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MANAGER

THE MAGAZINE FOR PUBLIC SECTOR DECISION-MAKERS

PSM

FEBRUARY 2017

Advancing local government

Minister Des van
Rooyen in the
driver's seat

High hopes

Preparing learners
and students for
success

Provincial focus

Northern Cape
aims for the stars

Lifestyle

- Love is in the air
- Underground adventures



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FROM DAVOS TO DURBAN.

It has been said that the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, is about the rich discussing the problems of the poor. In fact, many matters came up for discussion at its January meeting with the rising challenge of inequality receiving widespread attention.

Of course, this came against the background of a threatened return to trade protectionism - against which the Chinese president eloquently warned - the rise of right wing populism in the United States and Europe, the uneven economic recovery of the world's economies and the understanding that the Fourth Industrial Revolution is upon us and may worsen the inequalities in societies.

The first industrial revolution was characterised by using steam power to mechanise production, the second used electric power to get to mass production, the third electronics and information technology to automate production. All had profound effects for management and employment.

The fourth one, in which the world finds itself now, piggy-backs on the third, and according to WEF's Klaus Schwab "is a fusion of technologies that it is blurring the lines between the physical, digital and biological spheres". It is bound to disrupt almost every industry in every country and "could herald the transformation of entire systems of production, management and governance", according to Schwab.

South Africa will not escape this change. To keep abreast of this development and other issues touched on in Davos, the country had a strong delegation at WEF, led by Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa. He pointed out that South Africa had come through a turbulent year but was confident that the economic environment this year will be stable even though growth will be slower than is needed.

He praised South Africa's strong institutions and emphasised that whatever growth there is, will be inclusive.

At SANRAL we are very aware of these trends. There is a policy in place to enhance inclusive growth through two broad approaches: strong supportive programmes on the educational front and a strict rule that in all its construction programmes local SMMEs must be involved, with a strong element of skills transfer built in.

The roads agency supports programmes at five South African universities, namely University of Free State, Stellenbosch University, University of Cape Town, University of Pretoria and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, aimed at furthering research in road construction and related disciplines as well as supporting programmes aimed at enhancing science and maths learning at school level.

In addition, it awarded 122 bursaries for tertiary education in science-related subjects last year as well as 196 high school scholarships - to the combined value of R10,49 million - to ensure that there is an adequate future supply of potential engineering students.

These are long term interventions. In the short term, significant investments were made in SMMEs, notably black-owned enterprises. Thus, SMMEs earned a total of R3.5b through contracts with SANRAL of which R1.9b went to 1 004 black-owned entities. At the same time, the skills development programme benefitted 4 120 people, including 1 531 women.

The agency is thus fully aligned to the fundamental government thrust.

This will be taken further in May when our government will host the World Economic Forum on Africa in Durban.

Regional and global leaders from business, government and civil society will meet to explore solutions to create economic opportunities for all - exactly one of the goals of the Davos meeting.

According to a WEF statement on the coming meeting, there will be refocused attention on the urgency of economic diversification, revitalisation of manufacturing and harnessing of human innovation.

It adds: "The Fourth Industrial Revolution offers new opportunities to achieve inclusive and sustainable growth by fast-tracking market integration in Africa through industrial corridors."

Against that background, it is important to note that without a well-maintained high-quality road network, economic growth will be more difficult. And higher economic growth is a sine qua non, if the inclusive growth which is national, and thus SANRAL, policy, is to be achieved to make any significant change in the lives of more people.

Davos was important, and Durban will shift the focus to the immediate and local.





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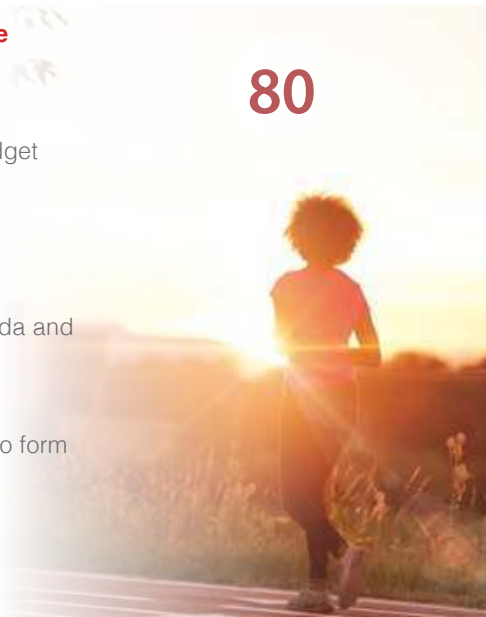


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Public Sector Manager
THE MAGAZINE FOR PUBLIC SECTOR DECISION-MAKERS

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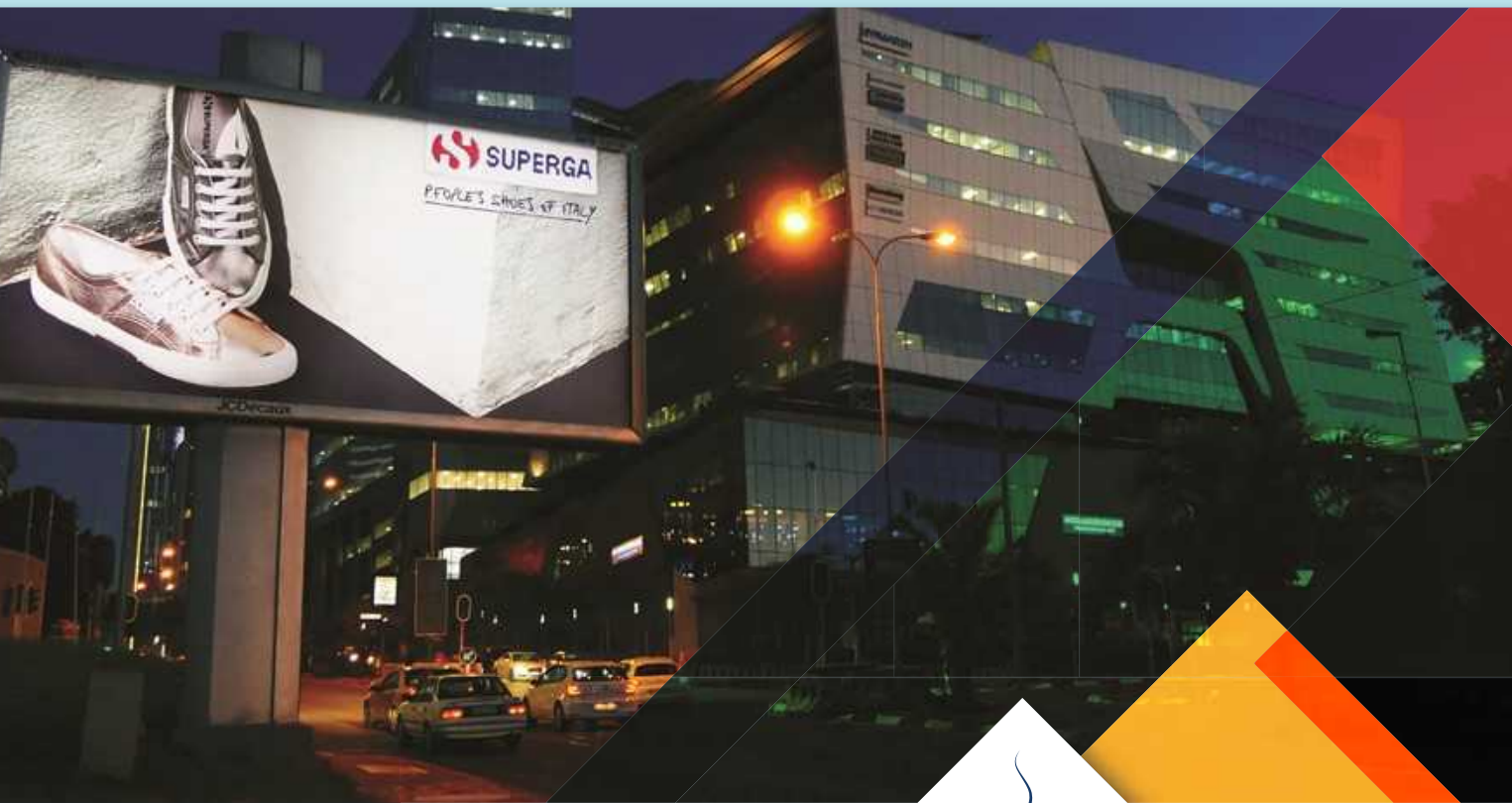
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Working towards NDP goals

As we look to a new year with all its challenges and expectations, there is no better place to turn to for guidance than the National Development Plan (NDP).

The NDP is a blueprint for what needs to be done to turn South Africa into prosperous society by 2030. Adopted in 2012, it sets targets which include lowering unemployment to six percent by 2030 and eradicating absolute poverty by 2030.

At its basis is the idea that all those who live in the country must do their bit to leave it a better place than they found it. It is not the responsibility of government alone to do so. An active citizenry that holds government to account is all important.

To ensure a uniform communications approach across all spheres of government, implementing agencies and social partners championing the plan, the NDP brand identity was launched in August 2016. It contains the country's most recognisable symbol, our flag, atop the lettering "NDP 2030".

All sectors of society, business, labour and civil society can play their part in advancing the brand identity of the NDP by highlighting the implementation of the NDP through co-branding initiatives that are catalytic in implementing the plan.

The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation has been tasked with monitoring the progress towards the NDP through the Medium-Term Strategic Framework 2014-2019, which is the first five-year implementation plan of the NDP.

The Outcome Programme of Action reports for the first and second quarter of 2016/17 reveal mixed results.

On the one hand, we have made inroads in the implementation of climate change plans, made gains in life expectancy (from 54 years in 2009 to 62 in 2015) and notched up a number of improvements in the education sector – such as more new schools being built and improved learner outcomes.

The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, which was released by the Human Sciences Research Council in November 2016, reveals that from 2003 to 2015 South Africa saw a significant improvement in mathematics and science, more than for any other country with comparable data.

There has also been improved provision of basic services, including grid and non-grid electricity connections, potable water in dwellings, sanitation and solid waste management.

However, weak economic growth has set back our drive to reduce unemployment, poverty and inequality. South Africa is growing at well below the five percent a year the country needs to meet the NDP targets.

Government has, however, responded with a Nine-Point Plan which has begun to show some progress.

In the coming months, government will also seek to put into action a number of other initiatives, such as a 30 percent procurement set-aside for small businesses, the fast tracking of 10 of the 40 priority investment projects and the deployment of locally developed technologies.

An important cornerstone to the NDP is a capable state. To strengthen the public sector, new regulations ban public servants from doing business with government. In addition, the Department of Public Service and Administration has developed a measurement framework which provides departments with a toolkit to manage and measure their productivity.

Government has also centralised the management of disciplinary cases to speed up the resolution of these cases.

But to achieve the goals of the NDP, all South Africans must pull together to tackle the country's many challenges. We've done it before – when we organised the successful 2010 FIFA World Cup and negotiated our new democracy. Now it's time for new challenges. Let's make it work! 





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Setting course for progress



In the year that we celebrate the centenary of OR Tambo, let's return to our work with renewed motivation to move South Africa forward, energised by his enduring values of honesty, hard work, humility and service to our people.

Whilst President Jacob Zuma's 2017 State of the Nation Address, which outlines government's plans for the year ahead and assesses progress made with the plans announced in 2016, will provide a backdrop for the year ahead, we can be proud of what we have achieved in the past 12 months, despite the prevailing economic challenges.

The anxiety of a ratings downgrade brought organised labour, business and government closer together in a partnership that put South Africa first.

In the end, all three rating agencies kept South Africa's sovereign debt credit rating status above junk status.

The Nine-Point Plan, which was introduced to boost economic growth and create jobs, is yielding results. Eskom has scaled up its maintenance work and energy availability has improved to a position of surplus capacity to power regional economic development. In December 2016, Kusile – the first power plant in Africa to implement clean fuel technology – connected its first 800 MW unit to the national grid.

A R1.5 billion fund for small and medium-sized enterprises has been established by big business and the fund is expected to make its first investments early this year. Chief executives of the country's big companies have also committed to a youth employment programme to place one million youth in paid internships over three years.

The Department of Trade and Industry last year launched a new investment promotion agency called Invest SA. Between 1 July and 30 September, Invest SA facilitated an investment pipeline of R18.2 billion, mostly in large scale gas to power projects.

To help boost small businesses, government will this year finalise amendments to the Preferential Procurement

Policy Framework Act, which are necessary before a 30 percent set-aside for small businesses can be introduced.

Close to a trillion rand has been budgeted over the next three years for public sector infrastructure in areas such as energy, transport and telecommunications, all of which will boost internal and external trade efficiency.


The Industrial Development Corporation last year approved R14.5 billion in new investment, the largest sum in its 76-year history, which included R2.9 billion in transactions involving black industrialists, R1 billion for youth-owned enterprises and R1.2 billion for women-owned enterprises.

In addition, public and private investment totalling R17 billion has been targeted towards "oceans economy" initiatives over the past two years, creating about 5 000 jobs. Investments support shipbuilding and training of marine engineers and artisans.

Construction has also begun on at least five agri-parks, while several land reform projects involving a 50/50 share of the land, which proposes relative rights for people who live and work on farms, are being carried out.

In November 2016, a National Economic Development and Labour Council commission announced a proposed R3 500 national minimum wage. Agreement is expected to be reached on the final figure this year.

There has been much progress but 2016 was also marked by student protests and the worst drought since 1992. To address these challenges, government has so far committed well over a R1 billion in drought relief, while the National Treasury last year allocated an additional R17 billion to universities over the next three years.

Despite the challenges, we are a government at work and 2017 will be no different. As we look back at the progress made in 2016, we also look forward to new opportunities 2017 presents to grow our economy and improve the lives of our people. 



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Developing local government for success

Local economic development will take centre stage as the Ministry for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs' Back to Basics (B2B) programme enters its second phase in the next financial year.

Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) Des van Rooyen says municipalities will be expected to focus more on local economic development.

"B2B continues to be a government programme driving improved, essential service delivery for all the people of South Africa.

"A core aspect of the programme involves the degree to which municipalities are putting their people and communities first by engaging with them, providing frequent report backs and addressing their concerns," he said.

The Minister noted that much progress has been achieved with the implementation of the first phase of B2B and much more can be expected during the second phase.

"Bearing in mind that developmental local government remains the visionary foundation for the continuing reconstruction and development of our country, B2B is moving into its second phase, which will see the accelerated implementation of the programme."

Reflecting on his department's performance in the past financial year, Minister Van Rooyen said the programme will also drive the implementation of the Integrated Urban Development Framework. Launched last year, the framework aims to steer urban growth towards a sustainable model of compact, connected and coordinated towns and cities.

The current framework is aligned to the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2014-2019, namely addressing spatial imbalances in economic activities, fostering sustainable human settlements, job

creation and inclusive growth. All these are aimed at underpinning the foundation for a responsive and accountable local government.

"This is in keeping with the findings of the 2016 State of the Cities Report that called on the different sectors of government to work together to drive economic and social inclusion," explained the Minister.

He added that his department would also continue to stress the importance of municipal public accounts committees in the oversight of municipalities, while the third Presidential Local Government Summit, which will be held in 2017, will review the progress made in addressing local government challenges.

Overcoming challenges

Minister Van Rooyen's departments had to deal with a

Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Des van Rooyen wants municipalities to turn their attention to local economic development.



number of issues in the past financial year, including a crippling drought, delivering fair local government elections and having to ensure the seamless transition of the new municipalities.

The department played a key role in coordinating the elections held in August, working with various stakeholders through an Inter-Ministerial Committee.

"In the run-up to the elections, the Department of Cooperative Governance played a pivotal role in overseeing this process. Importantly CoGTA, working with other stakeholders, ensured that the requirements of the Constitutional Court judgment on Tlokwe were met. This allowed the elections to go ahead without any hindrances."

In its ruling in June, the court gave the Independent Electoral Committee 18 months to get the voters roll in order. "This allowed the elections to go ahead without any hindrances," said Minister Van Rooyen.

Between February and April 2015, the Minister requested the Municipal Demarcation Board, in terms of the Demarcation Act, to determine or re-determine the boundaries of various municipalities with the view to optimising their financial viability.

This resulted in the number of municipalities being reduced from 278 in the last local government elections to 257.

"Many of those municipalities have proven to be financially unviable and we believe that the amalgamation of municipalities will provide for a strengthened local government sector," he said.

Following the elections, the department, working closely with the South African Local Government Association, rolled out an integrated councillor induction programme. In addition, the department held a national awareness campaign to increase community participation in the election of credible ward committees.

Municipal Infrastructure Grant

Minister Van Rooyen also stressed the importance of the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) programme. It is aimed at providing all South Africans with sustainable access to a basic level of service through grant finance targeted primarily at covering the capital cost of

providing new basic infrastructure for the poor and renewing that infrastructure.

"Sustainable access to services implies that the infrastructure must be properly planned; delivered effectively and efficiently; and operated and maintained in such a way as to remain functional over its expected useful life."

Since its inception in 2004/5 up to 2015/16, municipalities have spent R106 million for the funding of basic infrastructure to the poor in line with their Municipal Integrated Development Plans.

For 2016/17 to 2019/20, R65.3 billion has been set aside for the MIG programme.

Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent

To improve the functioning of the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent, the department, through the programme management office, managed by the grant, has concluded diagnostic assessments in four districts – Amathole, uMzinyathi, Greater Sekhukhune and Bojanala, the Minister noted.

Support plans are being developed for these four district municipalities. The plans focus on helping to boost revenue, improving operation and maintenance, scaling-up technical capacity and putting in place better infrastructure project planning and implementation.

"The plans are expected to help develop a pipeline of priority projects to address service delivery backlogs."

He added that during 2015/16 the Municipal Infrastructure Agent supported the enrolment of 256 apprentices in accredited training centres for theoretical training necessary for them to qualify as artisans.

"These learners are continuing with their training and most of them will be completing their apprenticeship in the 2017/18 financial year thereby contributing to an increase in the pool of skilled technical individuals for the local government sector."

Dealing with drought

The department also helped lead and coordinate the government's response to the drought, the Minister pointed out. >>



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"Through our work within the Inter-Ministerial Task Team, drought plans were better coordinated to ensure that they had the necessary impact. Of importance was to ensure that we work with various stakeholders who also greatly assisted in cushioning our country from the scourge of drought we are experiencing.

"In the past financial year 681 boreholes were refurbished and 1 026 new boreholes drilled.

"Even though we have seen some rain in parts of the country, we are not out of the woods as yet. We should continue to use water sparingly until the whole country has recuperated and our dams are at an acceptable level," he urged.

Community Work Programme

Minister Van Rooyen also detailed progress on the Community Work Programme (CWP) which offers an employment safety net to the poor. The programme does so by soliciting the input of the citizens of the area in determining the work to be carried out and the relevant partners with non-governmental organisations, schools, private sector and national government departments.

During the past financial year 30 new sites were added and the intention is to add CWP sites to another 38 municipalities by March 2017. This will increase the number of municipalities implementing the programme to 236.

The programme creates employment for 214 430 people, which is up from 100 000 at its inception in 2010/11.

"Currently about 42 percent of participants are youth, while 83 percent are women. Just over one percent of participants are persons with disabilities," he added.

