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INTERNET ARTICLE

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ECSA Strengthens South Africa's Engineering Voice at Africa Engineering Week

The Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) reaffirmed its commitment to advancing the engineering profession across Africa through its participation in the 12th UNESCO Africa Engineering Week and 10th African Engineering Conference, held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, from 13 to 17 September 2026, with technical visits and excursions concluding the programme on 18 September.

Held under the theme "Engineering Africa's Inclusive, Innovative and Sustainable Future", the conference brought together approximately 1,200 delegates from 29 countries, including policymakers, engineering regulators, professional institutions, academia, industry representatives, researchers and emerging engineering practitioners.

ECSA's official delegation comprised ECSA President Mr TC Madikane Pr Eng, Ms Niniza Mtshali and Tshego Cornelius Pr Eng, each contributing to strategic engagements throughout the conference, including high-level policy dialogue, professional regulation, engineering data governance, women in engineering initiatives and the recognition of engineering excellence.

Beyond its official delegation, ECSA acknowledges the broader South African engineering fraternity whose participation in technical presentations, plenary discussions and conference activities further demonstrated the country's contribution to continental engineering advancement.

Strengthening Engineering Data and Governance Across Africa

The conference commenced on Sunday, 13 September, with the UNESCO Africa Regional Training Workshop on Engineering Data Collection and Governance, convened in support of the preparation of the Third UNESCO Global Engineering Report (ER III).

The initiative seeks to develop a comprehensive, evidence-based understanding of engineering capacity globally, enabling governments, engineering institutions and development partners to make informed decisions concerning engineering education, workforce development, research, investment and professional development.

The workshop introduced UNESCO's Engineering Capacity Assessment Framework and methodologies for collecting, validating and governing comparable national engineering data.

*Mr TC Madikane | ***Dr PC Msomi | Mr P Sekhoto | Mr ML Meder | Mr T Selebogo | Ms PF Sibiya | Ms P Mazibuko | Ms SN Shozi
**Ms M Maidi | ***Ms KC Maelane | Mr DL Cawdry | Ms S Sulliman | Prof D Lokhat | Mr J George | Mr Havenga | Dr S Kabane
***Mr E Oswald | Dr VT Hashe | Ms ST Sishi | Prof K Ramdass | Ms S Mona | Ms SP Moketla | Mr MV Lupuwana | Ms K Majola
***Prof E Kearsley | Prof PM Mashinini | Dr M Heyns | Mr L Monyatsi | Mr B Maluleka | Ms NS Gumede | Dr ME Makgae | Ms N Koranteng
***Ms VP Nene | Ms SN Chamane | Dr N Gareeb | Ms ML Damane | Mr SJ Xawuka | Mr S Palackal | Mr GS Gcaba | Ms VN Ndlovu
***Mr BJ Motladiile | Mr IS McKechnie | Mr S Mbadamana | Mr SC Khoza | Ms V Mudau | Mr MP Khathide | Dr PT Govender | Mr. S Pillay

*President | ** Vice President | *** Chairpersons

Ms Niniza Mtshali actively contributed to the workshop discussions, engaging in a process of particular relevance to ECSA's role as South Africa's engineering regulatory body. The engagement highlighted the importance of understanding national engineering capacity, professional registration, continuing professional development, demographic representation and emerging technological capabilities through reliable and appropriately governed data.

This emphasis on engineering information would subsequently be reinforced by the Dar es Salaam Engineering Declaration, which recognised engineering data as strategic infrastructure supporting evidence-based planning and sustainable development.

The day concluded with an official welcome reception hosted by the Institution of Engineers Tanzania (IET) and the Local Organising Committee (LOC). International delegates were welcomed by IET President Eng. Asa Mwaipopo and LOC Chairperson Eng. Martin David, setting the stage for continental collaboration and professional exchange.

Advancing Women and Young Engineers in Africa

On Monday, 14 September, the conference hosted the 9th African Women in Engineering Forum and Young Engineers Forum, placing the advancement of women and emerging engineering practitioners at the centre of discussions on Africa's engineering future.

The proceedings featured contributions from engineering leaders across the continent, including Federation of African Engineering Organisations (FAEO) President Eng. Refilwe Buthelezi, former President of ECSA and the Council's first female President, who delivered remarks during the forums, reinforcing the importance of inclusive engineering leadership.

