



MINISTRY  
COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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## **Minister Solly Malatsi, MP, GovTech 2025 opening address. KwaZulu-Natal Province, eThekweni Metro Municipality. 08 September 2025**

My esteemed colleagues in Cabinet,

Premier,

Executive Mayor,

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Communications,

Leaders of industry, academia, government,

Distinguished sponsors, partners and delegates.

Good morning.

It is my privilege to welcome you to GovTech, proudly hosted by SITA, which is our flagship event where government, industry, and innovators come together to reimagine the future of South Africa's digital government.

As a country, we have made significant strides in our journey towards digital government. We have managed to expand connectivity, enabled the rollout of new technologies and removed regulatory barriers that once limited investment.



**But** - the reality is that challenges remain, and these challenges prevent us from utilising the great potential of a fully capacitated digital economy. The cost of connectivity remains disproportionately high for low-income households, and device affordability is still a constraint.

The challenges extend to government too – our digital systems are still fragmented, and our data is not interoperable, leading to fragmented implementation of digital services and tools.

Combined, these challenges are obstacles not only to efficiency, but also impede trust, transparency, and effective service delivery.

Rather, let us for a second imagine a South Africa where digital government is implemented to its full effect.

In this South Africa, every young person, regardless of where they live, can access education materials from the Department of Education online, without having to worry about the cost of data.

Entrepreneurs can access support from the Department of Small Business Development and engage with the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition with a click of a button, rather than travelling back and forth to offices.

In this South Africa, each and every citizen trusts that their government services are transparent, fair, and efficient.

Digital government is thus just not a buzzword we use to justify the work in our portfolio. It is a key enabler of the future we want for our country.

The Medium-Term Development Plan sets out three primary priorities for the Government of National Unity's term of office: driving including growth and job creation, reducing poverty and tackling the high cost of living, and building a capable, ethical and developmental state.

Digital government has a role to play in achieving all three of these priorities.

## **1. Driving inclusive growth and job creation**

It can lower the barriers to market entry by making business registration, licensing and compliance with regulations easier and less costly.

It enables innovation by opening opportunities for small enterprises and entrepreneurs to access markets and to scale their solutions to reach broader audiences.



It reduces the cost of doing business by streamlining processes and cutting red tape – allowing businesses to spend more time on creating value, rather than spending time on compliance.

Digital government also creates entirely new job pathways – in software development, digital services, data analysis and ICT infrastructure. We cannot underestimate government's role in stimulating the digital economy.

## **2. Reducing poverty and tackling the high cost of living**

Digital platforms make service delivery more efficient and cost-effective. Citizens spend less time and money travelling to government offices, and more time focusing on their livelihoods and generating income.

Better data sharing between departments and entities reduces duplication and wastage, saving taxpayers' money.

And by using traceable, transparent digital systems in government expenditure, digital government can give citizens the confidence that resources are used fairly and efficiently.

## **3. Building a capable, ethical and developmental state**

We must acknowledge that there is a significant trust deficit between government and its stakeholders.

Digital systems can strengthen accountability and rebuild that public trust. By creating audit trails and reducing opportunities for corruption and plundering of state resources, we can assure citizens that we are acting in their best interests.

Data interoperability does not only save money, it allows better decision-making in government – both at the macro and individual level. When departments and entities share information, we address the siloed approach to governance, which means we can all work toward the same goals.

Simply put, a state that is digitally enabled is more empowered to deliver on its constitutional mandate to serve all its people fairly and efficiently.

To achieve the lofty ambitions of the MTDP, we need to strengthen the foundations of our digital transformation. Cybersecurity, data governance, digital identity, and interoperability are not optional extras; they are the bedrock of a capable digital state.

As part of the GNU's reforms, we launched the Digital Transformation Roadmap earlier this, with a clear purpose: to align our digital investments, eliminate fragmentation, and ensure that government's digital services are citizen-centric and seamless.

SITA will play a crucial role in this journey, modernising government ICT infrastructure, enforcing standards, and ensuring interoperability across departments and agencies. Without this backbone, the promise of smart government will remain out of reach.

Connectivity and digital transformation cannot be achieved by government alone. It requires political commitment, government action, and private sector collaboration. It requires civil society and academia to keep us honest and innovative.

This is why GovTech is such an important platform. It allows us to build the partnerships that will bring our vision to life.

Let us work together to deliver on the promise of *One Data, One Citizen, One Citizen Service Journey*. Together, we can build a smart and inclusive digital government that drives growth, reduces poverty, and strengthens our democracy.

A smart government is not a dream of the future.

It is a necessity of the present.

And it is within our reach, if we work together with urgency and focus.

I thank you, and I wish you a successful conference.

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