



NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTRE (NDMC) SOUTH AFRICA

NEWSLETTER - QUATER 3: 2025/26





FOREWORD BY THE HEAD OF THE NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTRE

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As South Africa experiences the height of the summer season, the increasing impacts of climate change—including severe storms, flooding, droughts, and veld fires—continue to place communities at risk. These conditions underscore the importance of vigilance, preparedness, and coordinated action across all sectors of society.

South Africa remains committed to strengthening its capacity to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to disasters. Central to this effort is the enhancement of multi-hazard early warning systems that ensure timely, reliable information reaches vulnerable communities, enabling early action that saves lives and reduces losses.

We urge all citizens to remain informed about potential hazards and to take proactive measures to protect their families, homes, and livelihoods. Education, awareness, and preparedness are critical to reducing disaster risks. Government also continues to promote nature-based solutions, including the protection and restoration of ecological systems, to help mitigate disaster impacts and support sustainable development. Meaningful community participation remains essential to the success of disaster risk reduction efforts.

On behalf of the national government, we extend our sincere appreciation to provinces and municipalities that actively commemorated the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDR) on 13 October 2025 under the global theme “Fund Resilience, Not Disasters.” Your commitment has strengthened the shift from reactive disaster response towards proactive risk reduction. Special recognition is

extended to Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality in collaboration with the Eastern Cape Provincial Disaster Management Centre; the Limpopo Provincial Disaster Management Centre in collaboration with the University of Venda; and the Gert Sibande District Municipality in collaboration with the Mpumalanga Provincial Disaster Management Centre.

As we move into 2026, the resilience demonstrated by provincial and local government structures remains one of our greatest strengths in addressing climate-induced hazards. Integrating disaster risk reduction into municipal planning, budgeting, and development processes is essential to securing a safer and more sustainable future for all South Africans.

We extend our deepest sympathies to the families and communities in Mpumalanga and Limpopo affected by the current summer floods. We commend the tireless efforts of disaster management practitioners, emergency services, and first responders who continue to work under challenging conditions to protect lives and provide relief.

In closing, we encourage all community members to remain vigilant and to respond promptly to early warning messages issued by the South African Weather Service.

The National Disaster Management Centre remains committed to publishing this newsletter quarterly as a platform for sharing disaster risk management information and good practice. Stakeholders are invited to submit contributions to Mr Bakang Mebalo at BakangM@ndmc.gov.za before the end of each quarter.

A Decade of Sendai: Reflecting on Resilience at Sun City

NDMC Strengthens Partnerships and Practice at the 2025 DMISA DRR Conference

The Disaster Management Institute of Southern Africa (DMISA) convened its prestigious annual Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Conference from 22–23 October 2025 at the Sun City Resort and Convention Centre. Held in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) and supported by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), the conference provided a vital platform for practitioners, policymakers and academics to reflect on progress in disaster risk reduction across Southern Africa.

Under the theme “A Decade of Sendai in Southern Africa: Progress, Gaps, and the Road Ahead,” the conference marked ten years since the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, offering a timely opportunity to assess implementation at national, provincial and municipal levels. Central to the discussions was the need to translate policy commitments into practical action that meaningfully reduces risk for communities on the ground.

A key highlight of the programme was the strong and visible participation of the NDMC, reinforcing its leadership role in advancing disaster risk governance, coordination and capacity building. On 21st October 2025, ahead of the main conference, the NDMC co-hosted a focused pre-conference workshop titled “Navigating Disaster Risk – Practical Priorities for Action in DRR.” The workshop provided a space for frank engagement on reviewing South Africa’s disaster management system and identifying priority reforms, while also exploring strategies to strengthen disaster risk governance in rural municipalities where capacity constraints and vulnerability often intersect.

The main conference programme further reflected the NDMC’s strategic priorities. The keynote address by the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Mr Velenkosini Hlabisa, underscored the professionalisation of disaster management as a core government function—an agenda strongly championed by the NDMC through national policy, capacity-building initiatives



and partnerships with professional bodies such as DMISA.

Discussions throughout the conference echoed NDMC’s emphasis on moving from policy to practice. Expert-led sessions on early warning systems, including contributions by Prof Dewald van Niekerk, called for a decisive shift from “talking to doing,” particularly in advancing multi-hazard early warning systems across the SADC region. These discussions aligned closely with NDMC’s ongoing work to strengthen preparedness, anticipatory action and intergovernmental coordination.

The conference also highlighted the importance of inclusive and forward-looking approaches to resilience. A powerful youth perspective was shared by student advocate Nandipha Maphanga, who called for the integration of disaster risk management into school curricula to equip young people as informed and capable first responders. Case studies presented during the conference showcased local resilience in action, including community-led climate change adaptation initiatives and mine-induced emergency preparedness programmes—practical examples of risk reduction in diverse contexts.

As DMISA looks ahead to 2026 and beyond, the conference reaffirmed a shared message: while South Africa and the region have robust legislative and policy frameworks, the next decade must prioritise implementation, enforcement and localisation. Through its active participation and co-hosting role, the NDMC reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening partnerships, supporting municipalities, and driving practical action that advances the objectives of the Sendai Framework.

The 2025 DMISA DRR Conference not only marked a decade of reflection but also set a clear direction for the future—one in which collaboration, professionalisation and action-oriented disaster risk reduction remain central to building a safer and more resilient Southern Africa.



Commemoration of International Disaster For Risk Reduction In Eastern Cape





Commemoration of International For Disaster Risk Reduction in Mpumalanga.



Images: DMISA Conference 2025 in Sun City North West Province.