Reflecting on the impact of the programme, Minister Van Rooyen noted that in Gauteng participants helped clean almost 300 000 square meters of public spaces, rivers and canals.

In all 1 051 illegal dumping sites have been cleared, while 2 076 community gardens have been maintained. It has also benefited 10 800 children at crèches, while 2 058 desks have been refurbished and 34 000 learners have gained school patrols.

"The Community Work Programme is much more than an employment programme. It reminds our citizens



CoGTA Minister Des van Rooyen and Deputy Minister Andries Nel painting a house of a community member.



Deputy Minister Obed Bapela (second from left) during a meeting with communities and traditional leaders in Mpumalanga.

that this is a government that cares. It offers hope and opportunity to a sector of the population that is economically and socially excluded. It makes the promise of a brighter future a reality for thousands of our citizens and their dependants,” he said.

Traditional leadership

To strengthen traditional leadership the department continues to work with traditional authorities on a number of key issues ranging from tackling service delivery protests, promoting rural and economic development, and mitigating the effects of drought, among others.

“Some traditional leaders are already working with government to bring services closer to rural people by availing the traditional councils as service delivery points closest to citizens,” pointed out the Minister.

He said a number of traditional councils’ offices currently provide various government services, including those of the police, social security, social development, home affairs, labour and small business development.

To improve the functioning of traditional councils and their workings with elected local government heads, Draft Section 81 Regulations on Participation of

Traditional Leaders in Municipal Councils have been developed.

In the current MTSF period the Department of Traditional Affairs plans to consult with all role players before finalising the regulations.

In addition, the Commission on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims has finalised 991 traditional leadership disputes and claims out of the 1 244 lodged. Limpopo will finalise outstanding disputes by December 2017.

Minister Van Rooyen also highlighted the tabling of the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Bill to Parliament in the current financial year. The bill affirms and recognises the Khoi and San communities, their leadership and structures.

The Minister also welcomed the Traditional Courts Bill.

“It came at an opportune time as it now completes the transformation of the institution of traditional leadership. The bill will allow communities to play a key role in rehabilitating people within communities guided by our constitutional provisions. The Traditional Courts will implement restorative justice,” he added. ●

SOUTH AFRICA IS OPEN FOR *Mining investment*

The African continent, which produces more than 60 metals and mineral products, has huge potential with respect to mineral reserves for exploration and production. Investors are seeking expansion of new markets, especially in the developing world, as this presents investment opportunities. In this context, the South African mining industry is offering unparalleled opportunities for both local and international investors.

South Africa has one of the best and progressive mining policies and is one of the most attractive destinations for investment in the resource sector. This year the sector also celebrates 150 years of formal mining. The first diamond was discovered in South Africa in 1867, and marked the beginning of the growth of the South African economy and much of the development we see today. Despite the global mining challenges, South Africa's mining sector is still attractive to investors, well over a century later.

SA BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

The country boasts many competitive advantages such as: an endowment of both natural and man-made resources, some of the world's greatest mining assets and minerals resources estimated between US \$2.5-trillion and US \$3-trillion dollars, highly-developed physical infrastructure of roads, airports and railways, including dedicated rail links and ports for the export of minerals as well as mobile communications.

MINING LEGISLATION

South Africa has transformed from a State characterised by oppression to one that is democratic and alive with possibilities. The mining industry was not immune to discriminatory policies that resulted in the majority of people not benefiting from the country's mineral wealth.

Legislation like the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development

Act are in place to create a globally competitive, transformative and attractive regulatory environment to nurture the sustainable growth and meaningful transformation of South Africa's mining industry. The Act, which improves the ease of doing business, provides for the Mining Charter to effect transformation with specific targets.

Transformation of the South African economy finds its foundation in our Constitution. It addresses fundamental areas that are critical in advancing socio-economic development in developing industrialists and champions to take South Africa forward, empowering local communities and labour sending areas, as well as employees.

It is for this reason that the Mining Charter aims to substantially and meaningfully expand opportunities for black people to enter the mining and minerals industry and to benefit

from the exploitation of the nation's mineral resources. The Charter also aims to utilise and expand the existing skills base for the empowerment of black South Africans and to serve the community. Engagements have been held with stakeholders in the sector – including business, labour and communities – on proposed amendments to the Charter. The reviewed Charter aims to be a reflection of what South Africans want to see in the mining sector.

ENSURING THE FULL PARTICIPATION OF JUNIOR MINERS

For mining to be sustainable, it requires ongoing and extensive exploration, given the time it takes to bring new mines into production. The decrease in exploration expenditure is partly due to the lack of capital available to junior miners who are the principal drivers of exploration, and this is raising concerns with regards to the future health of the mining industry. The country is encouraging interested investors to come on board and invest in the junior mining space for growth and development of the sector.

South Africa's minerals industry is open to investment, especially in exploration, mining and value addition activities. To facilitate investment, the Department of Mineral Resources selected several projects to showcase at last year's African Mining Indaba which took place from 6 to 9 February 2016 in Cape Town.



"THIS YEAR THE SECTOR ALSO CELEBRATES 150 YEARS OF FORMAL MINING."

The Mining Indaba is the world's largest gathering of mining's most influential stakeholders and decision-makers vested in African mining. This gathering provided an opportunity for international mining analysts, fund managers, investment specialists, and government leaders to meet and exchange current economic and mining developments with the world's leading experts on African mining.

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Adding shine to the diamond industry

Writer: Noluthando Motswai

“We have been mining diamonds since 1867, when the first diamond was discovered in this country.”

Futhi Zikalala makes it her business to know all there is to know about diamonds in the country.

Zikalala is the CEO of the State Diamond Trader and leads a team that promotes the local beneficiation of the diamond industry.

This includes buying and selling diamonds to companies and individuals that cut and polish diamonds.

“We buy and sell locally. In terms of legislation, we buy up to 10 percent from local diamond miners and sell them to local manufacturers,” she explains.

There are those who question the need for the State Diamond Trader to be part of the value chain of buying and selling diamonds, Zikalala says.

Throughout the world diamonds are bought through a tender system and traditionally bigger companies have long-term contracts with their buyers.

“The state wanted to promote beneficiation but did not want the private sector to be the only players in the sector. Government decided that it needed a platform for people to buy rough diamonds, particularly new players,



CEO of the State Diamond Trader Futhi Zikalala is on a mission to ensure that more South Africans benefit from the diamond industry.

and not be threatened by the whole system of tenders through which they may not necessarily get what they are looking for.”

In addition to trading in diamonds, the organisation contributes to the growth of the industry.

“Apart from buying and selling diamonds we are also called upon by law to intervene and grow the industry through research and other interventions.”

In her role, Zikalala is tasked with running the State Diamond Trader and is responsible for its overall health.

“I make sure that the organisation complies with all the rules applicable to it and ensure that it is thriving and meeting its targets including establishing our own strategies and making sure that there is order in what we do daily. As the accounting officer, I account for everything in the organisation.”

Diamonds in the rough

Zikalala says rough diamonds are among the most regulated commodities in the world.

Rough diamonds are not readily available to those outside the industry and therefore unlicensed and there are regulations concerning how these diamonds are handled.

In South Africa most diamonds are found in parts of Limpopo, Gauteng, Free State, Northern Cape and North West.

“We know where it’s possible for people to find diamonds in the country. We also have a sense of what type of diamonds can be found in particular areas.”

A mining right or mining permit is needed to mine diamonds, which is available from the Department of Mineral Resources. “You mine in terms of the conditions of the license.”

Every unpolished or rough diamond that is traded and manufactured in the country is accompanied by documentation, so that it to be traced back to its origins.

Zikalala says if a person is found in possession of a rough diamond without the proper documentation, he or she can be arrested.

Once a diamond is polished and sold to the public it is accompanied by a laboratory certificate that says it has been polished and includes details about its size and

characteristics.

“It is very important for buyers to know that they need to have the laboratory certificate and to ensure that they get it from the seller.”

Turnover targets

The State Diamond Trader usually aims for an annual turnover of R500 million, but in 2015/16 its turnover was under this at over R400 million.

“Annually, we always try for a R500 million turnover and above - this is our goal, to hit the mark and exceed it. When we have a bad year like 2015, we fall short.”

Since the economic downturn in 2008, the diamond industry has experienced its fair share of challenges.

“Diamonds are luxury goods. Ultimately, when the chips are down people would rather buy food than diamonds. The State Diamond Trader was also affected by the economic downturn as our stock lost value. Since then we have bounced back but not really come out of the woods.”

A rich diamond mining history

South Africa has been mining diamonds for over 100 years and is the seventh largest diamond producer in the world.

“We have been mining diamonds since 1867, when the first diamond was discovered in this country. The whole world knows that South Africa is a diamond manufacturing country.”

While the country has a rich history in mining diamonds, a large number of South Africans were excluded from the industry and unable to mine diamonds or own them.

As a result, only one portion of society has benefited from the diamonds found in the country.

Efforts are now underway to ensure that those who were previously excluded participate and benefit from diamonds.

Opportunities for young people

Zikalala is particularly proud of the State Diamond Trader’s initiatives, such as its enterprise development programme, that ensures that young people flourish in the sector. >>



“Seeing young people come through our doors not knowing anything about the diamond trade and then coming out of their shells and going on to buy and sell diamonds is such an inspiring thing for me.”

She says her organisation currently has an intake of 18 youths who are being trained to be part of the diamond industry.

The aim of the programme is to expose them to beyond what they would learn from institutions of higher learning, so that they get a better understanding of the diamond industry and ultimately contribute to job creation.

“The programme is in its second year. Three of the 18 youth were sent to Mumbai, India, for further training. They were there for two months.”

Making a mark in a man’s world

As with any industry, diamond trading has its fair share of challenges. Zikalala says that it’s still seen as a man’s domain throughout the world. However, she does not let this deter her.

“It is a man’s world but I have knowledge of the industry as well. I have broad shoulders to get myself in there and do what needs to be done. Being part of the public sector and being a female manager is not that challenging because there is support.”

Zikalala says that when she was growing up she never thought she would be the CEO of an organisation. “If I can make it to the top by hard work, then so too can young people in the country who are willing to do the same.”

About Futhi Zikalala

Zikalala is a law graduate from the former University of Natal (currently University of KwaZulu-Natal). She was admitted as an attorney in 1991. She practiced as an attorney for a few years, before joining the Criminal Justice Centre at the University of Natal as a researcher. She has also worked for the Commission on Gender Equality, where she was responsible for KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga.

In 2001, she joined the Department of Minerals and Energy as the Deputy Director Mineral Laws and much later was appointed Deputy Director-General in Mineral Policy and Investment Promotion. In 2008, she joined the State Diamond Trader as the acting CEO and was appointed as CEO in 2012.

This and that

How do you relax?

I love watching movies when I get the opportunity.

What is your favourite food?

While I have a good palate for various food types, I love South African food in general, including cabbage cooked in any form.

If you were not in your current job what would you be doing?

I would probably be a back-up singer or a designer. I still make my own clothes.

What is your favourite holiday destination?

Locally, I love the south coast of Durban; internationally it has to be Vancouver, Canada.



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Marelize Bosch

is helping empower consumers

Ensuring that consumers are treated fairly is all in a day's work for the Chief Operations Officer of the National Consumer Tribunal (NCT), Marelize Bosch.

One of the most important roles of the NCT is providing access to redress for aggrieved South African consumers, she says. The NCT is an adjudicator that deals with cases referred to it in terms of the National Credit

Act and Consumer Protection Act.

Bosch explains that usually when consumers have problems they have to try to resolve them with the relevant service providers first.

If they are unsuccessful, they can approach either the industry ombuds or ombuds with jurisdiction, before escalating their complaints to either of the regulators - the National Credit Regulator or the National Consumer

“The main reason we are so important is because of our provision of access to redress.”

Commission (NCC) - depending on the nature and type of complaint.

“If the regulators believe the complaint is valid, the matter is then referred to the NCT for prosecution after an investigation. Consumers can also refer the matter to the NCT directly but under limited circumstances or after the outcome of the investigation by either of the regulators,” she says.

NCT equipped to take action

The NCT has a wide variety of powers and can declare a conduct to be prohibited, should it find that it is against the law.

“For example, if the practices of a credit provider are not above board, the regulator can prosecute it before the NCT, which can give a number of remedies.

“This can include issuing compliance notices, declaring a conduct to be prohibited, cancelling the registration of a registrant, issuing administrative fines which can be up to R1 million or 10 percent of the previous years’ annual turnover, or refunding the consumer.

Bosch points out that her organisation is a valuable platform to consumers because the NCT process is more user-friendly to those who are not familiar with legal processes.

“The main reason we are so important is because of our provision of access to redress. If you look at the court system in South Africa, it can be very expensive, and take a long time to come to a conclusion. It’s also very difficult for a lay person to go to a court of law and represent themselves.”

The NCT guides consumers representing themselves on how to file a case and also assists during the hearing process.

“Since the NCT is inquisitorial the tribunal members

can request additional information and ask questions, if necessary, to establish the truth and come to a just decision.”

Judgments issued by the NCT have the same status as a judgment from a high court, says Bosch.

She adds that the NCT’s services are affordable or free, making it accessible for consumers. If consumers cannot pay the nominal administrative fees, they can apply to have them waived.

Increased demand for services

Over the past four years the NCT’s caseload has quadrupled, meaning more people are accessing its services, says Bosch.

In the 2015/16 financial year the NCT received 19 122 cases and issued 10 826 orders and 132 judgments. In 2012/13 the NCT received 4 191 cases, 5 386 in 2013/14, and 9 589 in 2014/15. About 98 percent of the NCT’s caseload is debt rearrangement matters.

Consumers can apply for debt rearrangement with the NCT when they are experiencing financial difficulties. This is done through a debt counsellor who facilitates a rearrangement with credit providers on behalf of the consumer. Once everybody agrees to a rearrangement, the debt counsellor can file that agreement with the NCT to confirm as a debt re-arrangement order.

She says in some instances a consumer may agree to pay the debt back over a longer period of time that helps the consumer to afford the monthly instalments and some credit providers might agree to a reduction in the interest rate.

“Once the NCT receives the application it will consider it before making it an order of the NCT. The arrangement will be binding to the parties and as long as the consumer pays according to the order their assets will be >>

protected and no one can repossess their property.”

The NCT currently has 12 NCT members who adjudicate on different matters.

“We also have motion courts. This is when we go to all the nine provinces for debt rearrangement cases and then a debt counsellor meets the NCT members who adjudicate on their applications. Currently we have week-long motion courts in the different provinces.”

With the increased caseload, Bosch says that the NCT is working on facilitating access to its services via electronic filing (e-filing) of debt rearrangement matters and through the motion courts.

“We are also working on automating the processes so that we can deal with these matters on a larger scale. However, consumers will still be able to file manually because we want to be accessible.”

Know your rights

Bosch also stresses the importance of consumers educating themselves about their rights so that they are able to tell when they are being infringed upon.

Consumers should also familiarise themselves with avenues through which they can seek redress to en-

force their consumer rights such as the various ombudsmen and through the NCR and NCC, among others.

South Africa has well-structured consumer laws and consumers should ensure that they enjoy the full protection of these.

“Your role as a consumer is to educate yourself about your rights and responsibilities so that you know what your options are and don’t just sit back and accept whatever situation you may find yourself in,” she says.



Setting the bar high

Bosch is proud of her work at the NCT, particularly because the organisation received a clean audit for the fourth consecutive year.

“As the NCT, we are required to assess other people’s conduct. It is therefore imperative that our own conduct is impeccable. From that perspective, the clean audit indicates that we are doing things responsibly. It also makes me proud to provide redress and in some instances, we put money back in the pocket of the consumers.”

She says she loves her job because she is able to make a difference to South African consumers.

“There is nothing more than being in a position through which you can directly impact on the welfare and improve the circumstances of consumers.”

About Marelize Bosch

Marelize Bosch has a law degree from the University of Pretoria and a Project Management Diploma from Varsity College.

Through hard work and her passion for law, she worked her way up from candidate attorney to becoming a partner at a law firm in a very short period of time. She also qualified as a conveyancer during this period. Bosch then became Legal Advisor and later Senior Legal Advisor at a financial service provider. In 2011 she joined the NCT as Head of Legal Services. The following year she became the Registrar of the NCT, before being appointed Chief Operations Officer in 2014.

This and that

How do you relax?

I enjoy spending time with family.

What is your favourite food?

Anything Italian.

If you were not in your current job what would you be doing?

Possibly some other role in consumer protection.

What is your favourite holiday destination?


I like the seaside, specifically the West Coast.

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Sowing into plant conservation

Writer: Noluthando Motswai



e-Flora support officer Lerato Hoveka is helping conserve South Africa's plants.

When Lerato Hoveka goes to work each day, it is to plant the seeds for conservation. The 29-year-old, who works for the South African Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), is part of the team that is currently gathering all plant species in the country and creating an online portal, which will be known as e-Flora of South Africa.

Hoveka, an e-Flora support officer, explains that SANBI is a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) - the body that deals with biodiversity across the world.

As a member of the CBD, South Africa has consented to be part of the CBD's Target 1 of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, which aims to produce an online flora of plants of the world by 2020.

This convention has a global strategy for plant conservation with certain objectives.

"The first objective of the strategy is for all citizens to know what you are conserving. People must have knowledge of the plant they are trying to conserve and have access to information about these plants."

e-Flora of South Africa

e-Flora is a project that aims to produce details of a flora or group of plants in a certain region, which SANBI will make available online.

"The e-Flora of South Africa will produce a taxon page with the scientific name with authorship and synonyms for a taxon; description, habitat, and distribution data; il-

lustrations and literature citation for each of the country's plant species."

There are about 21 000 species of flora in South Africa and new species are discovered annually.

Hoveka says that usually plant descriptions are found in journals and there are costs involved to access them.

e-Flora will be an online portal on the internet which students or the community will be able to access, at no cost, to obtain information on any plant they may be interested in.

"We aim to publish the e-Flora of South Africa website by 2020. Other countries are also taking part and compiling their own floras. The aim is that by 2020 people should have access to information on all plants in the world."

SANBI has a team of 18 scientists, who are specialists in different plants, and eight technicians working on the project.

The appeal of nature

Hoveka's love of nature began while still a child growing up in Polokwane, Limpopo. "When most children were playing outside on a Sunday, I would be watching programmes about nature."

After completing matric at Northern Academy, she was unsure of what field of study to pursue.

"I applied for a Bachelor of Science degree because I was not sure what I wanted to do, but I enjoyed science at school. During my first year I got a bursary to study Zoology from the Department of Economic Development

and Tourism in Limpopo. I did my degree at the University of Limpopo.”

She majored in Botany and Zoology because she had an interest in animals and plants.

“During my studies I was exposed to a lot of conservation programmes. We would go out in the field and do collections and practicals. This was something that I really enjoyed.

“I also joined a student group and we started a biodiversity society. We would go out into the field and gain more experience and awareness than what we were getting in the classroom,” recalls Hoveka.

A love affair with *Euphorbia clivicola*

One day, while on a visit to a conservation agency in Limpopo, she was exposed to plants that are considered threatened in the country.

“There was one special species called *Euphorbia clivicola*. It’s a threatened plant in Limpopo. It’s found on a koppie next to the town where I grew up and its numbers were dwindling due to development. There was something about this plant that got my attention and I grew to love it.”