Eng. Tshego Cornelius, serving as the appointed Theme 3 Lead within the FAEO Women in Engineering Committee and South Africa's Women in Engineering Country Representative, contributed to the FAEO Women in Engineering Committee Updates and Continental Initiatives presentation. The engagement provided an opportunity to share progress on continental initiatives and highlight ongoing efforts towards advancing women's participation, professional growth and leadership within Africa's engineering ecosystem.

ECSA further acknowledges Ms Takalani Netshipale, one of its Future Leaders Ambassadors, who presented a paper titled "Building Inclusive Nations: Empowering Women in STEM to Lead Innovation, Sustainability, and the Future" during the Young Engineers Forum. Her contribution demonstrated the important role of emerging engineering professionals in influencing inclusive innovation, sustainability and the future of the profession.

ECSA President Contributes to High-Level Continental Policy Dialogue

A significant highlight of ECSA's participation occurred on Tuesday, 15 September, when ECSA President, Mr TC Madikane participated as a distinguished South African representative in the High-Level Ministerial and CEO Roundtable during the conference's main opening proceedings.

Held under the theme "Engineering Africa's Transformation – From Policy to Delivery", the roundtable brought together senior government representatives and engineering leaders, including Hon. Prof. Paul Mavima, Zimbabwe's Minister of National Housing and Social Amenities; H.E. Dr Seng Chuan Tan; and Eng. Trudy Morgan. Discussions centred on

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infrastructure financing, energy access and Mission 300, industrialisation, digital transformation, regional integration and STEM development.

President Madikane brought the perspective of engineering regulation, professional competence, governance and accountability into discussions on Africa's infrastructure and economic transformation. His contribution highlighted the importance of translating Africa's policy ambitions into infrastructure projects that are technically sound, sustainable and responsive to societal needs.

Drawing on ECSA's regulatory mandate, he emphasised that unlocking infrastructure investment and accelerating delivery requires more than financing alone. It also demands capable engineering institutions, competent professionals, effective governance and consistent professional standards.

The discussions further highlighted the importance of reliable and affordable energy in enabling industrialisation and economic development, alongside the need to strengthen engineering skills and institutional capacity.

President Madikane's contribution also recognised the opportunities presented by digital transformation and emerging technologies, while reinforcing the importance of professional accountability, public safety and appropriate governance frameworks.

Through this high-level engagement, ECSA reinforced the role of engineering regulation and professional excellence in enabling Africa's sustainable infrastructure development and broader economic transformation.

Showcasing South African Engineering Expertise and Celebrating Excellence

Wednesday, 16 September, saw the conference transition into parallel technical paper presentations and knowledge-sharing sessions addressing key engineering priorities.

These included climate-resilient infrastructure, water and environmental sustainability, energy transition, digital transformation, engineering education, and gender and youth innovation.

ECSA acknowledges the valuable participation of South African registered engineering practitioners, candidate engineers, academics and researchers who delivered technical papers, chaired sessions and contributed to discussions across these themes. Their involvement demonstrated the diversity of South Africa's engineering expertise and the value of technical knowledge-sharing in addressing shared continental challenges.

The day's proceedings culminated in the Africa Engineering Gala Dinner and Awards Ceremony, celebrating outstanding contributions to engineering research, innovation, leadership and professional excellence across the continent. Serving as Chairperson of the FAEO Awards Committee, Eng. Tshego Cornelius provided leadership in coordinating the awards programme and its recognition of engineering excellence.

ECSA extends its congratulations to South African recipients Prof. David Lokhat and Prof. Katleho Moloi, who received Engineering Research Awards in the Industry and Academia categories, respectively. Their achievements reflect the valuable contributions of South African researchers towards advancing engineering knowledge, innovation and research excellence across Africa.

Strengthening Professional Registration, Standards and Mobility

The final day of the main conference, Thursday, 17 September, placed a strong emphasis on engineering governance, professional registration and cross-border recognition.

The Registrars' Forum, held under the theme "Engineering Registration, Professional Standards, Mobility & Recognition Across Africa", provided a platform for engineering regulatory and professional institutions to exchange perspectives on strengthening professional practice, competence standards and recognition across the continent.

