

# NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTRE (NDMC) SOUTH AFRICA

**NEWSLETTER - QUATER 4: 2025/26**

**Disaster Risk Management  
School Expo and Career  
Guidance Event**

**Strengthening Disaster  
Preparedness Through  
Interdepartmental Collaboration:**

**Building Resilient Schools:  
Train the Trainer Disaster  
Risk Reduction Workshop**





# FOREWORD BY THE HEAD OF THE NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTRE

## **Dr Bongani Elias Sithole**

Head: National Disaster Management Centre  
Department of Cooperative Governance

It is with a deep sense of purpose and commitment that I present this Foreword as the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) continues to strengthen collaborative efforts aimed at building a safer, more resilient South Africa. The initiatives outlined herein reflect our collective resolve to enhance preparedness, response, and awareness across all spheres of disaster risk management.

The hosting of the National Fire Service Indaba stands as a critical milestone in advancing professional dialogue, sharing best practice, and reinforcing coordination among fire services and disaster management stakeholders nationwide. This platform provides an opportunity to reflect on emerging risks, evolving climate impacts, and the importance of modernised fire and rescue capabilities in protecting lives, infrastructure, and the environment.

Equally significant is the observance of Armed Forces Day, jointly commemorated with the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). This occasion reaffirms the strategic partnership between the NDMC and the SANDF, particularly in disaster response, humanitarian support, and civil protection operations. Our collaboration remains pivotal in ensuring swift, disciplined, and effective interventions during times of national emergency.

As we enter the winter season, the submission and implementation of contingency plans is of paramount importance. Winter-related hazards such as cold-related incidents, fires, flooding, and severe weather events continue to pose serious risks to vulnerable communities. Through coordinated planning and focused disaster awareness messaging, we aim to empower communities with knowledge, promote early warnings, and reduce the loss of lives and livelihoods.

Looking ahead, preparations to host International Fire Fighters' Day in Rustenburg underscore our recognition of the bravery, dedication, and sacrifice of fire fighters across the country and beyond. This occasion not only honours their service but also strengthens international and local solidarity in fire safety, emergency response, and disaster risk reduction.

Together, these initiatives reflect our shared responsibility to foster preparedness, strengthen intergovernmental and international cooperation, and build resilient communities. The NDMC remains steadfast in its mandate to lead and coordinate disaster risk management efforts, working alongside our partners to ensure a safer and more resilient future for all. Stakeholders are invited to submit contributions to Mr Bakang Mebalo at [BakangM@ndmc.gov.za](mailto:BakangM@ndmc.gov.za) before the end of each quarter.



# Building Resilient Schools: Train the Trainer Disaster Risk Reduction Workshop

By Boipelo Selaledi

**A** two-day Train-the-Trainer Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) workshop, held from 26–27 March 2026 in Port Alfred was conceptualised and convened by Stenden University as part of its strategic commitment to advancing school safety and disaster preparedness. The workshop brought together educators, disaster management practitioners, and key institutional partners, reflecting the university's proactive role in initiating platforms that strengthen school safety through a sustainable, capacity-building approach.

The workshop was implemented with the support and participation of several partners, including the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC), Santam, the Fire Protection Association of Southern Africa (FPASA), Sarah Baartman District Disaster Management Centre, and the Ndlambe Local Municipality Fire Department. Their collective involvement contributed diverse technical and operational expertise, underscoring the value of multi-stakeholder collaboration in advancing disaster risk reduction within the education sector.

It is notable that NDMC and Stenden University are currently engaged in discussions to explore areas of collaboration, with a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) under consideration.

NDMC's participation in the workshop therefore also served as an important demonstration of institutional support and alignment, while allowing both parties to practically engage around shared objectives related to disaster risk reduction, policy alignment, and capacity development.

A key practical component of the workshop was the on site risk assessment conducted at Dambuza Full-Service School in Port Alfred, where participants applied hazard and compliance identification methods in a real world school setting using the DRR School Toolkit. Complementing this, representatives from various schools actively completed and engaged with the DRR School Toolkit, while first aid sessions included both theoretical input and practical demonstrations.

Central to the training was the train the trainer approach, which aimed to ensure sustainability by equipping participants not only with essential knowledge and practical skills, but also with the capacity to transfer these competencies within their own schools and communities. Through this model, the workshop sought to embed disaster risk reduction and safety practices across the education system, strengthening institutional capacity and promoting safer learning environments.



# Strengthening Disaster Preparedness Through Interdepartmental Collaboration: SANDF and Disaster Management Stakeholders Commemorate Armed Forces Day

By Bakang Mebalo



The commemoration of Armed Forces Day by the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC), Limpopo Provincial Disaster Management Centre, and the Vhembe District Municipality, served as a powerful platform to highlight the critical role of interdepartmental collaboration in disaster risk reduction, advocacy, and community awareness.

Armed Forces Day, traditionally observed to honour the sacrifices, discipline, and service of members of the SANDF, was this year leveraged to underscore the Defence Force's evolving role beyond national security. The commemoration emphasized the SANDF's indispensable contribution to disaster management, humanitarian assistance, and community resilience, particularly when working in synergy with disaster management structures at national, provincial, and local levels.

## SANDF's Role in Disaster Management and National Resilience

The SANDF has long been a key strategic partner in disaster response and recovery in South Africa, providing logistical support, engineering capabilities, medical assistance, air and ground transport, and manpower during times of crisis.

Whether responding to floods, droughts, fires, pandemics, or other emergencies, the SANDF's rapid deployment capacity makes it a cornerstone of national disaster response.