When she completed her degree she decided to work on *Euphorbia clivicola* and look for ways to conserve it.

“I did my Honours in Botany and focused on this plant. What was special about *Euphorbia clivicola* is that it is only found in South Africa. It’s a succulent [a plant with thick fleshy leaves or stems adapted to

storing water] and succulents are generally sought after plants for dry gardens.”

Hoveka decided to research methods to propagate the plant and found that it can be grown from stem cuttings or in test tubes.

After completing her Honours, she did an internship with the Limpopo Department of Economic Development and Tourism for six months.

“During that six months I saw an advert from SANBI for custodians of rare and endangered flowers. I thought this was a great opportunity and I applied for the internship and was successful.”

She later obtained another bursary from SANBI to do her masters.

“I did my masters at the University of Johannesburg and SANBI funded my work on aquatic invasive plants in South Africa. These are unwanted plants in wetlands in water or rivers. These aquatic invasive plants are a problem in the environment because they cause mosquitos and snails that transfer illnesses.”

Hoveka said these plants change the eco-system for fish species. They also change the water quality of a river or a stream.

“The research I was doing was to find a way of identifying these plants. The plants are alien, they are not from South Africa,” she explains.

Finding solutions

Currently, Hoveka is doing her PhD at the University of Johannesburg, looking at how climate change will affect South Africa’s flora.

“I’m trying to establish how climate

change will affect certain plants and also look at what would be the ideal in terms of conservation if only about six percent of South Africa’s flora is protected in a nature reserve.”

She says she is trying to find out what the optimum reserve design that ensures that climate change does not result in the country losing its plant species would be.

Hoveka loves working for SANBI, especially since the work she is doing is meaningful and will leave a lasting impact.

“We are doing a good job on trying to conserve biodiversity,” she points out.

Hoveka encourages all South Africans to familiarise themselves with the various plants found in the country.

“These plants, which can be found in your backyard, could be the key to an important cure. Without plants we are a doomed society. Plants are a vital part of the ecological system,” she adds. ●

This and that

What is your favourite food?

Anything with potatoes, I love them.

Your favourite holiday destination?

São Paulo, Brazil.

If you were not in nature conservation what would you be doing?

I would want to be a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity.

How do you relax? I enjoy writing.



Northern Cape Premier Sylvia Lucas wants to put the province on the global map.

Northern Cape flourishes

In South Africa's largest province, which also has the smallest population, one of the scientific world's biggest projects is underway.

And it is this project, the Square Kilometre Array (SKA), that Northern Cape Premier Sylvia Lucas hopes will place the province prominently in the sight of the global community.

The SKA Project is an international enterprise to build the largest and most sensitive radio telescope in the world, and will be located in Africa and Australia.

The SKA will be about 50 times more sensitive than any other existing radio telescope.

The South African MeerKAT radio telescope, which is currently being built 90 km outside of the small Northern Cape town of Carnarvon, is a precursor to the SKA telescope and will be integrated into the mid-frequency component of SKA Phase 1.

Premier Lucas says the construction of the SKA in the Northern Cape will not only benefit science, but will put the province on the global map.

Already the province is seeing the benefits of the SKA, which is one of 18 strategic infrastructure projects identified by the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission.

About 422 people are working as a result of the SKA, through initial infrastructure projects. Fifty-four percent of these are young people, which shows that youth employment has been incorporated into the SKA and the MeerKAT.

In addition, over 800 people have been supported by skills development over the years ranging from postgraduate studies to artisanal skills that are being developed.

The SKA is also attracting more tourists to the province and as a result there have been upgrades of roads and

new lodges, and bed and breakfast establishments have been built.

"There are still developments going on around the SKA. Investment has been put into the area, because many people that are coming here are looking at the kind of infrastructure that we can provide."

Doing more with less

The province gets only two percent of the total national budget and according to Premier Lucas, this is not enough, as service delivery in the province is hampered.

"This requires us to do a fine balancing act, especially because we need to take into consideration all the apex priorities that we need to focus on."

She adds that the conditional grant received from national government has helped the province to deliver, especially on infrastructure.

Although operating on a shoe-string budget, the Premier says her administration will do all in its power to render services to the people of the province.

Providing decent housing

Owing to financial constraints, most of the projects implemented at provincial level emanate from national government and are only administered by the province.

The Northern Cape Government is working closely with national government to provide essential services, such as housing.

The National Department of Hu-

man Settlements allocated funds to the provincial government for the construction of over 4 000 houses in Leratong Park, outside Kimberley.

"This project includes bank-subsidised houses and communal and rental properties. That is a major project and when I came in as Premier it was already running. But it had a lot of challenges.

"Fortunately it's now running smoothly."

From April to December 2015, the province built 1 085 houses and transferred 2 085 properties.

The allocation for the Human Settlement Development Grant for the current financial year is R401 million, which includes about R87 million for priority mining in Ga-Segonyana, Kgatelopele, Tsantsabane and Gamagara.

The focus is also on the informal settlements' upgrade programme, specifically on the provision of basic services.

Empowering young people and creating jobs

According to Statistics South Africa, many young people in the Northern Cape are unemployed and go to bed hungry. In 2010, 19.4 percent of households with youth went hungry, compared to 29 percent in 2014.

Premier Lucas is well aware of these figures and says that most of the province's job creation initiatives are aimed at young people.

These include the Community Works Programme and the Extend-

ed Public Works Programme.

The province recently held a youth summit where young people from all districts in the province raised issues that affected them.

According to the Premier, many young people are interested in starting their own businesses and creating jobs for others, but need a push in the right direction by the provincial government.

"One of the major issues that came from the summit is mentoring. Young people really want to go into business but they also want to be taken by the hand and be led in a direction where they can provide for themselves," she points out.

In response to the concerns raised at the summit, the provincial government recently launched a programme to mentor young business people.

"We are targeting at least 100 young people across all districts. We want to provide them with skills that will enable them to be deployable and we as government can use those skills in the different fields and enable the youth to start their own businesses."

One of the resolutions taken arising from the youth summit was to hold a further summit in partnership with the Department of Small Business Development to explore how the department can help the province turn young people into entrepreneurs.

The Premier says that many young people are keen to work with government to find solutions to the >>

challenges of poverty and youth unemployment, and the province will do all it can to support them.

After the youth summit, the province developed a provincial youth strategy that is aimed at helping young people become more proactive.

After consultation with all role players across the province, the strategy will be finalised and put into a proper document for adoption, she says.

Agriculture and mining

The Northern Cape, like its neighbour the North West, is heavily reliant on mining and agriculture, which have faced some challenges in recent times.

The downturn in the mining sector affected the production of iron ore while other minerals, such as manganese, were unscathed, says the Premier.

“In spite of the fact that some companies, such as Kumba, were downscaling, they were still opening up new operations, such as the one in Dingleton. This is beginning to balance things out and bringing us to a point where the mines, especially the iron ore sector, is now beginning to show a positive trend.”

She adds that the provincial government is in talks with Zinc International (a mining house with operations in Namibia and Ireland) about opening a new operation that is expected to inject some life into the economy of the province and create jobs.

“They are going to open a new mine in the Namaqua area. We are getting reports and they are already tell-

ing us that in the first two years of operation, they will employ 1 500 people.”

In addition, West Coast Resources, which took over some operations from De Beers, has in the past six months employed more than 100 people.

The effects of the drought

The agricultural sector in the province has been hard hit by the drought and Premier Lucas is hopeful that the opening of agri-parks will give the sector a boost.

“As early as the first quarter of 2017 we are going to see some positive developments within agri-parks because we are going to have five agri-parks in each district per province.”

Though the agri-parks is a government initiative, there are many partners and a lot of jobs are expected to be created.

The province is one of the first to use technology to assess the effect of drought by deploying drones to farms to gather information which is used to declare the province a disaster area.

Approximately 2 000 smallholder farmers across the province are benefitting from drought relief of R23 million.

With the developments associated with the SKA, a growing mining sector and the delivery of basic services being made a priority, Premier Lucas says the province is achieving success. ●



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Fast facts at your fingertips

Government made much progress in 2016 as it continued to implement programmes that were aligned to the National Development Plan. Government recently provided an update on some of its work and *PSM* looks at the numbers and facts that tell the story.



Education

- 14 343 students were awarded bursaries through the Funza Lushaka teaching bursary to study towards a Bachelor of Education or a Post Graduate Certificate in Education during 2016.
- The building or refurbishment of 170 schools were completed through the Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative.
- Water was provided to 615 schools, decent sanitation to 425 schools and electricity to 307 schools.
- While 377 933 learners were targeted to benefit from the learner transport programme, 418 947 learners were transported to schools at the end of the first quarter.
- The National School Nutrition Programme reached 9 630 590 learners in 21 177 public primary, secondary and identified special schools during 2015/16.
- The Department of Basic Education ran a successful National School Deworming Programme leading to a total of 3 523 794 (57 percent) learners being dewormed.
- The adult basic education programme, Kha Ri Gude, completed 4,2 million classes from 2008 to 2015 and created 326 320 job opportunities over this period.
- National Treasury allocated R812 million for improving Early Childhood Development infrastructure and increasing the child subsidy.

Housing

- Government has spent almost R170 billion to provide housing to over 22 million indigent and vulnerable beneficiaries over the past 22 years.
- More than 56 percent of government's housing beneficiaries are women.
- The country celebrated the delivery of over 4,3 million houses and subsidies in 2016.
- The Department of Human Settlements has been paying more than R16 million to contractors weekly.

Social support

- To date, over 17 million people access social grants.
- The Child Support Grant and the Older Persons Grant are the two largest grants, with 12 million children and 3,2 million older persons benefitting from these.
- The Department of Social Development has facilitated the establishment of a network of food distribution centres, with 212 Community Nutrition Development Centres operating in targeted deprived communities in partnership with non-profit organisations.
- Since the 2015/16 financial year, the department has provided food to 3 155 306 beneficiaries, created a market for 245 emerging food producers and cooperatives, and procured about R9 222 862 worth of food from these emerging food producers and

cooperatives that previously would not be able to participate in the food supply chain in the country.

The economy

- The Department of Trade and Industry (dti), through its range of incentives, supported 1 770 companies, resulting in R57 billion new investments made by the private sector and more than 80 000 jobs were supported during the 2015/16 financial year.
- In addition, the dti, through its incentives, leveraged more than R27 billion private sector investment, supporting just over 7 000 new jobs to be created.
- In 2015 the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) approved R14.5 billion in new investment, the largest sum to date and 26 percent higher than the preceding year. This new investment includes R2.9 billion in transactions involving 54 black industrialists to broaden participation in the economy.
- More than 22 black industrialists have been supported to the value of more than R1.5 billion, mainly in the agro-processing, plastics and pharmaceuticals, electro-technical equipment and metals sectors. More than 2 000 jobs were created across the sectors.

Special Economic Zones (SEZ)

- The SEZ programme remains an important instrument to attract strategic foreign and domestic direct investment, build targeted industrial capabilities and also build new industrial hubs.
- The programme secured investments worth R41.2 billion and the relevant projects are at various levels of implementation. Of these, R9.4 billion worth of investments are already in operation in the zones.

Environmental sector

- Through the Expanded Public Works Programme, environmental programmes have created work opportunities for over 97 000 previously unemployed people.
- Working for Waste has provided 3 750 job opportunities. The Working for Water Programme employed 33 000 participants to clear invasive plants.
- 1 450 environmental monitors have made a significant difference in combating the poaching of rhinos

and other species.


- During 2016, there has been a reduction in cases of rhino poaching, which points to the success of the Integrated Strategic Management of Rhinoceros approach.
- South Africa has also ratified the Paris Agreement to combat climate change.

Energy

- Significant progress has been made to stabilise electricity supply in the country.
- Eskom has been able to meet the demand and no load-shedding has been experienced since August 2015.
- The stabilisation of the grid is a direct result of commissioning new capacity through Eskom's build programme and additional capacity sourced from Independent Power Producers.
- A grant of R5.6 billion was made available to the Department of Energy for the electrification of 235 000 households through the grid and 20 000 non-grid in the 2016/17 financial year.
- R1.3 billion has been spent, realising 167 225 household connections in the first and second quarters of the financial year.

Infrastructure projects

Infrastructure projects implemented in 2016 include:

- The Ncora Bulk Water Treatment Works Project in the Eastern Cape, which is estimated to benefit 17 887 families from 208 villages.
- The Drakenstein Waste Water Treatment Plant, which was launched and handed over to the Drakenstein Municipality in the Western Cape.
- The Mokolo and Crocodile River (West) Water Augmentation Project, which supplies water to the Lephalale Local Municipality.
- Eskom's power stations (Matimba and Medupi), the Zeeland water treatment plant and Exxaro's Groote-geluk Mine. It also transfers water from the Crocodile River West, near Thabazimbi, to the Lephalale area in Limpopo. 

Wage increase for domestic workers

South Africa’s domestic workers sector received an upwardly adjusted minimum wage from 1 December 2016. The relief is applicable until 30 November 2017.

According to the Department of Labour, the minimum wage adjustment is in line with the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, which is regulated by sectoral determination.

“Domestic workers are classified by law as vulnerable, hence the sectoral determination governing minimum wage and conditions of employment,” the department said.

The new sectoral determination of domestic workers prescribes that the minimum wages for domestic workers, who work more than 27 ordinary hours per week, are as follows:

- Area A (those in major metropolitan areas) will earn R12.42 (up

from R11.44 in 2015/16) hourly rate; R559.09 (R514.82 in 2015/16) weekly rate; and R2 422.54 (R2230.70 in 2015/16) monthly rate.

- Area B (those not mentioned in Area A) R11.31 (up from R10.23 in 2015/16) hourly rate; R508.93 (R460.15 in 2015/16) weekly rate; and R2 205.17 (R1 993.82 in 2015/16) monthly rate.

The minimum wages for domestic workers who work 27 ordinary hours per week or less are:

- Area A (those in major metropolitan areas) will earn R14.54 (up from R13.39 in 2015/16) hourly rate; R392.58 (R361.50 in 2015/16) weekly rate; and R1701.06 (R1 566.35: 2015/16) monthly rate.
- Area B (those not mentioned in Area A) R13.53 (R12.07 in 2015/16) hourly rate; R360.54 (R325.98 in 2015/16) weekly rate; and R1 562.21 (R1 412.49 in 2015/16) monthly rate.

Domestic workers include housekeepers, gardeners, nannies and domestic drivers, among others.

Department of Tourism the best

The Department of Tourism received the top accolade at the 2016 National Batho Pele Excellence Awards (NBPEA) for being the Best Functioning National Department of the Year.

The Department of Public Service and Administration’s (DPSA) Batho Pele Excellence Awards recognises and promotes improved public servants’ performance, and a professional and productive public service.

Tourism was among 38 government departments that were assessed in the Best Functioning National Department category, based on the Management Performance Assessment Tool and the Auditor-General’s report.

The assessment considered areas of strategic planning, finances, operational planning, management and implementation, and the impact of the work done by the department on its beneficiaries and the broader society.

Accepting the award, Tourism Minister Derek Hanekom said he was very proud of the department, and that the award affirmed that their vision and plans to grow the tourism industry were on the right track.

“Excellent service is the keystone of the work we do in tourism. It is entrenched in our strategies and our work culture, and it inspires us to continuously work hard to serve our citizens and position our country as one of the top tourist destinations in the world,” he said.

In 2015/16, the department achieved more than 85 percent of its performance targets and received an unqualified clean audit by the Auditor-General.



Postcode Meerkat launched

A wide area surveillance system, known as Postcode Meerkat, was launched in the Kruger National Park (KNP) recently.

South African National Parks (SANParks), Peace Parks Foundation and South Africa's Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) have partnered to research, develop and manufacture the innovative system.

Postcode Meerkat comprises a suite of radar and electro-optic sensors that will detect, classify, monitor and track humans moving in the park over a wide area. In addition, the system has been designed to be mobile so that it can be rapidly deployed to prevent poaching crisis zones from developing.

This is the first time that this kind of technology is being applied in a counter poaching role in a bushveld environment. Smart thinking in its development enables it to differentiate between humans and animals, while its application will guarantee early warning and rapid response capabilities.

This will augment ranger reaction times, allow for better preparation and support the proactive apprehension of poachers, which could save the lives of humans and animals. It also has the future potential to be used in a conservation role, for example to better understand animal behaviour.

Postcode Meerkat will significantly increase KNP's ability to protect rhino and other vulnerable species. It will enhance the capacity to combat wildlife crime, along with the many other systems already put in place, such as improved ranger skills and support, increased aerial and ground mobility and gate access control and zones with increased wildlife protection.

Funding for the development and deployment of Postcode Meerkat was secured by Peace Parks Foundation from the People's Postcode Lottery of the UK.

Students to fly SA's flag at international competition

Science and Technology Minister Naledi Pandor has applauded a team of six students from the universities of the Western Cape and Stellenbosch who will be representing South Africa at the International Student Cluster Competition.

The competition is to be hosted at the 2017 International Supercomputing Conference (ISC) in Germany.

The six students were selected from 10 teams from various universities in South Africa, who recently battled it out to demonstrate their cluster building and high-performance computing skills.

At the National Student Cluster Competition level, the students competed to demonstrate the incredible capabilities of state-of-the-art high-performance cluster hardware and software. In a real-time challenge, teams of undergraduate students build small high-performance computing clusters on the exhibition floor, using hardware provided by the Centre for High Performance Computing (CHPC) and its industrial partners, and race

to demonstrate the best performance across a series of benchmarks and applications.

The awards ceremony took place recently at the 10th National Conference of the CHPC.

The CHPC is a key component of South Africa's national integrated cyberinfrastructure system, implemented by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) on behalf of the Department of Science and Technology. The International Student Cluster Competition is regarded as the premier international high-performance computing student competition, involving teams from prestigious universities around the world.

The six students who will represent South Africa are Mishka Mohamed, Kyle Jordaan, Tyrone de Ruiters, Liam Doult, Phillip Goosen and Lydia de Lange.

"With South Africa having come first, three out of the four times the country has competed in this international competition, there is naturally some pressure on the team, but I am confident that the CHPC will once more provide excellent support to our team, and that we will be proud of the outcome," said Minister Pandor. ●



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AU pursues prosperity for Africa

Trading the Africa we have for the Africa we want by 2063 through Agenda 2063 is the African Union’s (AU) plan to create a prosperous Africa.

The goal is for Africa to be seen as a success story, not the “development challenge of the 21st century”, said former AU Commission Chair Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma during her recent AU State of the Continent Address in Durban.

Her term as AU chair ended in January, having chaired the commission since October 2012.

In her address, Dlamini Zuma did not avoid Africa’s dismal development record, reporting that the continent has risen out of the ashes of the two “dead decades” for development of the late 1970s to the 1990s.

While other developing regions, especially Asia, pro-

gressed in terms of their economic transformation, industrialisation, infrastructure and human development, Africa stagnated, remaining underdeveloped and marginalised, she noted.

Rich land, poor land

Despite its rapidly urbanising population, abundant natural resources, productive land and diverse ecosystems, Africa is a continent of contradictions. Thirty-four of the 48 least developed countries worldwide are African.

The continental development framework, Agenda 2063, aims to change this. It was drafted after consultation with stakeholders and sectors that included the media, cultural workers, youth, women and the private sector in Africa and beyond. It seeks to define the mission of cur-



“Our efforts in basic education, technical vocational education and training, in science, engineering and mathematics education are at the foundation of the skills revolution.”

Former AU Commission Chair Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma has high hopes for Africa’s future.



rent and future generations of Pan Africanists, explained Dlamini Zuma.

For Agenda 2063, the African Capacity Building Foundation researched the skills gap in Africa.

"It is clear that short of an African skills revolution we will not be able to decisively tackle underdevelopment and poverty ... It is also clear from the report that we have an acute shortage of skills in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) areas," said Dlamini Zuma.

Africa's economies have to be aided through interventions in education, addressing critical skills shortages, growing agriculture, agribusiness and agroprocessing, integration in various areas, infrastructure development, the free movement of people, peace and security initiatives and a commitment to building a people's union.

Growing education

With more children attending school than before, the AU firmly supports growing access to education and measures to keep children from leaving school prematurely, such as the End Child Marriage Campaign.

The AU is working with members on improving teachers' conditions, upgrading their skills, expanding school feeding programmes in all schools, focusing on teaching science, engineering and mathematics and strengthening technical vocational education and training.

"Our efforts in basic education, technical vocational education and training, in science, engineering and mathematics education are at the foundation of the skills revolution," said Dlamini Zuma.

She added that higher education had grown and university enrolment was up from 2.7 million students in 1991

to over 11 million in 2015, representing average annual growth of 16 percent.

The education sector faces challenges such as funding and relevance in an increasingly knowledge-based global environment, said Dlamini Zuma. Various initiatives aimed to address this include the creation of the Pan African Virtual University (PAU) to use technology to massify access to higher education. The PAU has five initial campuses, including the PAU Institute for Space Sciences in Cape Town, and aims to create centres of excellence and attract students from across Africa.

Agriculture remains prominent

Dlamini Zuma noted that agriculture remains the mainstay of African economies.

"It contributes on average over 30 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The World Bank (2013) projects that by 2030 agriculture and agribusiness will have grown to a US\$1 trillion business from the current US\$313 billion today," said Dlamini Zuma.

Investments in African agriculture have grown seven percent a year but African countries must be encouraged to meet their targets and attract women and young people to the sector which is run by an ageing population, she added.

Integration for prosperity

Dlamini Zuma said integration was necessary for shared prosperity and peace. "As globalisation, travel and information communications technology have turned our world into a global village, as economic shocks and booms affect us all, as diseases such as HIV, Ebola, Zika and SARS know no borders, the imperative for African>>

integration has become more urgent.”

The AU supports various initiatives promoting integration, for example economic integration in Regional Economic Communities, intra-Africa trade and the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA), which would expand the 26-member Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa - East African Community - Southern African Development Community Tripartite Free Trade Area. It has a combined GDP of US\$1.2 trillion. “Together it represents just over half the total African population and economy,” said Dlamini Zuma.

Intra-African trade on aggregate remains low but has grown to around 18 percent, 40 percent of which is manufactured goods. Dlamini Zuma urged the launch of the CFTA Area by 2017, citing examples of single common markets for goods and services that had significantly boosted trade.

“A common African market of over a billion consumers and growing will give further impetus to manufacturing across the continent as well as growing Pan African investments and businesses.”



Infrastructure development to promote growth

Countries are investing in domestic infrastructure development. The AU’s focus is on the connections between countries and regions, such as regional transport corridors, the regional railway network in East Africa, which the affected countries are working on with China, and the 20 to 30-year Pan African Integrated High-speed Rail Network as one of the Agenda 2063 flagship projects. This project is using the latest technology to connect all African capitals and commercial cities.

The aviation sector is also an important driver of integration. Over the past decade African airlines have increased connections between African countries, said Dlamini Zuma. To create a single African airline market, the AU Commission has pushed for the implementation of the ‘open skies’ Yamoussoukro Declaration. Dlamini Zuma said 13 countries agreed to make this happen by 2017.

The AU is also promoting the free movement of people, which is critical to its industrialisation, education, infrastructure and peace programmes. Rwanda has Africa’s most liberal migration policy and has seen tourism from African countries grow 24 percent and trade with its neighbours rise 50 percent.

To grow intra-Africa trade, the AU is encouraging members to introduce 30-day visas for African citizens, launch the African passport and adopt a comprehensive protocol on free movement of people by 2018. The African passport launched in Kigali in 2016 is being converted into an e-passport with the collaboration of the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

Flourishing communication infrastructure

Information Communications Technology development has played a critical role in driving African growth and development over the last 15 years, noted Dlamini Zuma.

“From being the continent with the least landlines at the turn of this century to being amongst the fastest growing markets for mobile phones, 65 percent growth annually just over the last five years. This has also driven innovations in banking, access to information to farmers, e-commerce and a host of other areas,” she reported.

With accessible, affordable broadband as a recognised necessity, the AU is running the Pan African Internet Exchange System project that created single national internet exchanges, reducing the cost of connectivity. By 2016 national internet exchange points had been established in 32 member countries, eight of which (including South Africa) had been awarded grants to become regional internet exchange points. An outcome is the AU’s support for the creation of Africa’s first and the world’s fourth Global Roaming Exchange.

These continental priorities underpin the AU’s activities and international engagement with bodies such as the G20, G77 and United Nations. “Africa is determined to take its rightful place in the world as a manufacturing, trading, knowledge producing region of innovation and technological development,” stressed Dlamini Zuma. ●



CATHSSETA RE-ENGINEERS ITSELF FOR EFFICIENT DELIVERY

In a country that is faced with the scourge of unemployment, the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA) prides itself for taking the leap of faith with a group of unemployed youth and giving them a one year internship programme, which later translated into permanent employment for more than 80% of these youths. CATHSSETA showed its commitment to youth development and training and is proud to have given the interns much-needed experience to allow them to get absorbed into the ranks of the employed.



In the past, CATHSSETA had only focussed on disbursing funds to various organisations for internship programmes, but this changed in 2015 when CATHSSETA Administrator, Pumzile Kedama, made a decision to recruit the first cohort of interns for CATHSSETA. The CATHSSETA internship programme, now in its second year, will be taking about 30 interns in the 2017/18 financial year, who will be placed within its various divisions and in the regional offices.

Kedama, who took the reins of CATHSSETA in October 2014, spearheaded a number of improvements which saw CATHSSETA achieve a clean audit in the 2015/16 financial year – a first in the history of CATHSSETA.



This came about as a result of the turnaround action strategy, which Kedama put in place soon after his appointment by the Director-General of the Department of Higher Education and Training. Progress to turn CATHSSETA around was seen as early as 2015, within the first five months of administration, when

CATHSSETA achieved an unqualified audit with matters of emphasis for the 2014/15 financial year.

The annual performance against set targets also improved from a mere 34% in the 2013/14 financial year to 80% in the 2015/16 financial year – achievements Kedama credits to CATHSSETA management and staff who embraced the change unreservedly.

“The turnaround strategy that we put in place was to guarantee that we do not only address issues of governance and institutional human resource challenges, but that we ensure CATHSSETA is better placed to fulfil its mandate of being a leader in skills development within our diverse sector,” said Kedama.

For more information about our skills programmes, please call 011 217 0600 or visit our website www.cathsseta.org.za. You can also contact our regional managers on the following details:

EASTERN CAPE

Physical Address:

Lovedale Public TVET College
1 Amatola Row House no 9,
King Williams Town, 5600

Email address: EC@cathsseta.org.za

Regional Manager: Nelisa Pambo

Nelisap@cathsseta.org.za

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Thekwini TVET College CATHSSETA Offices
262 Daintree Avenue Asherville, Durban

Email address: KZN@cathsseta.org.za

Regional Manager: Zandile Ntshangase
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Regional Manager: Martha Collett
Martha@cathsseta.org.za

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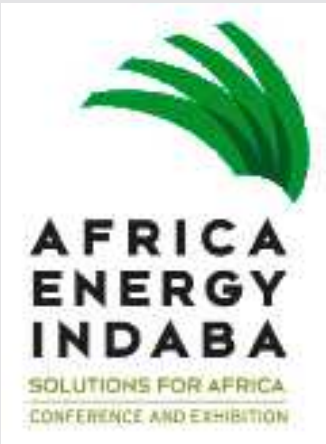
21-22 February 2017



The 2017 Africa Energy Indaba Conference, hosted by the Department of Energy, will seek solutions to enable adequate energy generation across the continent. Sponsored by the Gauteng Growth and Development Agency, the conference will explore the growing interest in 'green' and sustainability issues in the context of developing countries and explore ways in which government and business leaders plan to address the energy demand. The efficiency of various public support mechanisms, public-private partnerships across the continent and a review of new data and the latest technological trends globally will also be assessed. The conference will also discuss how the new energy landscape is creating new opportunities to address the continent's challenges, improve the way it works, impacts training and development and attracts new talent and technology to Africa. The two-day conference will be held at the Sandton Convention Centre. For more information email: info@energyindaba.co.za or call 071 844 2569.

Meetings Africa

27 February – 1 March 2017



In recent years, the global meetings industry has begun to recognise Africa as a sought after destination. Meetings Africa showcases Africa's diverse offering of services and products where African associations and African meetings industry professionals can partner to help transform the continent. Meetings Africa, known as the business tourism lekgotla of Africa, gathers travel professionals from across the continent and the world in Johannesburg every year. The event is sponsored by the Gauteng Convention Bureau, SA Tourism and Johannesburg Convention Bureau, and will be held at the Sandton Convention Centre. For more information go to www.meetingsafrica.co.za

Design Indaba

1 – 3 March 2017



The Design Indaba Conference is an annual three-day showcase of the world's best creative minds, providing endless inspiration, new perspectives and universal solutions. The conference has been the highlight of South Africa's creative calendar since 1995, and has not only contributed vastly to uplifting the South African design sector, but has also been named the best design conference in the world. For 2017, the Design Indaba audience can look forward to a stellar selection of speakers with compelling multimedia presentations that combine performance, storytelling, career-changing insights and the most cutting-edge creative work on the global circuit. The Department of Arts and Culture is one of the developmental partners of the event. Attendees can expect activations, live performances, music, exhibitions, a feast of food and drink at Design Indaba 2017. The conference takes place at the ArtScape Theatre in Cape Town. For more information call 021 465 9966 or go to www.designindaba.com

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More opportunities for students to further studies

Higher Education and Training Minister Blade Nzimande has called on students to make use of opportunities to further their education so they can be successful and develop a skilled workforce for the country.

Minister Nzimande said there are approximately 505 731 opportunities available for young people within the Post-School Education and Training system to further their studies.

“The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) will be funding 205 000 first-time entering and continuing eligible students at universities and 200 000 students at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges in 2017 by providing student loans and bursaries totalling R15.2 billion,” he added.

Minister Nzimande said that no deserving student would be left out in the cold.

“Government will pay the fee increase, capped at eight percent, for all qualifying registered students with a gross combined family income up to R600 000 per annum in 2017.

“This is a grant, which covers the increases for tuition fees and university- or college-managed accommodation, and will not have to be repaid by qualifying students.”

Registration fees

Government will pay the registration fee of deserving students.

“We have also gone further and made arrangements through NSFAS to pay the registration fees for all NSFAS-funded students as an upfront payment to universities and TVET colleges.

“Therefore, NSFAS qualifying students will not pay any registration or upfront fees in 2017,” he stressed.

Increasing access to universities and TVET colleges

This year, South Africa’s 26 public universities will provide access to about 197 400 new entrants wishing to pursue studies across all general, technical and professional fields.

This includes the three new universities: Sol Plaatje University (SPU), the University of Mpumalanga (UMP) and the Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU).

“It has been most encouraging to witness the growth of these new universities which focus on specific skills areas for our economy.”

Minister Nzimande said out of the 197 400 new university entrants in 2017, about 63 950 students will be enrolling in scarce fields that include Engineering programmes, Life and Physical Sciences programmes, Human Health programmes and Veterinary Sciences programmes.

“In pursuit of the department’s mandate to increase access and success in TVET college learning programmes, and to transform TVET colleges into institutions of choice, three new campuses will come into operation during 2017,” Minister Nzimande said.

“NSFAS qualifying students will not pay any registration or upfront fees in 2017.”



These include Thabazimbi Campus at Waterberg TVET College in Limpopo; Bambanani Campus at uMfolozi TVET College in KwaZulu-Natal and Nkandla A Campus at uMfolozi TVET College in KwaZulu-Natal.

"All in all, those who have completed Grade 12 with a minimum of a higher certificate achievement can consider studying further at one of the 50 public TVET colleges. In 2017, 207 510 new entrant opportunities will be provided by TVET colleges," he said.

According to Minister Nzimande, TVET colleges play a pivotal role in addressing South Africa's skills needs and cater for a wide spectrum and growing numbers of students.

Out of 610 178 Grade 12 learners who wrote their matric examinations, 162 374 learners are eligible for admission to bachelor studies; 179 619 learners are eligible for admission to diploma studies and 100 486 learners are eligible for admission to higher certificate studies.

Learnerships, artisan opportunities

The Minister also urged matriculants to consider careers as artisans.

According to the National Development Plan, the country will need to produce at least 30 000 artisans per year to meet the demands of the economy.

"Learners must continue to seek and utilise Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) or National Skills Fund (NSF)-funded artisan learnerships or apprenticeship opportunities to access artisan training in the various fields of engineering and services areas," Minister Nzimande said.

He stressed that to be accepted into an artisan training programme, learners must have passed Mathematics with a minimum mark of 50 percent and earned a pass

in Science.

"Learners who pass but do not achieve the required achievement level in Mathematics and wish to consider a career as an artisan may also register for the Generic Trade Preparation Programmes, a bridging course for artisan training at the National Artisan Development Support Centre (NADSC)," he said.

Making the most of opportunities

SETAs will be providing 100 821 learning programme opportunities in the form of 34 469 learnerships, 17 824 bursaries, 5 819 internships, 26 193 skills programmes, 9 486 work-integrated learning and 7 030 apprenticeship opportunities.

"The NSF will continue to invest in TVET colleges, funding approximately 15 000 learners per annum in occupationally directed programmes which are linked to scarce and critical skills areas.

"All of this signals progress, but we cannot and should not do it all alone," Minister Nzimande said.

He also called on business and state-owned enterprises, municipalities and other employers to redouble their efforts, work with the department and ensure that as many young people as possible are afforded an opportunity to gain skills and make a life for themselves.

Learners who have an inclination to become artisans can register at the NADSC by going to the website: <http://nadsc.dhet.gov.za>.

They can also call the NADSC Call Centre on 086 999 0125 or email copies of their qualifications to nadscinfo@dhet.gov.za or nadscplacements@dhet.gov.za.

They can approach Student Support Services at any of the public TVET colleges or the Khetha Career Development Services at the department for more information. ●

Preparing the Class of 2017 for success

While the improved pass rate achieved by the Class of 2016 has given Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga much to be proud of, she is already looking ahead to ensure that the current cohort of matric learners fair even better.

In an interview with *PSM*, the Minister said while she is happy with how the department's interventions improved learner outcomes last year, plans are afoot to tighten them.

At the beginning of 2016, the department coordinated provincial interventions and support programmes to improve the performance of Grade 12 learners based on outcomes from 2015 in 11 high-enrolment subjects.

The department took a more hands-on approach and worked directly with districts to implement targeted interventions, she noted.

It focused on tracking the performance of learners at targeted schools – from progressed learners to high achievers.

The provinces also received specific and targeted programmes ranging from the start-up campaigns to the last-push campaigns directed at Grade 12 learners.

Given the success of these interventions, the Minister said she plans to meet with all provinces and districts to look at plans for 2017.

"We are going to meet again to look at the implementation plans... and also assess what worked and what didn't work so that we can strengthen the plans that we already developed.

"We will go back to the drawing board to see what we need to put in place to ensure that every district operates at above 80 percent."

Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga and Deputy Minister Enver Surty with the Class of 2016's top achievers.



Focus on partnerships

The department also intends to increase its focus on partnerships to ensure that learner outcomes are improved.

"We have plans. We are getting more coherent partnerships. The biggest advantage the Free State had was their partnerships with Kagiso Shanduka Trust.

She added that through the National Education Collaborations Trust there is collaboration between the support offered by the corporate sector and the work of non-government organisations so that there is just one coherent programme that works with the department.

"That is also going to help us to really get the system in the right direction," the Minister noted.

Progressed learner policy

While the 2016 National Senior Certificate (NSC) results had pockets of excellence – from students shining against all odds to the Free State breaking the 90 percent pass mark – the story of progressed learners passing with flying colours was the success story for the books.

A decision by the Council of Education Ministers – which is made up of the Minister, her Deputy Enver Surty and all nine education MECs – to encourage provinces to progress or condone learners who had repeated Grade 11 more than once and were over age, received widespread criticism.

This brave but necessary decision was made in 2013. While many viewed this as further denting learners' hopes of succeeding given their poor Grade 11 showing, the policy has meant that the learners flourished with an impressive showing in their Grade 12 results.

The Minister said she was pleased that the policy to progress learners has produced results.

"I was very happy with those progressed learners. For them to be progressed and then end up with a Bachelor's pass and distinctions, it means that they really used the second chance that we gave them," she noted.

Providing opportunities

Of the progressed learners who wrote the 2016 NSC examinations, 29 384, or 27 percent, passed. This makes up 6.6 percent of all learners who passed the 2016 NSC examinations.

A closer look at the results reveals that 3 335 progressed learners obtained bachelor passes; 12 636 obtained diploma passes and 13 385 obtained higher certificate passes.

In addition, there were 2 361 distinctions (compared to 1 081 in 2015) attained by progressed learners, including distinctions in Accounting, Mathematics and Physical Science.

"The significance of these achievements is that the 29 384 progressed learners who passed the 2016 [matric] examinations – the would-be high-school dropouts if they were not progressed – now have the opportunity to either go to university or a Technical and Vocational Education and Training College.

"This is positive indeed, especially when the NDP enjoins us to mediate the high drop-out rate of learners from the basic schooling system by increasing the learner retention rate to 90 percent, and allowing for an increase in the number of learners entering vocational and occupational pathways.

"The incremental introduction of the three-stream model that includes technical-vocational, as well as technical-occupational, in the basic education sector is intended to address this NDP directive," she added.

She said that some schools would have been forced to release these learners because of their age; they would not have been able to remain in the system.

"If you reach 20 or 21, you have to leave the system, which means they could have been released into the wilderness.

"Now we are releasing them at least with a qualification and the chance for them to do something with their lives," the Minister pointed out.

In 2016, the largest number of progressed learners >>

was registered since the policy’s promulgation.

“For the Class of 2016, we had 108 742 registered progressed learners, up from 65 673 progressed learners in 2015.

This is an increase of 43 069, or 65.5 percent, from the number of progressed learners in 2015, and 16.1 percent of the total number of full-time candidates registered for the 2016 NSC examinations,” said Minister Motshekga.

She added that the policy on progression, the diversification of the curriculum, the three-stream model and the second chance programme are some of the innovations the department has introduced to improve the retention rate and the through-put ratio in the basic education system.

“We can report that research reveals that since the advent of democracy in 1994, more learners remain in school up to Grade 12. In this regard, South Africa does well relative to other middle-income countries, such as Tunisia, Egypt, Costa Rica and Uruguay.

“Virtually all children remain in school up to the year in which they turn 15 years of age, in line with the compulsory schooling policy embodied in the South African Schools Act, 1994.”