ECSA President Eng. TC Madikane and Ms Niniza Mtshali represented the Council during this engagement, with support from registered South African engineering practitioner Eng. Jones Moloisane.

The discussions aligned closely with ECSA's mandate to regulate engineering practice, uphold professional standards, protect the public interest and contribute to the development of internationally recognised engineering practitioners.

The forum reinforced the importance of collaboration between African engineering institutions towards strengthening professional registration, accreditation, competency standards and appropriate mutual recognition pathways for engineers, technologists, technicians and artisans.

Celebrating South African Leadership Within FAEO

The closing proceedings provided a special opportunity to recognise the leadership and contribution of outgoing FAEO President Eng. Refilwe Buthelezi, former ECSA President and the first woman to lead the Council. Her progression from national engineering leadership to the Presidency of FAEO represents an important milestone for South Africa's engineering fraternity and reflects the country's continued contribution to continental engineering leadership.

As part of messages of goodwill from FAEO national member organisations, ECSA President Eng. TC Madikane delivered remarks expressing appreciation for her service, leadership and contribution to advancing engineering cooperation across Africa.

South African delegates attending the conference joined him on stage to extend their appreciation and best wishes as she concluded her term.

The occasion represented a moment of national pride and recognition of the contributions of South African engineering leaders to the advancement of the profession beyond the country's borders.

From Dialogue to Delivery: The Dar es Salaam Engineering Declaration

A significant outcome of the conference was the adoption of the Dar es Salaam Engineering Declaration 2026 and accompanying Action Resolutions, establishing a continental framework for moving from policy dialogue towards practical implementation.

Under the overarching message "From Dialogue to Delivery", the Declaration outlines 14 commitments and 18 action resolutions addressing engineering's role in development

planning, infrastructure resilience, water security, energy access, digital transformation, professional standards, education, inclusion, research and innovation.

Of relevance to ECSA are resolutions calling for:

Professional standards and mobility: Strengthened cooperation among engineering regulators and professional institutions towards comparable competence standards, accreditation, registration and professional recognition.
Engineering data and capacity development: Improved engineering data collection, governance and benchmarking to support evidence-based planning and the development of engineering capacity across Africa.
Future-ready engineering education: Greater emphasis on engineering skills development, continuing professional development, emerging technologies and closer collaboration between academia and industry.
Professional ethics and public safety: Stronger engineering standards, quality assurance, professional accountability and regulatory capacity as foundations for safe and sustainable infrastructure development.
Inclusive professional growth: Expanded opportunities for women and young engineering practitioners to advance into professional practice, leadership, innovation and enterprise development.

The Declaration further calls for a 2026–2030 action and accountability framework, identifying responsible institutions, implementation partners, milestones and measurable indicators, with progress reporting through successive Africa Engineering Week and African Engineering Conference platforms.

These outcomes present valuable opportunities for ECSA, working alongside FAEO and other continental partners, to contribute towards regulatory cooperation, professional capacity development and the advancement of a competent, inclusive and internationally recognised African engineering profession.

Sustaining the Momentum Beyond the Conference

Following the conference, FAEO hosted a post-conference highlights session on 14 October 2026 through the FAEO Academy.

The session provided an opportunity to revisit key conference discussions, achievements and outcomes, extending the conference's reach to engineering professionals who were unable to attend in person.

A recording of the session is available through the FAEO Academy, supporting continued knowledge-sharing and continental engagement.

ECSA's Continued Commitment to Africa's Engineering Future

As a proud member of the Federation of African Engineering Organisations, ECSA remains committed to strengthening continental partnerships, promoting professional engineering excellence and contributing to the advancement of engineering standards and capabilities across Africa.

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Its participation in Africa Engineering Week 2026 demonstrated the value of meaningful engagement across policy development, engineering regulation, technical expertise, research, mentorship, leadership and the recognition of professional excellence.

As Africa advances from dialogue towards implementation, ECSA looks forward to continued collaboration with FAEO, fellow engineering institutions and international partners in supporting the continent's infrastructure, industrialisation, innovation and sustainable development ambitions.

Through collaboration, professional excellence and shared accountability, ECSA remains committed to advancing engineering that serves society and contributes to Africa's inclusive, innovative and sustainable future.

Ms Tshego Cornelius, Pr Eng

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