AEME EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE EXERCISE 2025

By Shelter Muntswu



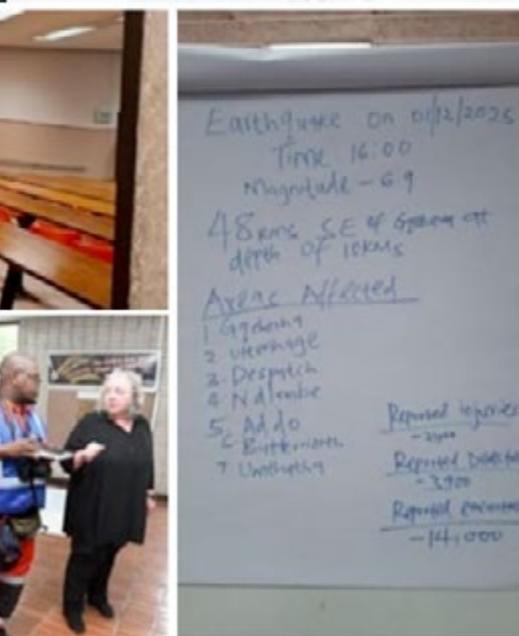
The Department of Cooperative Governance (DCOG) through the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) hosted a successful five-day 2025 Africa, Europe, and Middle East (AEME) desktop earthquake response exercise from 01-05 December 2025 in Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality (Gqeberha), Eastern Cape Province. The exercise was hosted in partnership with the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) under the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA).

This large-scale international earthquake simulation event was aimed at testing and strengthening search and rescue operations, multi-agency coordination, communication and command systems, post-disaster recovery planning, emergency medical response, evacuations and logistics, as well as humanitarian coordination in line with national and INSARAG policies, guidelines and methodologies. The exercise gathered a diverse range of stakeholders, from national, provincial, and municipal disaster management centres to international humanitarian partners. Key participants included National responders (Police, Fire Services, EMS, Defence Force); International Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams and Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs); United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) experts; and Humanitarian organizations from the Africa, Europe, and Middle East regions.

The simulation successfully demonstrated the value of coordinated disaster management, with participants highlighting the discipline and operational strength of the response teams. The simulation also allowed for the real life, step by step response simulations to be completed and a broad understanding of areas of improvement for this type of real life response.

The final day, 05 December 2025 provided practical insight into logistics and specialized equipment during a visit to the Rescue South Africa warehouse and concluded with a closing ceremony led by Deputy Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), Prince Zolile Burns Ncamashe, who emphasized the importance of aligning policy and legislative frameworks with modern disaster risks. This was more than just a response exercise, it marked the first step toward building long term resilience. The lessons learned from the simulation will inform future policy development, strengthened readiness for climate induced and seismic disasters, reinforced the need for investment in resilience planning.

The AEME Earthquake Response Exercise 2025 successfully demonstrated international solidarity, operational excellence, and a forward looking approach to disaster risk management.



Strengthening Disaster Risk Management Capacity Through Education

NDMC Bursary Programme Builds the Next Generation of Disaster Management Professionals

By Koketso Mpshane

The National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) continues to advance disaster risk management (DRM) capacity across South Africa through its Bursary Programme. Anchored in the Disaster Management Act and guided by the National Disaster Management Framework (NDMF), the programme is a strategic intervention aimed at developing scarce technical skills and promoting a culture of risk avoidance among disaster management practitioners and stakeholders.

Why the NDMC Bursary Programme Matters

Education, training and research form a core part of the NDMC's legislative mandate. Sector-wide assessments, including the National Education, Training and Research Needs and Resources Analysis (NETaRNRA), have highlighted persistent skills gaps within the disaster management environment. In response, the NDMC bursary programme was introduced to support students and professionals pursuing formal qualifications in disaster risk management and related fields.

By investing in higher education and research, the programme contributes directly to building a capable and professionalised DRM workforce. This investment strengthens institutional capacity and supports the broader national objective of building resilient, risk-aware communities.

Quarter 3 Programme Progress

During the reporting period, the NDMC bursary programme attracted strong interest from prospective students across the country. Following a structured verification and shortlisting process, a cohort of new beneficiaries was approved alongside continuing bursary recipients from the previous academic cycle. Successful candidates were drawn from a range of reputable institutions of higher learning, including Stellenbosch University, University of the Free State, North-West University, Durban University of Technology and Tshwane University of Technology.



These institutions play a critical role in producing graduates equipped with the technical, analytical and research skills required in the disaster management sector.

Transparent Selection and Strategic Focus

The bursary selection process was overseen by a multi-stakeholder committee comprising representatives from provincial disaster management centres and the Disaster Management Institute of Southern Africa (DMISA). The committee applied clear and transparent criteria to ensure fairness, credibility and alignment with national disaster risk reduction priorities.

Priority was afforded to applicants enrolled in fire technology and postgraduate disaster management programmes, reflecting NDMC's focus on scarce and critical skills. Academic merit remained a key consideration, reinforcing a culture of excellence and supporting the Centre's long-term research and innovation agenda.

Building Long-Term Impact

Through sustained investment in education and research, the NDMC bursary programme continues to address the skills gap that undermines effective disaster risk reduction, response and recovery. Beyond fulfilling legislative obligations, the programme is a cornerstone of efforts to professionalise the disaster risk management sector in South Africa.

By empowering current and future practitioners with specialised knowledge and formal qualifications, the NDMC is laying a strong foundation for a more capable, resilient and forward-looking disaster management system—one that is better positioned to protect lives, livelihoods and development gains in an increasingly risk-prone environment.

