Microsoft SA, the Digital Council Africa, and other partners has provided us with an opportunity to engage key government stakeholders responsible for policy.

ICTs remain the greatest area of opportunity for improving the availability and efficiency of the provision of Government services to citizens. However, there is evidence that the adoption and use of ICTs has been rather haphazard and uncoordinated. Our Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT) developed the National e-Government Strategy and Roadmap in 2017 which was ultimately approved by Cabinet.

The implementation of this Strategy aims to guide the digital transformation of the public service in South Africa into an inclusive digital society where all citizens can benefit from the opportunities offered by digital technologies to improve their quality of life. Notwithstanding progress that has been made, an integrated approach will contribute positively to the realization of the objectives of the National Development Plan as well as leverage Government plans and programmes in collaboration with the private sector to provide Government services in an effective manner.

A total of 255 government services have been identified for digitization in consultation with DPSA and GCIS, to modernize the government business processes for improvement of efficiencies in the public service. In collaboration with SITA (the State Information Technology Agency), our department has facilitated the creation of an e-government services portal ([www.eservices.gov.za](http://www.eservices.gov.za)) for the country. This portal has been built on the model of enabling the life of a citizen, from cradle to grave and beyond. Currently 120 e-services have been digitized (**61 eServices developed and hosted by SITA, and 59 eServices developed by other Government departments**). There are 300 000 users monthly using the portal and we are currently working towards creating awareness of these e-services to make sure more of our citizens are accessing and using these digital services.

SITA is at the centre of digital transformation in the public service, though we acknowledge current service delivery challenges faced by client departments.

Our department has started a process to re-model SITA and the rationale is for the Agency to go back to basics and address the issues of value creation; building efficiencies and promoting effectiveness, articulating its role and purpose within a demanding commercial environment.

SITA has to improve its competitiveness in delivering services to Government for citizen convenience while ensuring that cyber security risks are mitigated, and citizen data is protected.

This will ensure that SITA becomes a strategic partner, a trusted advisor on digital assertiveness as well as an innovator par excellence, tackling the problems of tomorrow with today's 4IR technologies and insights.

In closing, the digital future of South Africa rests in our hands. We have the opportunity to build a more transparent, efficient, and responsive public sector that truly serves the needs of our citizens. The path to success will not be without challenges, but together, we can overcome them.

Let us embrace this era of digital transformation with optimism, resilience, and a commitment to innovation. DCDT stands ready to partner with all institutions, entities, companies, and individuals who wish to harness the power of technology in enabling a connected and digitally transformed South Africa. Let us work collaboratively, inclusively, and tirelessly to ensure that our public sector becomes a beacon of progress, setting an example for the world.

I thank you!!

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**Issued by the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies**