



MINISTRY
COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X860, PRETORIA, 0001 – iParioli Office Park, 1166 Park, Hatfield, PRETORIA
Tel: +27 12 427 8000 –Email: Media@DCDT.gov.za URL: www.dcdt.gov.za

MEDIA STATEMENT

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Online Broadband Fundamentals for Smart Communities Development: Digital Councillor Empowerment Programme

The Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT) launched the inaugural Broadband and Digital Skills for Municipalities Programme in Polokwane, Limpopo Province. The Minister for Communications and Digital Technologies, Hon. Solly Malatsi, told participants at the launch that the time has been ripe for government to equip councillors with digital skills so as to propel the use of technology to service our people and grow the economy.

The Broadband and Digital Skills launch, which drew councillors from the length and breadth of Limpopo Province and Digital expects under one roof with DCDT partnering with the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and the British High Commission as part of the Declaration of Intent signed between the South African Government and the United Kingdom under the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) Fund.

"The programme aims to empower municipal managers and councillors to steer the deployment of broadband infrastructure in an inclusive manner to reach as many of people as possible. More so those who are digitally disconnected from the rest of the world or have been left behind by many current digital advances." Said Minister Malatsi

“In a world where public representatives, more so councillors, are inundated with endless service delivery queries and confronted with hundreds of important decisions to make on their council work daily, having the necessary digital skills will enable them to work, smarter, resolve public queries faster and be more accessible to residents.” Continued Minister

In an effort to ensure that councillors leverage AI capabilities, DCDT with SALGA and the British High Commission as partners intends on out rolling this programme to all other provinces in the country so as to leave no one behind.

Speaking at the launch event, Antony Phillipson, UK High Commissioner said:

“We know that digital technology is a powerful catalyst for economic growth and development - the impact of digital inclusion can be profound and wide-ranging. This UK-funded project reflects the UK’s commitment to both digital inclusion and partnership with all spheres of the South African government - ensuring that we are leaving no one behind as we transition to a digital future.”

The launch will be followed by a two-day training for councillors which will be a continuous exercise to ensure that councillors are well trained to deliver services to communities for sustainable development in the digital economy.

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MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

DCDT Media Liaison Officer : Ms Tlangelani Manganyi

Cell : 060 886 4670

Email : media@dcdt.gov.za

URL : www.dcdt.gov.za

Facebook : Department of Communications & Digital Technologies.

X : @CommsZA

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