

THE FW DE KLERK FOUNDATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

In collaboration with the **Konrad Adenauer Foundation**



To Commemorate the 36th anniversary of
FW de Klerk's speech that initiated
South Africa's Constitutional Transformation Process

"LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS 2026: Chances and Challenges for Municipalities to fulfil their Constitutional Mandate"

Tuesday, 3 February 2026

13:30 for 14:00 - 18:00

Followed by a cocktail reception



FW de Klerk
FOUNDATION



PROGRAMME

*Programme Director: **Mr Christo van der Rheede**, Executive Director, FW de Klerk Foundation*

- 13:30 Arrival and registration
- 14:00 Welcome by **Mrs Elita de Klerk**,
Chairperson, FW de Klerk Foundation
- 14:10 Welcome by **Mr Gregor Jaecke**,
Resident Representative, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)
- 14:20 **“LOCAL ELECTIONS FROM A COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE PERSPECTIVE”**
Mr Velenkosini Hlabisa,
Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs,
and President of the IFP
- 14:50 **“LOCAL ELECTIONS FROM A FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT &
ACCOUNTABILITY PERSPECTIVE”**
Ms Tsakani Maluleke,
Auditor General of South Africa
- 15:20 - 15:50 Tea & Coffee
- 15:50 **“LOCAL ELECTIONS FROM A PRIVATE-PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP
AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE”**
Dr Ruben Richards,
Executive Deputy Mayor of the Cederberg Municipality
- 16:20 Panel Discussion with Speakers
Facilitated by **Mr Christo van der Rheede**
- 17:10 Presentation of the 2025 FW de Klerk Goodwill Award to the family of
Dr Franklin Sonn, recipient of the award posthumously
- 17:20 Reply by **Mr Crispin Sonn** – on behalf of the family
- 17:30 Conclusion by **Mrs Christina Teichmann**,
Deputy Chairperson, FW de Klerk Foundation

Cocktail Reception



WILDEPAARDEJACHT

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MINISTER VELENKOSINI HLABISA

The Hon Mr Velenkosini Fiki Hlabisa was born on 4 January 1965 in KwaZulu-Natal, the eldest of six sons born to David and Them bani Hlabisa. While at primary school he benefitted from the Good Citizenship programme incorporated into the school curriculum by the KwaZulu Government, under the leadership of Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi. The teachings of self-help and self-reliance, and selfless service to one's community and country, resonated with him from a young age. His passion for education saw him pursue a career in teaching, where he rose to Principal of Somfula High School. Continuing his studies, he obtained an SSTD and B. Paed Degree in History from the University of Zululand, and a BA Honours Degree in History from the University of South Africa. While studying at the University of Zululand, he became a founding member and first Chairperson of the South African Democratic Students' Movement. Later he became Regional Deputy Chairperson of the National Teachers' Union. His work at the community level remained consistent. For six years he served as Chairperson of the Community Working Group, working with the South African

Medical Research Council on HIV/Aids and Microbicide trials. He has also served for over a decade as Chairperson of the Hlabisa Hospital Board. Through the Inkatha Freedom Party, he embraced the call to serve in governance and spent twenty-four years gaining experience in local governance in the positions of Councillor, Deputy Mayor, and Mayor at the District level. In August 2021, he was elected unopposed as the President of the IFP. In this position, he was the Leader of the Official Opposition in the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature, before being sworn in as a Member of Parliament in October 2023, taking the reins in the National Assembly from the late Founder of the IFP, Prince Buthelezi. Following the May 2024 National and Provincial Elections and the formation of South Africa's second Government of National Unity, the IFP became part of the national government. The President appointed Hon Hlabisa as Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, a role he embraced in the spirit of servant leadership. Minister Hlabisa is married and has been blessed with six children. Minister Hlabisa is committed to building a more stable, prosperous, and just South Africa, hand in hand with every citizen. He travels in hope, believing that change is possible.



MS TSAKANI MALULEKE

Ms Tsakani Maluleke is the Auditor-General of South Africa, the first woman to be appointed to this role in over 100 years. Prior to this, she served as the Deputy Auditor-General. She has more than 20 years of experience spanning diverse areas including Auditing, Consulting, Corporate Advisory, Development Finance, Investment Management and Skills Development. A seasoned business leader with a

wealth of corporate governance experience gained through participation on numerous corporate boards and strategic committees in both the private and public sectors. Her commitment to service excellence, ethical leadership and contribution to the advancement of transformation have been recognised by the Presidents of the Black Management Forum (BMF), the African Women Chartered Accountants (AWCA), the Black Business Council (BBC) and the Association for the Advancement of Black Accountants of Southern Africa (ABASA), of which she is a Past President.