Through this Armed Forces Day commemoration, the SANDF reaffirmed its commitment to the broader human security agenda—one that prioritises the safety, wellbeing, and resilience of communities. This commitment aligns closely with the objectives of the NDMC and provincial and municipal disaster management centres, which focus on disaster prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery in accordance with the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002).

## Interdepartmental Collaboration: NDMC and SANDF in Action

The collaboration between the NDMC and the SANDF represents a practical and strategic partnership aimed at strengthening disaster risk governance in South Africa. This partnership is anchored on coordinated planning, information sharing, capacity building, and joint awareness initiatives.

During the Armed Forces Day build up campaign in Limpopo, the NDMC, together with the Limpopo Provincial Disaster Management Centre and the

Vhembe District Municipality, worked closely with the SANDF to integrate disaster advocacy and awareness activities into the commemorative programme. This approach ensured that Armed Forces Day was not only a ceremonial event but also a meaningful opportunity to educate communities about disaster risks and preparedness measures.

The joint initiative demonstrated how defence and civilian institutions can pool resources, expertise, and outreach platforms to deliver a unified message on disaster resilience. It also reinforced the principle that disaster management is a collective responsibility requiring a whole of government and whole of society approach.

### **Disaster Advocacy and Awareness in Communities**

A central focus of the build up campaign was community based disaster advocacy and awareness. Through exhibitions, demonstrations, and interactive engagements, community members were informed about common hazards affecting the Limpopo Province, including floods, veld fires, drought, and severe weather events.

Officials from disaster management centres, supported by SANDF personnel, provided practical guidance on early warning systems, household preparedness, evacuation procedures, and the importance of community vigilance. The presence of the SANDF enhanced community interest and trust, creating an enabling environment for meaningful engagement and learning.

The advocacy activities also highlighted the critical role of local communities in disaster risk reduction, encouraging residents to take proactive steps to safeguard lives, livelihoods, and infrastructure.

### **Building a Culture of Preparedness Among School Learners**

An important component of the Armed Forces Day build up campaign was its focus on schools and young people. Targeted outreach programmes were conducted at schools within the Vhembe District, aimed at instilling a culture of disaster awareness and preparedness from an early age.

Learners were introduced to basic disaster management concepts, emergency reporting mechanisms, and safety practices appropriate to their local context. SANDF members shared insights into discipline, teamwork, and service, inspiring learners while reinforcing messages about preparedness, resilience, and civic responsibility.

By engaging schoolchildren, the NDMC and its partners sought to create informed young citizens

who can act as agents of change within their families and communities. This long term investment in disaster education contributes to building safer and more resilient communities over time.

### **Strengthening Local Capacity Through Partnerships**

The collaboration showcased during Armed Forces Day also strengthened coordination between national, provincial, and municipal disaster management structures. The involvement of the Limpopo Provincial Disaster Management Centre and the Vhembe District Municipality ensured that local priorities and context specific risks were fully integrated into the programme.

Such partnerships enhance preparedness at the local level by improving alignment between disaster management plans, emergency response protocols, and available resources. They also promote mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities among stakeholders, which is essential when responding to real life emergencies.

### **Conclusion**

The commemoration of Armed Forces Day in Limpopo stood as a compelling example of how national commemorative events can be harnessed to advance disaster risk reduction and community empowerment. Through effective interdepartmental collaboration between the SANDF, NDMC, Limpopo Provincial Disaster Management Centre, and Vhembe District Municipality, the event went beyond celebration to deliver lasting value through advocacy, awareness, and education.

This collaborative approach reaffirmed that building resilient communities requires sustained cooperation, shared purpose, and proactive engagement across all spheres of government and society. By working together, the SANDF and disaster management institutions continue to strengthen South Africa's capacity to prevent, prepare for, and respond to disasters—ultimately safeguarding lives and fostering a safer future for all.





# Disaster Risk Management School Expo and Career Guidance Event

By Boipelo Selaledi



The Capricorn District Municipality hosted a Disaster Risk Management (DRM) School Expo and Career Guidance Event on 13 March 2026 at the Harry Oppenheimer Agricultural High School in the Mogoshi Circuit, Polokwane. The event formed part of ongoing efforts to strengthen disaster preparedness, promote risk reduction and guide learners on potential career paths within the disaster management sector and related fields.

The expo was attended by 200 learners from 10 schools, providing a valuable platform for knowledge sharing and youth development. Through targeted presentations and exhibits, learners were introduced to the importance of disaster risk management and the role it plays in protecting lives, infrastructure, and the environment.

The National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) contributed significantly to the programme by delivering a message of support that reaffirmed the national commitment to disaster risk reduction. The message emphasised the importance of coordinated efforts between all spheres of government to enhance preparedness and to strengthen local capacity-building initiatives, particularly those involving young people.

In addition, the NDMC participated through an exhibition stall, where learners were provided with disaster risk management information and awareness materials. Learners were also informed about bursary opportunities and educational pathways available within the field of disaster management. This engagement encouraged learners to consider careers that contribute to community resilience, public safety, and sustainable development.

The DRM School Expo succeeded in combining education, awareness, and career guidance in a structured and meaningful manner. By engaging learners at school level, the Capricorn District Municipality and its partners demonstrated their commitment to empowering learners with knowledge and skills that support disaster resilience and informed career choices.

Initiatives of this nature play an important role in fostering a culture of preparedness while motivating learners to pursue careers that contribute to the safety and well-being of society.



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