Interventions are bearing fruit

The Class of 2016 achieved a 72.5 percent pass rate, when progressed learners are included, which is an improvement from the 70.7 percent in 2015.

Excluding progressed learners, the pass rate was 76.2 percent.

The Minister said 610 178 full-time candidates and 107 793 part-time candidates wrote the 2016 NSC examinations.

Of these 162 374 qualified for admission to bachelor studies, 179 619 achieved diploma passes; 100 486 higher certificates passes; and 68 National Senior Certificate passes.

There was an increase in passes in Mathematics and Physical Science, which are gateway subjects.

The Free State emerged as the best-performing province with a national pass rate of 93.2 percent.

The Minister said the improvements were as a result of interventions that the department implemented over the year.

One of these included the department going into provinces directly and rolling-out Schools-Based Assessments at district level to improve learner outcomes.

“We have adopted a much more hands-on approach wherein over the past two years the national department undertook to work directly with districts to support them so that once the province provides support, we also provide extra support.

“This coordination at district level is very helpful. Districts are an important support mechanism to schools, and their continued growth in performance will continuously be monitored at provincial and national levels.

“The Eastern Cape received the best learner support interventions, with an increased focus on progressed learners, high achievers, with the department also tracking learner performance.

The Minister said the national department also intensified its monitoring and accountability sessions with provinces, districts and schools. ○





Esther Mahlangu BMW art car 2016

NKANGALA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

“WE ARE GOING SOMEWHERE!”

By Fiona Wakelin and Elske Joubert

Covering an area of 16 758 km², the Nkangala District Municipality (NDM) in Mpumalanga is rich in minerals and natural resources. And with two powerhouse women at the helm, this district municipality is going from strength to strength.

Two consecutive clean audits from the Auditor-General (AG), two trophies recognising efficient financial management received at the 2016 Institute of Municipal Finance Officers event held in Durban, and an Investor Summit which resulted in diversifying its economy, all augur well for this municipality of 400 000 households.

We had the pleasure of speaking to Her Excellency the Mayor, Councillor Linah Malatjie, and Municipal Manager Ms Margaret Skosana to find out more about the challenges, success and plans for this vibrant district.



Linah Malatjie

EXECUTIVE MAYOR, COUNCILLOR LINAH MALATJIE

“Destined for excellence”

**NKANGALA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY
RECENTLY WON THE ZK MATTHEWS GOOD
GOVERNANCE AWARD FOR THE BEST
PERFORMING GROUP OF COUNCILLORS
– WHAT DID THIS AWARD MEAN FOR THE
DISTRICT?**

Cllr Malatjie: “This is a very important award which reflects the commitment of our councillors to good governance, service delivery and public

participation. Our councillors have attended all committee and council meetings as well as caucuses – not one meeting failed as a result of not achieving a quorum. It shows we are serious about service excellence.”

**PLEASE TELL US WHAT RECEIVING CLEAN
AUDITS FOR TWO CONSECUTIVE YEARS
MEANS FOR YOU AS MAYOR AND FOR THE
MUNICIPALITY AS A WHOLE?**

Cllr Malatjie: “Clean audits are extremely important, they build confidence – in the community, amongst stakeholders and for



Loskop dam

the country at large – they mean we are going somewhere! Businesses and external stakeholders want to invest in the district because we have demonstrated we are adhering to legislation, using resources appropriately and therefore are a good investment.”

IN 2016, THE NDM HELD AN INVESTMENT SUMMIT WHERE INVESTMENT STAKEHOLDERS – RANGING FROM BUSINESS OWNERS TO BANKING INSTITUTIONS – CAME TOGETHER TO DISCUSS OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVESTMENT IN THE DISTRICT AND LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES. CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT THE SUMMIT AND THE OUTCOME THEREOF?

Cllr Malatjie: “Our local economy traditionally relied upon mining, a non-renewable resource, and, given the drop in commodity prices globally, it is important to diversify. The summit attracted a multitude of investors, both international and local and resulted in the following exciting growth possibilities:

- The Polish embassy is working with us to grow the agricultural sector and invest in the production of agricultural equipment
- Airport expansion

- A glass recycling plant
- Business convention centre, including a boutique hotel
- A fly ash beneficiation process to derive increased benefit from coal
- Germany is interested in working with us on building a coal mining museum
- A waste to energy plant, contributing to the green economy.

“We have given ourselves 12 months to receive proposals, assess and devise a comprehensive economic strategy before reporting back on progress to the public and stakeholders.”

AS MAYOR, WHAT DO YOU REGARD AS SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FACING THE MUNICIPALITY AND HOW DO YOU PLAN ON TACKLING THESE ISSUES?

Cllr Malatjie: “There are three major challenges facing us:

- Unemployment – the enemy of the country
- Ageing infrastructure
- Water.

“The Investment Summit was crucial for tackling unemployment and we are forging ahead with multi-pronged initiatives in this regard.

“In terms of ageing infrastructure, this challenge is compounded by growth in

our population. Municipalities receive a municipal infrastructure grant from the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, however this is insufficient given the magnitude of the problem and we intend on appointing service providers to source funds on a risk basis, not only to refurbish or replace that which needs it, but also to plan for future growth both in terms of population and the economy.

“Water is a big issue. We currently do not have a source. We are engaging with Loskop dam to access water for our domestic and industrial needs.”

WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENTS?

Cllr Malatjie: “I think receiving a number of awards confirming good governance rank as some of our greatest achievements. The Clean Audit Award stands out, as well as the SALGA and ZK Matthews Awards.

“From a tourism point of view we have winners of the prestigious Lilizela Award for excellence and of course we are so proud of the iconic Ndebele artist Esther Mahlangu, who at the age of 81 has continued her work with BMW to create magical artwork for the brand’s 7 Series. In 1991, Esther was the first woman to create artwork for the BMW 525i sedan, turning it into a BMW Art Car.

“In the education sphere we are providing 55 bursaries and, together with private partners, are collecting a million pair of shoes over five years to ensure no child goes to school without a uniform. Our schools have received academic awards and learners are being provided with laptops and iPads to encourage learning and improve pass rates.

“We are committed to service delivery across the board.”

WHICH MOTTO OR SAYING INSPIRES YOU?

“I am destined for excellence!”

MUNICIPAL MANAGER, MS MARGARET SKOSANA

“The sky is not the limit”



Margaret Skosana

THE NKANGALA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY HAS RECEIVED CLEAN AUDITS OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS. CONGRATULATIONS! WHAT WERE SOME OF THE MAJOR PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS YOU, AS MUNICIPAL MANAGER, PUT IN PLACE TO ENSURE THAT THIS WAS ACHIEVED?

Ms Skosana: “We needed to take inventory and look at the issues that were preventing us from achieving clean audits. Nkangala District Municipality had received an unqualified audit opinion for the previous eight years. The municipality had challenges in terms of performance management – our annual audit performance report and the way it was structured was found to be unreliable by the AG.

“We had to sit down and look at our annual performance report and we had to make sure that we addressed all the issues that the AG has raised. We then developed an audit action plan that was proactive instead of reactive, and that was how we achieved our clean audit.”

ON YOUR JOURNEY TO BECOMING MUNICIPAL MANAGER WHAT WERE SOME OF YOUR MAJOR TRIUMPHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS?

Ms Skosana: “I was a municipal manager in one of the municipalities before I became municipal manager of Nkangala District Municipality. I have about five years’ experience in the municipal environment. I am therefore familiar with the processes and policies. I always kept myself informed, tried to increase my knowledge continuously and attend every training opportunity made available to me. I’m very hands-on and I know my municipality – I’m aware of its potential as well as all its challenges.”

WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES?

Ms Skosana: “In any municipality you’ll find that politics is often the biggest challenge preventing a municipality from really thriving and moving forward. The limited funds available for service delivery are also hindering us from accomplishing what we want to do in and around the municipality. We rely heavily on national grants, but even that is diminishing year by year. Other big challenges include the high rate of unemployment and the ageing infrastructure.”

PLEASE OUTLINE SOME OF THE EXCITING PLANS YOU HAVE FOR THE MUNICIPALITY

Ms Skosana: “We’re exploring a range of external funding possibilities in order to implement the various programmes we have planned for the municipality. We sent delegates to Germany last year to look at the country’s waste management technology and how we can implement it in our local context.”

CAN YOU ELABORATE ON THE WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME?

Ms Skosana: “We appointed a service provider to do a feasibility study on the waste management system used by Germany. We are looking to explore a non-conventional method in waste management and are looking at how the technology can be used to control the environment. Our district is vulnerable when it comes to air pollution and we are looking at ways to help alleviate this.

“The waste management programme will not only be conducive to the environment, but will also help immensely with job creation.”

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR YOUNG WOMEN ASPIRING TO PUBLIC OFFICE?

Ms Skosana: “A key thing to be cognisant of on your road to success is to ensure that you always upskill yourself. Always make sure that you remain knowledgeable. Look for mentors who can give you guidance and advice, and consult them often.

“The sky is not the limit! If you put your mind to it, you can do it – you can achieve it.”



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President Jacob Zuma says government is working hard to create a better life for all South Africans.



When the democratic government first started its journey towards creating a country that offers a better life for all, three quarters of the South African population were lagging far behind when it came to basic rights and development.

Since then government has made much progress in changing the lives of the majority of the South Africans, and guided by the National Development Plan (NDP), it hopes to do much more.

The NDP, which is government’s blueprint for tackling poverty, inequality and unemployment, is steadily being implemented. In August 2016, the NDP’s Communications Strategy was launched and its new brand identity unveiled. Going forward, the new brand identity will mobilise and actively engage citizens on the NDP.

Planning for the future

Adopted by Cabinet in 2012, the NDP remains on track to forge a better life for all South Africans, says President Jacob Zuma.

He recently shared his thoughts and insights with com-

munities from all corners of the country, in a recent radio interview with the Government Communication and Information System that was broadcast by a number of community radio stations.

“The NDP deals with the country holistically and there are many things that are being discussed, for example education, which is absolutely crucial for any country to develop.

“A country that is less empowered educationally will always have serious problems – this has been conceded as one of the important things that we have to do to empower our people so that they don’t just remain job seekers but that they become so empowered they can create jobs themselves,” he said.

The President added that whilst people who need social grants should indeed receive them, government should also try to reduce the number of people dependent on social aid by empowering them “so they are able to be participants in the life and economy of the country”.

An empowered population is any country’s greatest

commodity and people should look at what they can do for themselves and their country, rather than simply wait for a government handout, he pointed out.

NDP to benefit all

President Zuma explained that the NDP is targeted at all areas of society and aims to develop all corners of the country.

“I want to see a person in a rural area not rush to the city,” he said, elaborating that rural dwellers should have what they need to thrive in their communities, including good schools and hospitals.

The country must have a plan of where it is going and what it needs for prosperity, he said, adding that the NDP is a product of the South African people. It envisages everyone “participating in developing the plan and everyone agreed on it so we are all working to achieve the same things”.

Decent housing

One service delivery priority that remains an emotional one is the provision of decent housing.

One caller, who spoke to the President, shared his appreciation of the good work done by government. He said that residents of Olivenhoutbosh in Centurion, had seen a lot of development since the dawn of democracy, including the construction of houses.

After more than two decades, government is still working hard at resolving problems that the country has had for centuries, President Zuma pointed out, saying that many other countries have not enjoyed the same progress.

Over the past 22 years, government has spent almost

R170 billion on providing houses to millions of indigent and vulnerable beneficiaries. In 2016 alone, 4.3 million houses and subsidies were delivered.

SA is unique

However, service delivery is not without its challenges. “South Africa is different from other countries and I endeavour to make this point. Analysts always liken South Africa to other countries; what they don’t always factor in is that not all countries had institutionalised racism,” said President Zuma.

He cited as an example the fact that the majority of South Africans were deliberately not allowed to get a good education. “In 1994, the majority of people had no skills at all. We are dealing with this legacy – people forget this.”

The President said these critics look at South Africa and say we are failing.

“However, for example, black people were not allowed to come to the cities where there were opportunities and jobs. In 1994, when they were allowed to come in, there was no infrastructure or houses so we had to start afresh.”

In the beginning, government said it would give houses to those who didn’t have, explained the President. However, when people from rural areas come to the cities, they have nowhere to stay and so they build informal settlements.

He said government was dealing with this problem by “reconstructing the country so that everyone has something”.

“You can’t say I’m finishing the informal settlements now, because the more we do, the more people keep coming. The shortage is therefore still there. We are>>





almost taking three quarters of the population to development.”

Monitoring service delivery

President Zuma explained that mechanisms have been put into place to monitor service delivery. “We established the Department of Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME). But you can’t sit in the office, you have to move about and talk to people about how things are happening.”

He said that the DPME needs to be made bigger and stronger. “We have to capacitate it so we can be everywhere we need to be. We need to have offices of this department in the provinces and municipalities so that every day it can monitor what is happening and report back.”

In this way, problems and mistakes will be picked up immediately. “This monitoring is one of the most important instruments of government.”

Councillors and public servants are there to look after the people. They need to be humble yet innovative in how they can better the lives of citizens, said President Zuma. “Those in authority must handle people with care,” he said, so that citizens have more hope for a brighter tomorrow.

“Those who are put there by government must not be arrogant; they must not fail to service the people

“Those who are put there by government must not be arrogant; they must not fail to service the people because they are making a bad situation even worse.”

because they are making a bad situation even worse.

“They must be humble, they must be respectful ... because even you are in a difficult situation, if you know people care for you and they tell you this is what we are doing ... you then have hope.”

Overcoming challenges

With regard to water scarcity, the President said that work is being done to mitigate the negative impact of the drought and to ensure future water sustainability.

He explained that historically, South Africa did not have a long-term water plan and the fact that many of the country’s citizens did not have access to drinking water had not been of concern.

He said Water and Sanitation Minister Nomvula Mokonyane has many plans to secure the country’s water supply, which include looking for water sources beyond our borders, sea water desalination and the building of more dams.

Another national concern aired was racism. “People are the image of God and colour is not an issue,” stressed the President.

While racism is a global problem, it is going to “take longer to disappear” in South Africa, given that racism was institutionalised for generations, he added.

President Zuma said the recent incident in which a black man was shoved into a coffin provoked extreme reaction, adding that although some people will die racist, many others are reaching the point of saying that whether they are black or white, they are South African first.

“It’s a matter that we need to work on politically, religiously, socially and otherwise and condemn those who still believe in racism,” he said. ●



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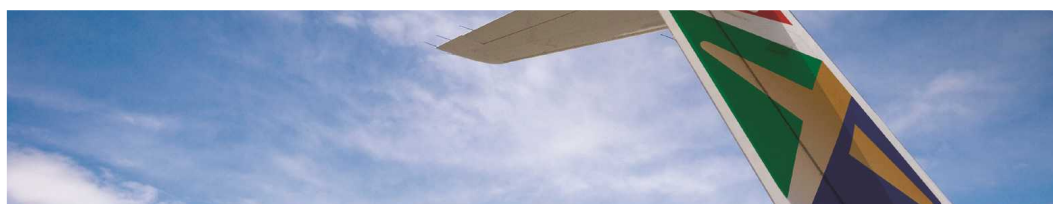
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Telling SA's good story at WEF

South Africa has done well to weather the challenging global economic climate and remains focused on encouraging investments, Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa told the world when he addressed delegates at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland, recently.

The Deputy President – who led a 56-person government, business and labour delegation to the forum – pointed out that it remained important to foster inclusive growth.

He, together with the South African team, conveyed to the international community South Africa's openness to business while stressing its status as a preferred destination for investment.

On the path to economic growth

The Deputy President said South Africa remained focused on pursuing a path to faster, inclusive and job-creating economic growth.

"We are, of course, like many other countries, facing slow growth, but what is important for us is that we were able, during the past year and the previous year, to withstand quite a lot of the challenges we faced and we need to remain focused on fostering economic growth and ensure the economic growth that we should have as South Africa is inclusive," he said.

The South African delegation also highlighted that government, business and labour have made significant progress in pursuing economic reforms; the country's strong institutions, stable macroeconomic environment, developed financial markets and strategic position provide a solid platform for stronger growth, and South Africa remains committed to strong fiscal discipline.

The delegation also stressed that steps are being taken to strengthen policy certainty; government is working to achieve a more supportive business environment and massive infrastructure investment that will continue to bolster domestic demand and productive capacity.

Speaking at a panel discussion on bridging the energy gap in Africa at the summit, Deputy President Ramaphosa also highlighted that government had prioritised energy security.

He attributed the success of the Independent Power Producer (IPP) programme for renewable energy to government's partnership with the private sector. So far investments worth R194 billion have resulted in 2 500MW of power generation.

While government policy was important in designing the programme, the private sector had played a key role in "sharpening the government's capability" in this area, Deputy President Ramaphosa pointed out.

"We needed to bring in new technology and those with better reach for technology were in the private sector."

Promoting investment

He also highlighted South Africa's national one-stop investment centre Invest SA, set up last year by the Department of Trade and Industry.

"At a national level investors come and they present whatever proposal and immediately all the various disciplines in government have combined the various ministries to assist that investor within a short space of time," he said, adding that provincial one-stop invest-



Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa led South Africa’s delegation to the World Economic Forum.

“We needed to bring in new technology and those with better reach for technology were in the private sector.”

ment centres were now being set up.

Invest SA was honoured last year by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development with a global winner award for excellence in partnering for investment promotion. The entity was also the runner-up at the Annual Investors Meeting in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, for promoting investment in sustainable development.

Working together for global success

Also speaking at the forum, Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan stressed the need for global leaders to work together better.

During a panel discussion on the outlook for global growth markets, Minister Gordhan said global leaders had worked fairly well together through the G20 following the 2009 global financial crisis, but that things had begun to deteriorate in 2013.

“It’s fallen into a deficit situation more recently and one of our concerns should be in a year of uncertainty... where are we going to get the cohesiveness that is required at a leadership level, how we get concerted actions as we got in 2009 onwards ... to create a better growth environment and to capitalise on the kind of contribution that emerging markets are making to global growth...”

Prospects, he added, remained “gloomy” because growing geopolitics had effectively divided the world.

In addition, countries themselves are facing increasing pressure from citizens to tackle inequality, the Minister noted.

He called on governments to take a three- to five-year view to start designing a more inclusive growth model, involving cooperation between governments, business and labour.

Ordinary citizens wanted to see palpable change in their lives whether this be through better jobs or income, or the ability to accumulate assets that they can leave to the next generation, Minister Gordhan pointed out.

"The key is in the next year or so, whether through the G20 or through other fora like this one, are we just going to talk and go home and carry on doing the same things, or are we going to provide that responsive and responsible leadership that begins to change the way in which we manage our individual affairs," he asked.

His sentiments were echoed by WEF Executive Chairman Klaus Schwab, who called for "certain deficiencies" of the capitalist system to be repaired and for global cooperation to be strengthened and re-imagined.

Fair trade practices

Meanwhile, Minister Gordhan also cautioned against the growing mood of protectionism across the world, calling on countries to maintain fair trade practices.

"Where there need to be adaptations and changes, because of a different philosophical outlook, let that actually happen, but don't damage the growth potential in developing countries, which is quite crucial to inclusivity at the end of the day."

He also called on China to play a key role in representing emerging economies.

In his address Chinese President Xi Jinping said in a world increasingly threatened by looming trade protectionism and the rise of populism, one should not blame globalisation for all the world's current challenges.