DR RUBEN RICHARDS

Dr Ruben Richards is a senior public leader, governance practitioner, academic and author with extensive experience in democratic governance, economic leadership, civil society and institutional reform. Born in Cape Town and raised on the Cape Flats during the apartheid era, his early life was shaped by systemic violence, exclusion and economic marginalisation. These formative experiences inform his commitment to ethical leadership, social cohesion, public safety and inclusive development. He is married and has two adult children. Dr Richards has pursued a diverse and distinguished professional career. He progressed from employment as a clothing factory worker to qualification as an artisan (fitter and turner) and subsequently to executive roles in business (public and private companies). He has also served as a commercial citrus farmer. He holds academic qualifications from institutions in the United

States of America and Switzerland, earned a PhD from the University of Cape Town in 1995 and has taught internationally. He played significant roles during South Africa's democratic transition, including service as an Executive Secretary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and as a founding Deputy Director-General of the Directorate of Special Operations (the Scorpions), contributing to the state's response to organised crime and corruption. In 2021, he co-founded a civil society organisation that participated in the local government elections and following a coalition agreement was appointed as Executive Mayor of the Cederberg Local Municipality. In this role, he has prioritised governance reform, institutional stability and improved service delivery. Dr Richards brings together lived experience, extensive leadership capability, technical and academic expertise as well as a deep understanding of South Africa's constitutional and governance framework, grounded in a strong commitment to public accountability.

www.rrf.org.za

Digital profile: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRfJNS-3mzo>



THE 2025 FW DE KLERK GOODWILL AWARD

Dr Franklin Abraham Sonn was born in October 1939 in Vosburg in the Karoo, Northern Cape and raised in Queenstown in the Eastern Cape. Dr Sonn graduated from the University of the Western Cape and began his career as an educator. He became the principal of Spes Bona High School in Athlone, Cape Town. Later, he became the President of the Cape Teachers' Professional Association before he was appointed, in 1977, Rector of the then Peninsula Technikon in Cape Town, a post he held until his diplomatic posting. Peninsula Technikon is now part of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). Dr Sonn was an anti-apartheid campaigner and a champion of broad-based economic empowerment, who exercised his vision for a just South Africa as a board member in significant corporate businesses and as a co-founder of large black-owned enterprises. Throughout his distinguished career, Dr Sonn served on the boards of major companies, including ABSA, Airports Company South Africa (ACSA), and Pioneer Foods. He was the Chancellor at the University of the Free State (UFS). Dr Sonn held this office from 2002 and retired as Chancellor of the UFS on 31 December 2009. He held 12 honorary doctorates and received the National Order, Counsellor of the Baobab Silver in 2008, from former President Thabo Mbeki. He monitored Zambia's general election in 1992, as part of Jimmy Carter's team, and ran for the African National Congress (ANC) in the



Western Cape during South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994. Dr Sonn was also a patron of the Klein Karoo National Arts Festival and was a trustee of the Desmond Tutu Freedom Trust. He spent three years as South Africa's first ambassador to the United States of America (USA) after President Nelson Mandela appointed him in 1995 until 1998. Dr Sonn was married to Joan Heather Gelderbloem. They have two children. Dr Franklin Abraham Sonn passed away on 15 November 2025 in Cape Town, Western Cape.

FW DE KLERK FOUNDATION

The FW de Klerk Foundation promotes and preserves FW de Klerk's presidential heritage by supporting the causes for which he worked during his presidency.

The Foundation:

- Promotes and defends the South African Constitution
- Works for reconciliation, mutual understanding and national unity
- Preserves and celebrates the legacy of FW de Klerk
- Provides information about South Africa's constitutional transformation process by hosting a multimedia exhibition and interactive website
- Is in the process of establishing the FW de Klerk Archive

The Foundation is a non-profit organisation (NPO number: NPO 031-061) with a small operating budget.

Support our work by making a donation or leaving a bequest.

Donations are tax-deductible and received in terms of section 18A of the Income Tax Act No 58 of 1962.

FW DE KLERK FOUNDATION

Bank Name: ABSA Private Bank

Account Name: FW de Klerk Foundation Trust

Account Number: 406 009 2839

Branch Code: 632005

Telephone: +27 21 930 3622

E-mail: info@fwdeklerk.org

Website: www.fwdeklerk.org

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