

Human Sciences Research Council

HSRC Annual Conference 2026 to spotlight cutting-edge research on digital transformation

Ekurhuleni, Monday, 14 September 2026 – The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) invites all media to the 2026 HSRC Annual Conference to be held at the Radisson (Destiny) Hotel & Convention Centre, O.R. Tambo, Ekurhuleni, from 15 to 16 September 2026.

Held under the theme, *The Age of Digitality and the Future of Society: Rethinking Knowledge, Ethics, and the Role of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, the conference aims to foster interdisciplinary dialogue on how societies can navigate digital transformation in ways that advance inclusion, justice, dignity and sustainable development, with a particular emphasis on African and Global South perspectives.

The inaugural session will feature opening addresses by HSRC Board Chair Prof Xoliswa Mtose, and HSRC CEO, Prof Sarah Mosoetsa, who will speak on the objectives and reflections of the conference. Apart from the opening plenary, the conference will reveal several of the latest and refined studies aligned to the conference themes.

These will include the following sessions and papers:

1. On digital innovation, health and indigenous knowledge:

- Digital innovation for public-private tuberculosis care integration in South Africa: Lessons from the Connect TB Study
- Digitalising indigenous health knowledge systems: Inclusion of izangoma in South African chronic healthcare
- Sustainable pathways for digitally managing, accessing, and promoting indigenous knowledge systems in South African mainstream education

2. On democracy and elections – as South Africa heads to Local Government Elections in a few days, the following studies will be presented:

- Findings from the IEC Electronic Voting Policy Discussion Document.
- Voting behaviour and electoral trust: Evidence from the 2024 elections and the road to 2026.
- Identity politics, democratic trust and electoral realignment: Lessons from South Africa's 2024 elections.

These form part of a rich programme covering nine sub-themes, including *Rethinking knowledge production in the age of AI; Digital humanities and African knowledge systems; Communication, digital publics and society; Ethics, power and accountability in AI; Data, infrastructure and sovereignty; The future of work, education and scholarship; Democracy and digital society; Digital inequality and social justice; and Global South pathways and alternative digital futures.*

Media will also have access to presentations, speeches and the HSRC Exhibition and Interactive Networking Hub – the dynamic heart of the conference – an immersive space to connect with researchers and engage with cutting-edge research.

The HSRC Annual Conference is one of South Africa's largest and most influential social science conferences. Each year the conference is organised around a pressing societal theme. The 2026 edition is held under the theme, *The Age of Digitality and the Future of Society*.

The conference will culminate on Wednesday, 16 September 2026, with a closing address by the Honourable Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Professor Blade Nzimande.

For more information about the conference, speakers and the programme, please visit: <https://annual-conference.hsrc.ac.za/>

END.

Details of the conference:

Date: 15 - 16 September 2026

Time: Registration from 08:00

Venue: Radisson (Destiny) Hotel & Convention Centre, O.R. Tambo, Ekurhuleni

YouTube Link:

For media enquiries, please contact Adziliwi Nematandani: Cell: +27 82 765 9191 Email: anematandani@hsrc.ac.za

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#HSRCConference

#AgeOfDigitality

#FutureOfSociety

#DigitalTransformation

Notes to the editor

About the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)

Established in 1968, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) is South Africa's statutory research agency and the largest dedicated social science and humanities research institute on the African continent. The HSRC generates evidence and insights that inform public policy, support development and improve lives. Through high-quality research, strategic partnerships and research capacity development, the Council contributes to evidence-informed decision-making in South Africa, Africa and globally.

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