"We should not develop the habit of retreating to the harbour whenever encountering a storm." Referring to the threat of protectionism, he added, "Nobody will emerge as a winner in a trade war".

Much of the forum's meetings and panels were devoted to the changing nature of work, and what to do about it, in what is being dubbed the Fourth Industrial Revolution – where current jobs are coming under increasing threat from the ability of computers to do the

same work.

Investing in education and skills

Speaking at a workshop on shaping the future of education and skills, Minister in The Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Jeff Radebe said to face off this growing challenge it is vital to invest in education and the right skills.

"The jobs that have driven rapid economic development in the past, from agriculture to light manufacturing, are disappearing and the jobs of the future will be ever more technology-intensive – requiring a higher-skilled workforce," he said.

Minister Radebe added that it meant those in the workforce will need skills to be able to analyse, adapt, problem solve, manage and work in an increasingly connected way.

Government, he noted, has a critical role to play in drafting regulations and standards, evaluating programmes and financing skills development. In addition, stakeholders should be involved in decision-making at institutional level.

He added that finding ways to raise the productivity of the informal sector through skills development is also important.

"We are all eminently aware that competing in today's globally interconnected and almost daily shifting economy is a complex affair. Our countries not only need advanced education both technical and vocational – they need dynamic, fast-paced and ever-evolving skills, and also, a flexible workforce that can adjust to these rapid shifts in demand."

At the event Minister Radebe was appointed to the stewardship board of the WEF System Initiative on the Future of Education, Gender and Work. The board comprises global leaders drawn from the public and private sectors. The Minister will be expected to provide leadership on issues relating to education, gender and work.

South Africa is expected to soon ramp up its investment promotion drive when it hosts the WEF Africa meeting in Durban in May. ●





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After nearly two decades at National Treasury, Kenneth Brown is moving on from the public service.

Former school principal Kenneth Brown was burning to make a difference in the country's new democracy when he joined National Treasury 19 years ago.

But it was a 2003 visit to a conference in India with National Treasury colleagues Ismail Momoniat and Dondo Mogajane that would leave a deep impression on the former Chief Procurement Officer, who left National Treasury at the end of December for a position in the private sector.

"We were pulled aside by a very old guy who was in the finance staff of the State of Kerala. He said he was very impressed with the passion that we approach life in South Africa with – we're young and vibrant

Kenneth Brown bids farewell to public service

and we just want to make sure that South Africa succeeds. Then he said, 'let me tell you something, South Africa is bound to go down on its knees before the true South Africa will emerge'."

The official then detailed the oft-told story of India's descent from a state run by a capable civil service at independence, to one riddled with graft in just a decade.

"He said: 'South Africa, you will also go that way. It's just the make-up of things... you can't afford to go down. If you go down it will take you years and miracles to get out of it'."

For Brown and his colleagues, the conversation would stick with them. "And when we got back we actually had quite a bit of a conversation and it became engraved in myself, Dondo and Momo," recalls Brown.

Allowing managers to manage

Just a few years before, Brown had helped draft the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA). The Act, which came into effect in 2000, decentralised procurement decisions, effectively enabling thousands of public sector managers to procure what they needed to without having to pass through one state tender board.

"Our belief for the PFMA was to enable managers to actually manage. But to be frank... we never realised that to take your budget and strategic plan and to deliver something, that the conduit towards delivery is actually the supply chain."

Supply chain management had up until then never been seen as a strategic function to, for example, enable the state to use the buying power of multiple entities to benefit from economies of scale.

Instead, National Treasury spent much of those years strengthening the financial system, making the budget more transparent and improving parliamentary oversight.

"But nowhere did we say 'but there's a relationship between service delivery failure and supply chain'," he says, adding that in places where efficient supply chain management was in place, service delivery was excellent.

Overhauling state procurement

In 2009 the then Tax Commissioner Pravin Gordhan took office as Finance Minister.

"Coming from a tax background [Minister Gordhan] was very concerned about the issue around tax morality... and taxpayers were start-

ing to voice their concern around the quality of spending and the fact that the tax Rand that they pay actually gets squandered.”

Compounding this, government’s anti-corruption task team revealed an increase in the perception of corruption. Brown says that close to 85 percent of the issues that the Auditor-General was raising in all of his audits over the years were supply chain-related..

“So when [Minister Gordhan] came in he said: ‘We need to find a way to enhance efficiency in spending and in enhancing efficiency in spending we need to think about having a procurement office kind of system’.”

It was then that National Treasury began a vast project to overhaul state procurement. A single policy and norms were put in place across government. Procurement of commonly sourced goods and services – such as tyres or medical supplies for hospitals – were centralised.

A policy of strategic sourcing was put in place to ensure that before opting to put something out on tender supply chain consulted with suppliers and researched the product.

“Research told you whether you were going to sole source, go out on tender or negotiate,” explains Brown.

He singles out the example of Microsoft. “We [in government] are Microsoft users. Are you going to work on tender to get Microsoft licenses, or are you just going to use Microsoft and negotiate a better

deal,” he says.

Governance and compliance were also strengthened to ensure that supply chain managers understood the rules. To address this National Treasury introduced a practice note in March 2016 to enable Treasury officials to carry out random checks on certain tenders and to engage with supply chain practitioners on any challenges they may have with tender rules.

A decision was taken to engage with suppliers and MPs. Previously National Treasury had never sat down to discuss challenges with suppliers.

“That’s the only way that people will understand what we want and what suppliers can give us – their products, what the products look like, the price, what the range of the products are and the competition in that space.”

Brown’s office has also, since the middle of 2016, been working with Parliament’s Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Scopa). Before MPs would go through the Auditor-

General’s reports but not know what to look for.

Automating supply chain

But crucially National Treasury has also moved to automate the entire supply chain and to bring it online.

This led to the establishment of the Central Supplier Database where suppliers need only register once to get a unique identification number which state buyers can use to view a suppliers’ tax status and other details.

Previously suppliers had to produce a tax certificate every time they needed to tender and complete their director information every time they did so. A large number of fake tax certificates and questionable BEE certificates predominated.

e-Portal tender

Accompanying this, an e-portal tender was set up, where it is mandatory for all government entities to list tenders. Tender documents are available on the portal free >>



“I think the past four or five years have been the pinnacle of my career and it has provided me with quite a bit of opportunity.”

of charge and the winning bidder's details and their score is listed there to allow for competing bidders to take bid decisions on review if they believe a tender was awarded unfairly. Brown says publishing bid winners' details has already brought down the level of disputes.

He adds that while some members of civil society had asked for minutes of bid adjudication committees to be made available on the portal, such a move could present a security risk to bid adjudication members, particularly if members were named.

Currently only 30 percent of tenders put out by departments, municipalities and state agencies are posted on the e-portal. National Treasury usually contacts those supply chain officials who continue to flout the instruction.

“In some cases people may say they were not aware of this, but in some cases you can see it's just maliciousness that is creeping into the system,” says Brown. However, he is confident that in two to three years 100 percent of tenders will be online.

He says once this mark is achieved National Treasury can move to allow payments to be made online to suppliers, making it a fully-automated system.

Currently National Treasury, through the State Information and Technology Agency, is in the process of procuring a procure-to-pay software system. This will handle quotation-based purchases which make up a quarter of the government's over R500 billion in annual procurement spend. ●

About Kenneth Brown

Brown was born in 1962 and grew up in Johannesburg's Alexandra township. In 1979, while in his matric year, he and his family were forcibly relocated when the apartheid state demarcated the township a black African area. They moved to Ennerdale, Johannesburg. After completing his teaching diploma in Kimberley he took various teaching posts, while studying economics part-time at the University of the Western Cape.

Brown says his experience as a school principal at AZ Berman Primary School in Cape Town and at a farm school in Darling helped shape his management style.

“I give quite a lot of freedom for people to excel... I am not top-down in my management style. So whether you're an economist or a secretary, clerk or accountant and you want to talk to something that will help the system, my door is always open.”

New horizons

He is expected to start his new position as Head of Public Policy at Standard Bank in February and he says he wants to bring developmental thinking to his new position, which includes the bank's funding of health, housing, education and other public funding.

“I don't say you must reduce your profit margin, but whatever you put into the system needs to benefit South Africans.”

Looking back, he says his nearly two decades at National Treasury have been good years. “I think the past four or five years have been the pinnacle of my career and it has provided me with quite a bit of opportunity.”

Brown adds it's logical to expect the challenges of state capture that South Africa is going through at present, given the size of the resources that the state manages and oversees. But he remains hopeful.

“It is just the nature of evolving democracies. But the key thing is whether we have got the maturity to put systems in place and make sure we can stop the downward spiral.”



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Fighting corruption is everyone's fight



Minister in The Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Jeff Radebe says government is committed to rooting out corruption.

Fighting corruption remains one of government's main priorities, given the detrimental effect it has on development, says Minister in The Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Jeff Radebe.

"Corruption never begins and ends with one official. There is always a network of corrupt officials who connive and make shady deals in the dark alleys of our society.

"It is against this backdrop that our approach to fighting corruption deals with both those who corrupt as well as those who are corrupted," added the Minister.

Corruption in the public and private sectors has serious consequences for South Africa's development and government's efforts to effectively deliver services, he noted.

The Minister delivered the keynote address at a gathering of diplomats, public servants, representatives of academia, civil society, labour, the media and others at the University of South Africa on International Anti-Corruption Day recently.

South Africa is a signatory to the United Nations (UN) Convention Against Corruption adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2003. Member countries have to regularly report on measures they've taken to implement the Convention.

In September 2015, to combat corruption, government started a process to

develop a comprehensive National Anti-Corruption Strategy that will inform the work of government and the citizenry towards building a more prosperous nation, said the Minister.

A global problem

Gauteng MEC for Finance Barbara Creecy, in an address on behalf of Premier David Makhura, said the UN reports that yearly worldwide more than US\$1 trillion is paid in bribes and about US\$2.6 trillion is stolen through corruption.

The UN says Africa is losing over US\$50 billion yearly to illegal transactions and had lost up to US\$1 trillion in illicit outflows in the past 50 years, added MEC Creecy. "Corruption is one of the biggest impediments to achieving development," she said. Zhuidyz Akisheva of the UN Office of Drugs and Crime pointed out that the poor and vulnerable suffer the most when there is corruption and that efforts against crime and corruption constitute a war.

Akisheva said there is growing intolerance among many ordinary people. "Corruption is the result of individual decisions," she said.

Initiatives in South Africa

Government has acknowledged

and accepted the challenge and is fighting the proverbial war against corruption alongside other strata of society, said Kenny Govender, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA).

Minister Radebe added that in 2014 government had undertaken to ensure the conviction of about 100 people involved in corruption and corruption-related cases where the total amount involved is R5 million or more. The target date is 2019.

"We have ... secured the conviction of 32 persons in corruption cases where the total amount involved was about R3.8 billion. In

confiscation orders to the value of R2.86 billion, said the Minister.

In addition, President Zuma has signed 27 proclamations empowering the Special Investigative Unit (SIU) to investigate serious malpractices, maladministration and corruption in connection with the administration of state institutions and to take appropriate and effective civil action.

The SIU's results include the recovery of cash or assets worth R204 million, setting aside or invalidation of contracts and/or administrative decisions/actions to the value for R756 million and the referral of 3 855 matters for disciplinary, execu-

vice Regulations 2016, issued by the DPSA to govern the receipt of gifts, financial disclosures, performance of remunerative work by civil servants, conducting business with an organ of state and ethics infrastructure.

Public servants had to stop doing business with the state by January 2017 and provide documentary proof to that effect by February 2017.

Curbing wastage

Government also created the Office of the Chief Procurement Officer (OCPO) to modernise and consolidate government's fragmented framework for procurement and

The main objective of the anti-corruption training programmes is to create ethical organisational ethos in departments and implement the Public Service National Anti-Corruption Strategy

cases where the amount involved is less than R5 million, the number of persons convicted is 58 and the amount involved was in the order of R188 million."

He added that in addition to securing convictions, corruption-fighting agencies were freezing or confiscating the assets of people suspected of involvement in corrupt activities while their prosecution was pending or their cases being finalised through criminal or civil procedures respectively.

Since 2014 government has obtained 871 freezing orders totalling R7.65 billion and 1 089 forfeiture/

tive and/or administrative action.

"To ensure that new and existing civil servants are not inducted into the scourge of corruption, the National School of Government (NSG) has developed a suite of programmes with the DPSA.

"The main objective of the anti-corruption training programmes is to create ethical organisational ethos in departments and implement the Public Service National Anti-Corruption Strategy. To date the NSG has trained over 5 600 officials from across national and provincial governments," said Minister Radebe.

Another initiative is the Public Ser-



supply chain management (SCM), said Minister Radebe.

"Since its establishment the OCPO has taken bold steps to curb waste, leakages, wrongdoing and corruption. Notable achievements recorded since 2013 are the Public Procurement Bill which aims to modernise the public procurement and SCM function by consolidating a legal framework applicable

to the public sector and to facilitate broader reforms.

"Steps have been taken to improve transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of SCM by simplifying the process of doing business with the state ... The Central Supplier Database is the first step in this journey and is seen as the precursor to eProcurement in government," he added.

Ensuring transparency

Gauteng Premier David Makhura recently indicated that one of the most powerful instruments in fighting corruption is ensuring transparency in public procurement.

"This is particularly important because all over the world the tender or procurement process is an avenue through which state corruption, corporate and state capture takes place. The stakes are high.

"For instance, in South Africa government's procurement budget for goods and services is estimated to be over R500 billion annually. The Gauteng provincial government spends more than R47 billion on procurement annually. All of this excludes procurement spend by municipalities."

To enhance the integrity and transparency of Gauteng's public procurements systems and decisions, the Open Tender Process has been expanded.

Premier Makhura said 72 projects worth R10 billion had been awarded using the Open Tender System (OTS) earning public commendation from civil society, business and government leaders.

The Gauteng government will appoint a civil society-led Integrity Promotion and Anti-Corruption Advisory Committee chaired by a retired judge and will table a Bill to ensure the OTS is signed into law.

A combined effort needed

Despite the progress that has been made, corruption remains a menace, said Minister Radebe, pointing to the nexus between government, business, labour and civil society "to enhance our collective might and energy".

"We are thus obligated to adopt a whole of government and societal approach in order to build a resilient anti-corruption system, an accountable public service, a moral society and ... adequate transparency by asserting the authority of the state, improving coordination, improving ethical conduct, promoting citizen participation and public education," he added.

For the purpose of developing an overarching strategy, government investigated the corruption phenomenon to inform the National Anti-Corruption Strategy. The diagnostic report led to a discussion document that government intended to launch early in 2017 for society-wide consultations, Minister Radebe announced.

The bottom line however is clear: corruption affects all of society and every person has a responsibility to combat it. All corruption starts with an individual making a moral or immoral decision. ●

UNCAC obligations

Signatories to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) include South Africa. The obligations of the parties to the Convention are:

- Prevention measures directed at the public and private sectors that include transparent policies in the financing of election campaigns and political parties.
- Criminalisation of a wide range of offences, including offences relating to public sector and private sector corruption.
- International cooperation in every way, including extradition and investigations.
- Asset recovery which is important in many developing countries where high-level corruption has plundered national assets.
- Technical cooperation and information exchange taking into account developing countries' need for enhanced financial and material assistance and technical assistance to developing countries and countries in transition.
- Implementation mechanism to assist in the implementation of the Convention if necessary.

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Government has resolved to transform the Castle of Good Hope to a place of nation building and reconciliation.



Colonial castle becomes a beacon of hope

The Castle of Good Hope, which remains in the centre of Cape Town many years after it was first built by colonial settlers, was once the nerve centre of South Africa’s difficult past – colonial injustice and racial oppression.

It is a standing reminder and sanctuary for the defence of a brutal system that robbed the majority of South Africans of their dignity, social identity, land and other benefits of their country’s economic potential.

The Castle of Good Hope, which officially turned 350-years-old in January 2016, is the country’s oldest building and its age, content, adaptive re-use and ongoing historical significance is indeed a major milestone in the life of the country’s young democracy.

To commemorate the castle’s 350 years of existence, Defence and Military Veterans Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula recently gave the monument a R108 million

facelift to restore its rich history and heritage and for South Africans to learn about the pain that remains in between its walls so that we have a better tomorrow.

A place of healing

Unveiling the refurbished castle at a commemorative event in Cape Town recently, the Minister said the castle should be seen as a place of healing and reconciliation.

The history of the colonial monument should be taught to young people for nation building and unity, she added.

“The commemoration of the 350 years’ existence of the castle offers us a unique opportunity to revisit, reinterpret and rewrite our complex, brutal colonial and apartheid history in a manner that is fully inclusive, restorative, respectful and educational.

“As with all events like these, the decision to commemo-

rate was not taken lightly, that is why we decided not to call this a celebration but rather a commemoration. We need to embrace our collective history and heritage – whether it is good, bad or ugly.

The commemoration offered the opportunity to rewrite colonial history in a manner that will enhance healing and nation building, pointed out Minister Mapisa-Nqakula.

“And it must start with primary school children – all of whom must be taught about the history of the castle in their history books.” The Minister said government had resolved to transform the castle from what it used to stand for to a place of nation building and reconciliation.

“This bastion of colonialism must, through a balanced interpretation of history, become a centre of healing and learning.

“It is of critical importance that young South Africans study the true history of the castle and, from lessons learnt, be part of efforts to achieve the overarching objective to heal and reconcile this nation.

“A study of the history of the castle, which is so interwoven with that of events leading up to the creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 and beyond, will also enrich scholarship in institutions of higher learning,” she said.

A rich history

While many will associate the story of the castle with that of the Dutch coloniser of Cape Town, Jan van Riebeeck, who docked his three ships at the Cape in 1652, the monument holds many untold stories.

The foundation stone of this historic monument was first laid in August 1666 by the then Governor of the Cape

Colony, Zacharia Wagenaar.

The intention was to build a solid defence against two main enemies – rival European powers who could attack from the sea and the indigenous population who fought to retain their land and freedom.

Construction of the castle began on 2 January 1666, and it was more than just a military fortress.

As the Dutch settlers, and later the British, used the Cape Peninsula as a springboard to conquer the inland, the castle became the political, judicial, legislative, penal and social nerve centre of the fledgling colonial administration.

It was also the residence of the Governor from 1679 until the British took control of the castle in 1795. It served as the military headquarters for the British until it was handed over to the government of the Union of South Africa in 1917.

Honouring heroes

During the recent commemorative event, Minister Mapisa-Nqakula unveiled the statues of indigenous warrior kings – King Cetshwayo kaSenzangakhona of AmaZulu, King Langalibalele kaMthimkulu of AmaHlubi and King Sekhukhune of BaPedi – as well as Gorochougua clan freedom fighter and Khoe (Khoisan) leader Doman, at the Castle of Good Hope.

They were honoured for their roles at different periods after they were captured and incarcerated at the castle, having led wars of resistance against the land and cattle disposessions that ensued following the arrival of Dutch and later British settlers in South Africa.

The Minister said the unveiling of the statues was “the beginning of an ongoing commitment to honour all



The foundation stone of this historic monument was first laid in **August 1666** by the then Governor of the Cape Colony, Zacharia Wagenaar.



those who gallantly fought against colonial conquest and in turn inspired future generations of freedom fighters”.

