

## MEDIA ADVISORY

**Delegates to gather at Unisa to deliberate on SA water challenges.**

### **For Public Release**

**Date: Thursday, 12 March 2026**

South Africa is currently facing a severe national water crisis, ranking among the world's 30 most water-scarce countries due to climate change, aging infrastructure and rising demands. Major cities like Johannesburg are facing significant restrictions, while areas in the Western Cape are experiencing critically low dam levels. To address these challenges, the University of South Africa (Unisa) will hold a roundtable Unisa Water Imbizo on Tuesday, 17 March 2026 at the Unisa's Science Campus in Florida, Johannesburg.

This year's imbizo is held in partnership with Unisa, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), Johannesburg Water, Water Research Commission of South Africa (WRC) and Rand Water under the theme "***Reimagining a Water-Secure South Africa***"

It intends to educate the public about their responsibility in water conservation and to raise awareness around the protection and sustainable management of the country's water resources. It seeks to provide a platform for meaningful dialogue and collective thinking geared towards developing tangible solutions to South Africa's water supply, infrastructure, and quality challenges.

Furthermore, these gathering aims to highlight the crucial role of higher education institutions such as Unisa as national think tanks capable of providing tested, research-based water solutions in partnership with government, consumers, industry, and municipalities. This collaborative approach will help ensure that government leverages the extensive skills, expertise, and innovation housed within universities as first points of contact when addressing the country's pressing water challenges.

Speakers include the following:

- Hon. David Mahlobo, Deputy Minister – Department of Water and Sanitation
- Prof Puleng LenkaBula, Unisa Principal and Vice Chancellor.
- Prof Sylvester Mpandeli, Senior Research Manager: Water Research Commission
- Dr. Zakhele Khuzwayo, Manager of Innovation and Technology: Johannesburg Water
- Prof. Mpho Ngoepe, Unisa VP – Research, Postgraduate Studies, Innovation and Commercialization
- Dr. Esper Ncube, Water Quality Specialist, Manager Process Technology - Rand Water
- Mr. Kwena Maphoto, Professional Development and Oversight of Engineers division, City of Johannesburg (COJ) – City of Johannesburg
- Mr. Caleb Finn, Ward Councilor of Florida, Johannesburg



- Trevor Gopo, Founder & CEO - Leadership in Water Innovation (LWI)
- Prof Thabo TI. Nkambule, Head – Institute for Nanotechnology and Water Sustainability (iNanoWS), Unisa
- Prof Vhahangwele Masindi, Distinguished Professor, Department of Environmental Sciences, Unisa College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences

As part of the programme, delegates will have the opportunity to tour the state-of-the-art water treatment facilities, research projects, and advanced prototypes developed and housed at the Unisa Science Campus in Florida, Johannesburg.

The event will take place as follows:

**Date:** Tuesday, 17 March 2026

**Time:** 09h00 – 15h00

**Venue:** 28 Pioneer Avenue, Unisa Science Campus, Florida Park, Johannesburg.

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For RSVPs and interview requests, please contact Unisa Senior Media Officers: Mr Tommy Huma on 072 218 6197 / 012 429 3981 / [humartm@unisa.ac.za](mailto:humartm@unisa.ac.za) OR Mr Edgar Rathelele on 063 731 5456 / 012 429 3981 / [ratheme@unisa.ac.za](mailto:ratheme@unisa.ac.za)

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