Centre for Memory, Healing and Learning

The castle has also opened the first ever Centre for Memory, Healing and Learning.

This is in recognition of what took place at the venue, explained the Minister.

The flanks of the centre house two very harrowing spaces - the one is called the torture chamber, while the other is the jail cells where incarcerated kings and chiefs from famous wars were held at the time.

“This centre—sponsored by the Department of Military Veterans—is breaking the curse of oppression, persecution and ignorance.

“There is going to be a seminar room where topics of colonialism, restitution, healing and heritage will be debated and discussed and taught, and I would really

encourage all government departments to make use of this facility,” she added.

Minister Mapisa-Nqakula noted that since the castle essentially served as a haven for colonial rulers and was a strong proponent of slavery, it was no accident that the largest contradiction and conflict around identity and race is found in the Western Cape and Cape Town in particular.

“We must use this opportunity to change the mind-set of the castle being glorified as a bastion of colonialism.”

The official commemoration of the castle comes not long after the Minister held a separate event to honour a heroine whose role in history contributed to the shaping of the country’s future.

In August 2016, the Minister held a ceremonial repatriation of the spirit of mama Krotoa – a Khoi woman who worked for Van Riebeeck – from Die Groote Kerk in the Cape Town city centre to the castle where she was originally buried. ●



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Transforming communities

Local government leaders have the opportunity and responsibility to transform their communities and are best placed to change people's lives.

This is according to Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, who was addressing a new cohort of leaders during the recent South African Local Government Association (Salga) National Conference.

He urged local government leaders to serve people selflessly and with distinction.

"Our people have elected you because they trust you and have confidence in your ability to lead and to transform their communities and their lives. They also have confidence that you will use the assets and resources they have put under your custodianship prudently.

"They have confidence that you will prioritise development and you will work tirelessly to advance their interests. They hope for an activist cadre of local leadership that will get out of the council chamber and walk the rocky and difficult journey of progress with them," he pointed out.

Serving people

The Deputy President cautioned leaders not to neglect their constituencies.

"We have experienced councillors who are detached from their constituents, neglectful of their duties and wasteful with public resources. They give local government a bad name.



Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa has urged councillors to prioritise development and put the needs of their constituencies first.

"But, we must hasten to add, these councillors are in the minority. Our responsibility is to ensure that all structures of local government, in all parts of the country, serve all of our people all of the time."

The new term of local government must be characterised by dedicated local leadership that responds to the urgent challenges facing communities, he added.

"We look to this cohort of councillors to exemplify everything our people expect of their public representatives. We want councillors that are accountable and responsive. No task must be too great and no resident's concern too trivial.

"They must be honest, trustworthy and uphold the highest standards of ethical behaviour. No councillor must ever again be accused of 'misusing our money'."

Making an impact

He also stressed the importance of leaders' abilities to manage public funds effectively.

"We want councillors that are capable, understand public finances, have experience in management and have a firm grasp of the theory and practice of governance. They must always be trying to improve their skills and expand their knowledge."

Deputy President Ramaphosa noted that government has made progress in creating a local government system from the fragmented, undemocratic and racially-divided apartheid system, adding that municipalities that were neglected must get priority.

"Working together, we are directing resources to rebuild administrations that were under-resourced, performed poorly and offered no real value to the people."

He urged municipalities to use technology more effectively to foster innovation and encourage thinking that looks beyond the immediate constraints to significantly increase local investment and economic activity.

"Municipalities should be incubating entrepreneurs and creating an environment for faster, greater employment creation."

Partnerships will be key, the Deputy President said.



Deputy Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs Obed Bapela with some of the delegates who attended the SALGA conference.

"We seek municipalities – in metros, cities, towns and rural areas – whose central purpose is to enable job creation, sustainable livelihoods and successful human settlements.

"They need to forge partnerships with business, organised labour and civil society to mobilise resources and ensure collaboration."

Committed to development

The newly-elected leadership of Salga committed to placing local government at the centre of development.

The conference saw the election and confirmation of national office bearers and the national executive committee, which will preside over and lead the sector guided by Salga's Strategic Framework 2017 – 2022.

The newly-elected President of Salga and former Mayor of Johannesburg, Parks Tau, said that the new leadership's task is to support local government to respond to the complex and rapid changes of the 21st century.

"As implementers and shapers of the future, it presents an opportune moment to reinvent ourselves to adapt and be responsive to the fast-changing environment.

"In particular, I think we have a major opportunity to pioneer development and transformation models that are more sustainable and just."

He added that Salga will learn from and work with other stakeholders.

"In my view, greater collaboration through joint initiatives and partnerships is the future of connected governance.

"Above all else, this will require collaboration and building strategic and global partnerships for development through united cities and local governments, widening our partnerships network and learning with cities and regions of the world.

"We must unlock barriers for our members through partnerships, negotiation and facilitation." ○

The way forward

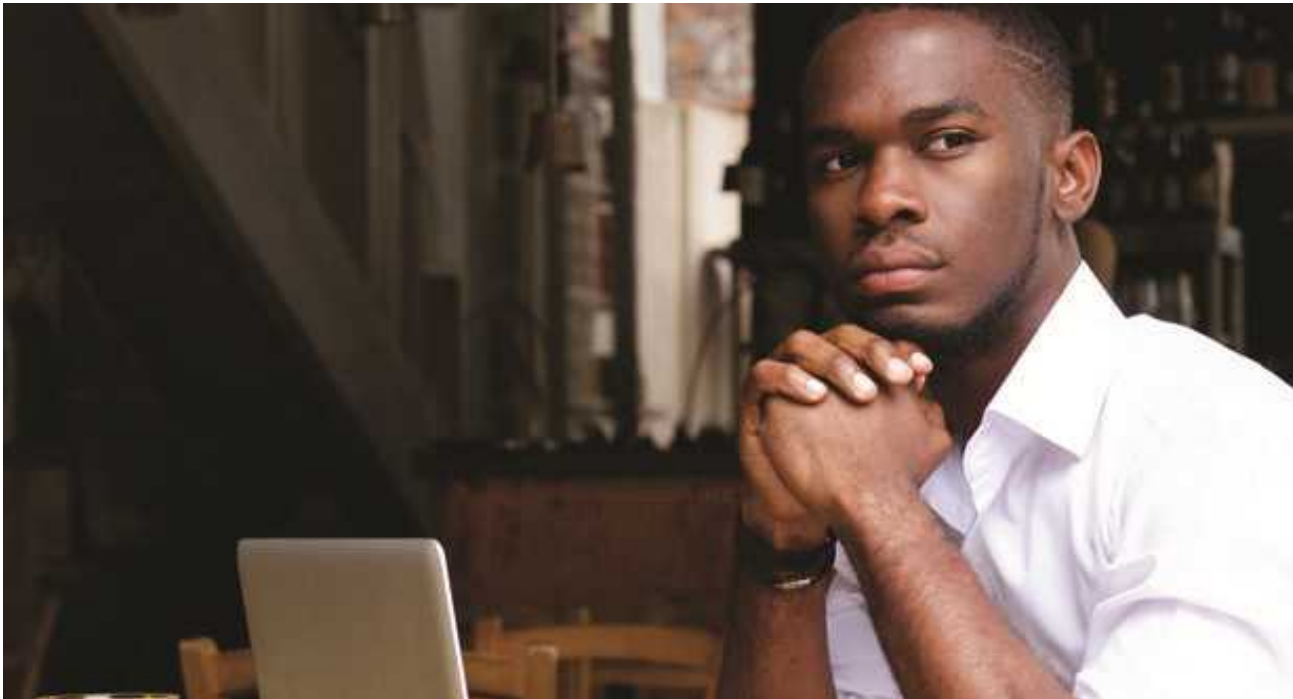
In their declaration at the end of the conference, local government leaders noted that while progress has been made in improving people's lives, more can be achieved with all three spheres of government working closely together.

Delegates identified that the high turnover of councillors and people in senior management positions is an area of concern that the new leadership will have to pay attention to.

In their declaration they called for, among others:

- The review of the powers assigned to local government, including reviewing the powers of executive mayors and councils, and functions assigned to the three categories.
- For primary health, human settlements, social cohesion, food security and community safety to be local government functions.
- The passing of legislation for an incentive-based repeal of the historical (pre-1994 and post-1994) debt owed by citizens to municipalities.
- To bring about the necessary policy and legislative changes so that local government has authority over the entire value chain (generation, distribution, reticulation, revenue management) for all trading services (water, sanitation, electricity, waste management, broad band infrastructure).

Giving young entrepreneurs a boost



A car accident in 2007 might have left him paralysed from the waist down, but it did not stop Ricardo Adams from starting his own business.

Two years ago, Adams, 32, received a R10 000 grant from the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), which has helped him to add two more permanent and two casual jobs, bringing his staff to six permanent employees.

The grant helped him replace old grass cutters and buy spare parts for his Jeffrey's Bay garden-service business, The Grass Barber.

The week-long basic business training he underwent before he could access the grant helped him to register his business.

Adams is one of thousands of youth entrepreneurs who

have received finance and business support in recent years from government.

Youth fund

To tackle the country's high youth unemployment rate the NYDA, the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (Sefa) and the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) collectively launched a R2.7 billion youth fund in 2014.

Under the arrangement, youth entrepreneurs can get up to R100 000 in grants from the NYDA, while Sefa provides loans of up to R5 million. Loans of between R5 million and R50 million are available from the IDC.

In the 2015/16 financial year, millions of rands went to youth entrepreneurs, which included:

- R970 million approved by the IDC in 19 transactions

for entities in which youth held more than 25 percent.

- R275 million disbursed by Sefa to 13 111 youth-owned businesses. Funding to these firms made up 29 percent of Sefa's total disbursements.
- R30 million given by the NYDA in grants to 673 youth-owned cooperatives and enterprises, which helped to sustain or create about 1 200 jobs.
- R4 million from the Technology Innovation Agency to mainly help youth innovators to access technical services.

Last year, the IDC announced that it had set aside R4.5 billion for youth businesses over the next five years.

Speaking at a recent IDC youth conference, IDC Chief Executive Geoffrey Qhena said the corporation could have approved more funding to youth businesses if it were not for structural challenges facing youth funding, including undeveloped balance sheets, as well as limited skills and capacity.

In a bid to address this, the IDC has launched a free youth portal (www.saunder36.co.za) to provide an interactive site for youth entrepreneurs to engage on challenges, opportunities and other critical issues affecting them.

Encouraging youth entrepreneurship

Speaking at the conference Deputy Minister in The Presidency, Buti Manamela, said the Presidential Working Group on Youth is concerned by the poor uptake in youth entrepreneurship.

Two-thirds of all unemployed people in South Africa are youth, a report released by Statistics SA in April 2016 showed.

The study indicated a decline of 2.6 percentage points in the total share of self-employed youth between 2009 and 2014, with youth in 2014 making up 543 000 or 27.2 percent of all self-employed persons.

Deputy Minister Manamela said the working group would request that the Minister of Economic Development Ebrahim Patel get the IDC, Sefa and the NYDA to develop a draft framework for an efficient youth entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Strengthening efforts

The NYDA, meanwhile, is stepping up its support for youth entrepreneurs. The agency's Chief Executive Khathu Ramukumba says the agency is now focusing more on partnering with private sector and government to improve entrepreneurship support.

The NYDA is also holding talks with a number of organisations, including Microsoft and the Innovation Hub, on how better collaborate.

He adds that a big challenge in assisting youth become entrepreneurs is that many prefer a job over self-employment and quickly abandon their business when a job comes along.

In addition, older entrepreneurs with more skills, contacts and capital, are arguably more likely to succeed in business.

Technical training

Ramukumba stresses that government is compelled to support youth entrepreneurship because of the high number of unemployed youth. This he describes as a "catch 22" situation.

To tackle this challenge, the NYDA is trying to get more youth to undergo technical training, he says.

Once equipped with such training, youth can be assisted to register cooperatives or businesses and can then access a grant from the agency, through which they could, for example, buy machinery or equipment for their enterprise.

In addition, the NYDA plans to turn all its 16 branches into Wi-Fi hotspots, allowing the youth to surf the web for business opportunities and information. Three minibuses fitted with Wi-Fi will also be used to offer internet access to rural areas and townships.

Ramukumba says the agency's interim board believes that the agency should have a bigger focus on entrepreneurship.

"You can't talk about real eradication (of poverty) without targeting entrepreneurship," he adds.

Three years ago the NYDA decided to limit entrepreneurship support when it halted loans to entrepreneurs and



moved instead to offering grant funding of up to R100 000.

Grand recipients are assigned a mentor who assists beneficiaries for at least a year.

The NYDA this financial year increased the amount available for grant funding, from R30 million to R36 million.

Ramukumba says a monitoring report that the agency completed in September has revealed that 52 percent of youth that acquired grants in the last three years are still in operation.

Business support

The agency also dispenses valuable business support. In the past financial year 63 042 budding and existing entrepreneurs received business training and support.

This included 2 067 vouchers, most of these to cover the cost of developing a business plan, set at R10 000 each. Entrepreneurs supported by the NYDA's business vouch-

ers were able to create 350 jobs.

Two years ago the agency decided to do away with the R200 commitment fee that youth formerly had to pay to access vouchers. The agency pays service providers directly for the services that applicants are seeking to acquire.

In addition, 17 865 youth received entrepreneurship awareness training through a one-day seminar, while 7 665 received in-depth business training running for three to five days and 26 127 school learners attended the Primestars programme, where content on entrepreneurship is screened at participating cinemas.

The NYDA is also looking for ways to boost market access for youth entrepreneurs. Ramukumba says the present market linkages programme has made little impact. It helped create just 32 jobs.

In September 2016 the agency put out a request for quote for service providers to provide solutions to address this challenge.

The NYDA has also been involved in discussions with National Treasury to allow for a possible youth set-aside.

For many youth businesses it is not easy for their businesses to reach break-even point.

Mmapheello Lefalatsa, who recently acquired new equipment for her Bloemfontein beauty spa she started in 2010, says her business is still "at the testing stage".

However, thanks to the services of Sefa, the IDC and the NYDA, young people like Lefalatsa have somewhere to turn to for help. ●




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Period Pain

by Kopano Matlwa

Medical doctor Kopano Matlwa was first introduced to the South African literary scene when she won the European Union Literary Award in 2006/7 for her debut novel *Coconut*. At the time she was only 21 years old and was a student at the University of Cape Town. It was her first novel that set her apart as a promising new voice in South African literature. Her beautiful narratives offer a distinct kind of honesty, one that embraces and depicts post-apartheid South Africa without fear.

Period Pain is her latest offering. Any woman who goes through the excruciating stabs every month

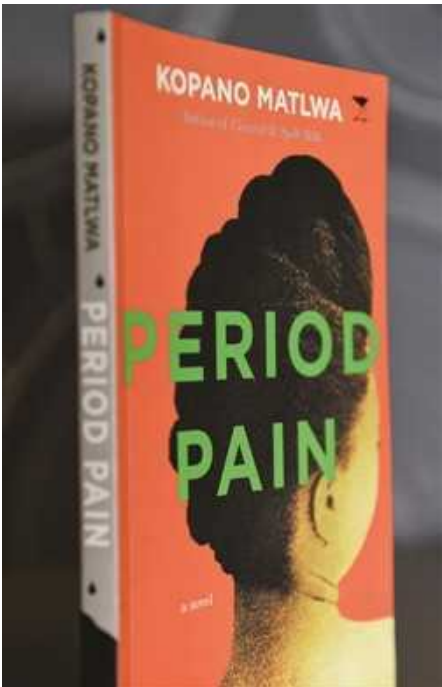
understands the intensity of period pain. That time of the month is associated with headaches, nausea and a very dry mouth. Matlwa takes this feminine condition and creates an allegorical representation of current day South Africa.

Period Pain is set in an anxious South Africa and is told in first person. It is told through the eyes of Masechaba who fills the shoes of the protagonist as if they had been custom-made for her.

Masechaba is a medical doctor who is dealing with a disgruntled past. She also comes from a background where feelings and emotions are not entirely addressed. As a response to this, she decides to document her life experiences in her journal.

Masechaba is fascinating to follow as the story progresses. Upon dealing with all her demons, she befriends a fellow young doctor who is originally from Zimbabwe. It is in this friendship that the reader sees the impact of xenophobia and what it means to be foreign in South Africa. Their relationship is very complex and their surroundings make things harder for their friendship.

Matlwa uses simple words and ideas to narrate a very hard and powerful story. Telling it in the first person creates a very beautiful but painful relationship between the reader and narrator. The mere



fact that the entire novel is actually Masechaba's journal makes it feel as though you are intruding on Masechaba's personal space and yet it is in that space where you fall in love with her voice. You can't help but want to save her.

And perhaps that was Matlwa's intention, to have readers open their eyes to their own realities, as well as the realities faced by women on a daily basis. The book also brings attention to the country's young men and women who suffer from mental illness and also personifies South Africa, as it goes through its own fair share of period pain.

Another novel that comes to mind when reading *Period Pain* is *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger; where the main character is dealing with the loss of a loved one, is questioning the world and also suppresses emotions.

If you enjoyed Matlwa's previous books, *Coconut* and *Spilt Milk*, then *Period Pain* is definitely for you. ●

The mere fact that the entire novel is actually Masechaba's journal, makes it feel as though you are intruding on Masechaba's personal space, and yet it is in that space where you fall in love with her voice.

Matome Tloubatla
Head: Credit and Collections, Ithala SOC Limited

Matome Tloubatla has been appointed Head: Credit and Collections at Ithala SOC Limited.

Tloubatla has 12 years' experience within the banking and financial sectors, and previously held senior roles at ABSA, and Platreef Resources. He also served in senior positions at the Limpopo Economic Development Agency and Development Bank of Southern Africa.

His academic qualifications include, among others, a Bachelor of Commerce Degree from the University of South Africa, a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Regent Business School and an International Business and Leadership Management Programme from the Shanghai University of International Business and Economics.

Tloubatla is expected to use his wealth of credit management experience to mitigate risks through robust credit granting processes to ultimately enable quality business growth of Ithala SOC Limited's loan book.



Thamo Mzobe
Chief Executive Officer, National Development Agency

Thamo Mzobe is the new CEO of the National Development Agency (NDA).

Prior to her appointment, she worked in the Office of the Minister at the Department of Social Development (DAD), where she held the position of Senior Manager: Cooperatives Unit.

Mzobe was also Senior Manager at the NDA: Office of the CEO, where she was responsible for Stakeholder Relations and Partnership Management. She worked as Provincial Manager at the NDA's KwaZulu-Natal provincial office and Chief of Staff and Director: Institutional Capacity at the DSD.

Mzobe was also Deputy Director: Portfolio Committees at the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature; principal of Ndwedwe Primary School; Head of Department and educator at iSibonise Primary School.

She holds a Postgraduate Certificate in Executive Leadership from the National School of Government, Postgraduate Diploma in Education Management, Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Arts from the University of South Africa. She is currently studying towards a Master's in Administration from the University of Potchefstroom.



Time to adopt a healthy lifestyle

February is National Healthy Lifestyles Awareness Month, which is aimed at encouraging South Africans to embrace behaviours that promote wellness.

There are five basic lifestyle principles that have been identified as particularly valuable in contributing to overall physical well-being. These are a balanced and nutritious diet; regular exercise; not smoking; avoiding substance abuse and practising safe sex.

Many of us know that we should eat right and get enough exercise, and we are often warned of the dangers associated with substance abuse and unprotected sex, yet too many people try to fool themselves into thinking that lifestyle-related diseases will not affect them.

National Healthy Lifestyles Awareness Month seeks to empower the public with the knowledge that a sustained, proactive approach to health has significant lasting benefits.

Healthy diet

A balanced and varied diet, which provides adequate

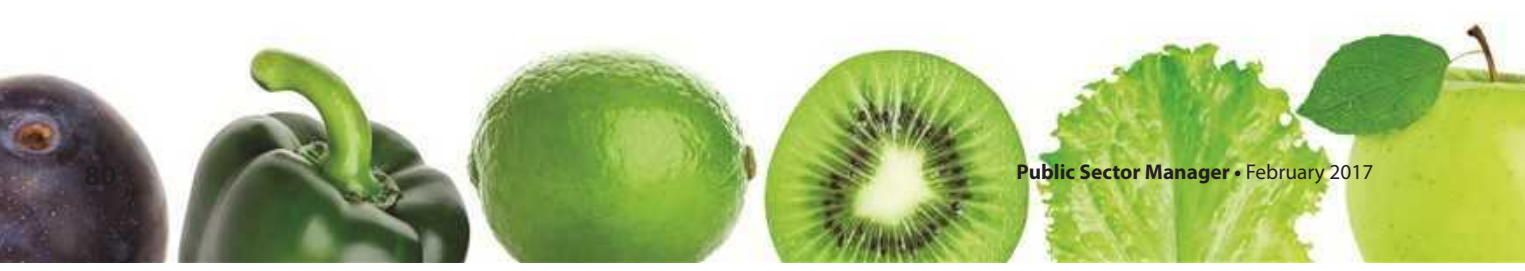
nutrition without too many calories, is the basis of a healthy lifestyle. The vitamins, minerals, proteins and energy contained in our food supplies our bodies with the fuel we need to function well and fight off infections and diseases.

Foods that contain a lot of fat, sugar or starch should only be eaten in moderation. Replace fatty meats, cakes, pastries and white bread with skinless chicken, fish, beans, fruit and wholegrain breads, as a starting point. To help reduce fat intake, it is also better to bake, steam or dry-fry food than to fry it in oil or butter.

Fresh fruit and vegetables contain more vitamins than those that have been cooked because vitamins may be destroyed at high temperatures.

Exercise

Regular physical activity is an important aspect of a healthy lifestyle, and there are many ways to add an element of fun to your exercise routine. Skipping, dancing, cycling, hiking and team sports are all excellent forms



of exercise to keep your heart and waistline healthy. Just remember to consult your doctor before beginning a strenuous new exercise regime.

It is better to start off with gentle exercise and gradually build up to a more physically demanding routine, particularly if you have not been in the habit of exercising recently. It is surprising how quickly our bodies adapt and fitness levels improve.

Members of Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) are encouraged to get their departments involved in the GEMS Fitness programme for additional guidance, support and motivation.

Quit smoking

Smoking tobacco is an unhealthy habit and can have severe long-term health consequences. Increased risks of heart disease, stroke, emphysema and various types of cancer, most notably lung cancer and cancers of the mouth and throat, are among the many negative health consequences of smoking.

The addictive nature of nicotine, one of the chemicals in tobacco, often makes it extremely difficult for smokers to reach the decision to quit smoking; even when they know that this is a dangerous habit. It is worth remembering that tobacco is a drug, and that there is help available for quitting smoking. If you are a smoker, talk to your family practitioner about strategies for quitting smoking.

Substance abuse

Alcohol and drug abuse are not only very bad for your health, but may also lead to risky behaviour and mental illness. This, in turn, affects families and communities in harmful ways.

Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to liver damage, high blood pressure, stroke, digestive problems and various types of cancer. Different types of drugs affect the body in different ways, and may also make people more aggressive and potentially violent, lead to risky sexual behaviour or reckless driving, to name just a few of the potential dangers.

Remember that drug abuse can refer to illegal drugs,

including whoonga, cocaine, ketamine, LSD and ecstasy; or the misuse of prescription medicines, such as painkillers and sleeping pills, among others. While it can be difficult to seek help for addiction, support is available and it is possible to conquer substance dependence to regain control of your life.

Safe sex

According to the World Health Organisation, over a million sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are transmitted daily. In South Africa, such infections remain rife, even though there have been extensive public education campaigns about safe sex. Remember that some sexually transmitted diseases cannot be cured, including the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and genital herpes, although in most cases such conditions can be effectively managed.

While STIs remain a serious threat to the health of South Africans, fortunately there are three highly effective means of protecting oneself from infection. The first method is abstaining from sexual contact.

The second method of preventing STI infection is correct use of condoms, although condoms do not necessarily provide 100 percent protection, particularly against HVP and crabs, for example. Remember that many of these infections can be passed through touching alone, and that unprotected oral and anal sex, as well as vaginal intercourse, can transmit diseases to both partners.

The third method of preventing the spread of STIs is to remain faithful to an uninfected partner in a monogamous relationship. In the latter case, it is a good idea for both of you to be tested for STIs at the start of your relationship, and have routine tests from time to time thereafter.

Embrace a new, healthier you

National Healthy Lifestyles Awareness Month is all about making lasting changes. We all know the basic 'dos and don'ts' for a healthy body, but this knowledge is useless if we do not commit to a healthier way of life. ●



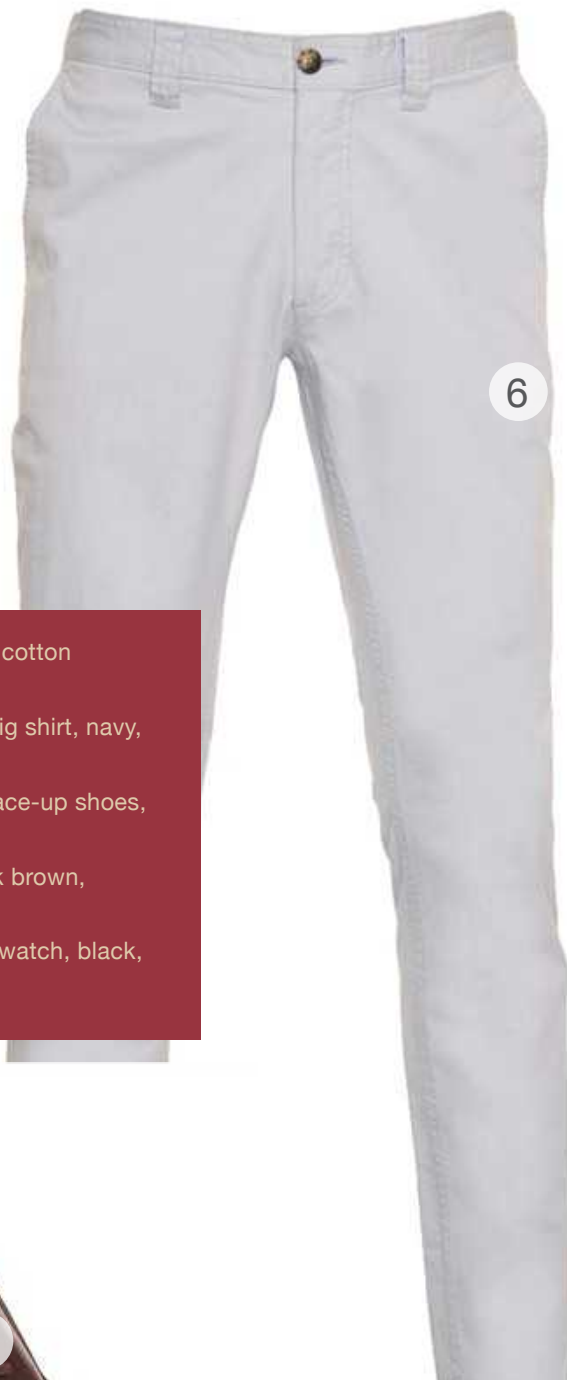
New Year...new you!

With the New Year comes resolutions; be they career goals, plans for special getaways, getting into shape or working on a new wardrobe. If you've decided it's time to spruce up your wardrobe, here are some items that are sure to breathe new life into it.

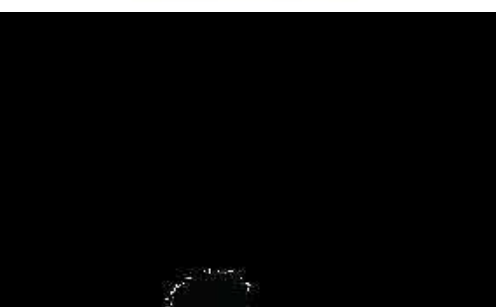


1. Thula Sindi Houndstooth twist dress with lace hem, black and white, **R2 249**.
2. Sissy Boy pointed-toe court heels, silver, **R629**.
3. Queenspark flower embossed bag, metallic, **R599**.
4. Woolworths embellished face watch, **R350**.
5. Shauna Neill pincushion gold ring, **R140**.





- 6. Woolworths slim fit cotton Chinos. **R499.**
- 7. Polo custom fit Greig shirt, navy, **R899.**
- 8. Anton Fabi Miami lace-up shoes, red, **R659.**
- 9. Polo Tyrel belt, dark brown, **R449.**
- 10. Fossil Nate leather watch, black, **R3 299.**





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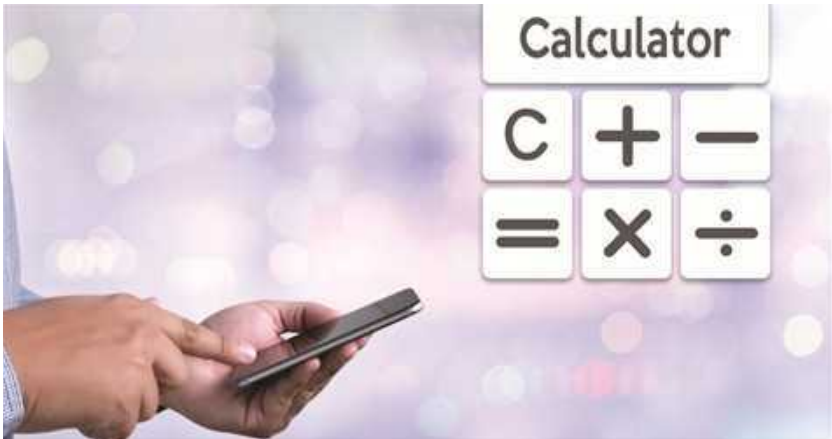
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Living on a budget

Compiled by: Albert Pule



For too many people, drawing up a budget and following it is a serious challenge. But living by a budget does not necessarily mean that your lifestyle will change drastically and it does not have to be restrictive.

Besides giving you power and control over your finances, a skilfully crafted budget keeps you from living pay cheque to pay cheque and enables you to save for future goals and dreams.

A proper budget also helps you to avoid getting into debt and reduces the stress of paying bills. When you look at the benefits of having a budget or a spending plan, it's clear that you should embrace the concept.

Make a list of all expenses

Creating a list of your bills is an essential part of creating a budget. Include all of your expenses on the list.

Some common categories include food, housing, entertainment, transportation, debt, services, education costs and insurance.

Personalise your list and base it on your lifestyle and circumstances. For instance, if you like to travel, include a travel category. When creating your list try to be as accurate as possible.

Don't break the number one rule

The number one rule of budgeting is that you cannot spend more than you earn. Unfortunately, most people don't follow this simple rule. After you add up all of your expenses, you need to compare them against your net income (not your gross salary, but your actual take-home pay).

If your bills exceed your net income, you must revamp your budget/spending plan by prioritising necessities. Start by cutting out luxuries and non-essential purchases

to bring your spending in line with your income.

Reward yourself

Reward yourself with 'treats' that you've built into your budget. Think of them as rewards for good financial behaviour.

Only you can decide what reward would make you happy and motivate you to stick to your budget. By rewarding yourself with modest but meaningful treats you won't feel like you're being deprived while on a budget.

Include a savings category

Not putting aside savings in your budget is a big financial mistake. Without regularly setting aside some savings, you're setting yourself up for budgeting failure.

Anytime something pops up, like a flat tyre, you'll ruin your budget or be forced to use a credit card.

Plan for budget busters

Unexpected events and emergencies will happen so it's best to budget for them too. This will help to minimise their impact and not ruin your budget. Following the above tips will help you create an effective budget that will give you peace of mind and less financial worries. ●

Additional information from: yourmoneycounts.com

THE COLOUR OF LOVE

Writer: Gilda Narsindas

There is a reason why the colour red is so closely associated with Valentine's Day - it symbolises divine love. Bearing this in mind, we have collated some ideas for great gifts for your significant other.



3



2



4



5



6



7



8



87



1

- 1 Famous Grouse blended scotch whiskey with personalised label, Netflorist, **R520**.
- 2 BVLGARI Omnia Coral for women, Red Square, **R1 090**.
- 3 Le Creuset candle holder, YuppieChef.com, **R279**.
- 4 Novel online rustic wooden picture frame, zando.co.za, **R219**.
- 5 Dunhill Desire Red for men, Red Square, **R1 095**.
- 6 Inissia automatic espresso machine with Aeroccino milk frother, YuppieChef.com, **R2 449**.
- 7 Pamper hamper wall plaque, zando.co.za, **R159**.
- 8 Smeg red package, At Home Living, toaster **R2 299**, kettle, **R2 399**.

A Mexican, Venda cook-off



Mexican and Venda cuisine took centre stage at the recent International Culinary Cultural Exchange presented by Chef Nompumelelo Mqwebu.

The event, which took place at the Culinary Table in Lanseria, exposed up-and-coming chefs to culinary excellence from both Mexico and South Africa.

The cultural exchange included a cooking demonstration, tastings and information on the rich history of Mexican and Venda cuisine. Globally acclaimed Chef Abigail Mendoza from Mexico and renowned Venda Chef Vho Lizzy Phedza prepared mouth-watering signature dishes for guests to feast on.

Mendoza, known for using authentic ingredients, owns a restaurant called Tlamanalli, which she runs with her sisters, and has written a book titled *Dishdaa'w* (meaning 'the word woven into the infinite meal').

Speaking to *PSM*, her face lit up as she recalled how her love for cooking started at the tender age of five. Mendoza says she would watch both her mother and

grandmother grind corn, a technique that was eventually passed onto her, which she does very well.

She kick-started the cook-off by whipping up some of her famous Mexican treats for guests and was followed by Phedza, who treated the crowd to her traditional signature dishes filled with rich tastes and aroma. Phedza did a modern take on traditional recipes, showcasing indigenous ingredients.

Both chefs shared some of their favourite recipes with *PSM*.

Mexican dishes
Squash blossom soup with chepiles
(Portion for six people)



Chef Vho Lizzy Phedza and Chef Abigail Mendoza from Mexico cooked up a storm at the International Culinary Cultural Exchange.

Ingredients

- 1 cup chepiles (legume) leaves
- 3 mealies
- 10 squash blossoms
- 3 medium tender zucchinis
- Sufficient water to cook with

Directions

In a crock-pot boil a litre of water. Split the zucchinis, shred the pumpkin flowers and wash with the chepil leaves, and then strain in a colander. Just before the water boils, add the zucchinis, then the squash blossoms and the chepiles and boil for 10 minutes.

De-kernel the corn in a flat grindstone (metate) with a bit of water; it will form a corn puree. Add to the pot and shake while cooking to prevent it from sticking. Boil at normal heat until a foam rises across the surface of the pot, this signifies that it is done. Serve with seasoned green chilli sauce, lemon and salt. It is accompanied with a two-cheese quesadilla and squash blossoms.

Zapoteca mole

(Portion for 10 people)

Ingredients

- 6 guajillo chillies
- 5 wide red chillies
- 3 creole garlic heads
- 8 pieces of toast
- 20g fresh creole oregano
- 20g fresh thyme
- 7 cloves
- 7 peppers
- 1 tsp cumin coffee
- 1 turkey or 2kg chicken



Directions

Devein the chillies carefully so that the seeds do not mix. Prepare a comal (a smooth, flat griddle) over low heat. Roast the chillies until they are brown. Once toasted spread on a baking sheet for three days to expel smoke. Separately dry fry the seeds until brown.

Having toasted the chillies and seeds, cook the turkey in a large pot with enough water and salt on normal fire. Once the meat is cooked, remove it from the broth.

Strain the broth for the mole (sauce). Approximately two litres are needed.

Put the grilled garlic heads in a hot cinder for approximately 30 minutes without them burning, and then peel them. Crumble regular bread pieces.

Rinse the chillies and place in hot water to soften (five minutes), and strain the seeds. First grind the chillies very finely in the metate and the seeds, garlic, cumin, clover, pepper and fresh oregano. Then they are mixed together with ground chilli to make a very smooth paste. In a clay



pot, boil the broth and add chilli paste to the broth. Boil for five minutes.

Lower the heat and add toast while constantly stirring to prevent it from sticking until the mole is seasoned well and the bread is soft. Add salt. Serve it in a deep plate with a piece of meat and pour the mole over.

Venda dishes Thophi

Ingredients

- 500g chopped fresh pumpkin
- 500ml boiled water
- ½ cup vhuse (ground coarse maize meal)
- 500g vhukhopfu (ground fine maize meal)
- *You may add sugar to taste if the pumpkin isn't naturally sweet.

Directions

Peel the pumpkin and remove the seeds (save your seeds to dry for future use).
Cook the pumpkin until soft and then purée.
Stir in a mixture of vhukhopfu and vhuse and mix well until thick
Leave to simmer for 15 minutes.

*Water should be added as required. Total estimated cooking time is about two to three hours.

Bhovola

Ingredients

- 6 cups khavhelo thethe (chopped fresh tender pumpkins)
- 8 cups moroho wa thanga (chopped/hand-prepared pumpkin leaves)
- 1 cup vhuluvha (chopped/hand-prepared pumpkin flowers)
- 1 cup of nngu (wild spinach)
- 4 cups warm water
- 2 cups nduhu (peanuts ground and sifted)
- 15ml salt (to taste)

Directions

Pour water into a pot then stir in khavhelo and vhuluvha. Cook for about 15 to 20 minutes.
Add moroho and continue and cook for about 15 minutes.
Add nngu and nduhu and cook for about 15 to 20 minutes
Serve with meat or pap, if desired. ●

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HONDA BACK to its best

It is really good to see Honda getting back up to form. Hondas of late were becoming staid and fuddy-duddy, targeting mostly the older folk. Yes, they may be responsible for the exotic NSX, the super Type R and also highly-respected in Formula One, but their line-up was a bit weak. It is not that Honda does not have the pedigree, it just seems they had lost some of their pioneering verve. While they boasted some bulletproof engines, remarkable resale values and excellent build quality, servicing costs were worrisome to owners. But die-hard Honda fans supported the brand loyally, growing with the model ranges which eventually culminated in the highly-acclaimed American favourite, the Honda Accord. Sadly, the Accord no longer appealed to our local, highly fussy market which explains the poor sales of the Honda flagship.



In the sport utility vehicle (SUV) segment, things are a bit better for the brand. With the HR-V, the CR-V and the recently launched Civic, Honda is fighting back. And the latest model in its arsenal is the BR-V. Honda Motor Southern Africa has added a third, all-new model to its highly-regarded range of SUVs. The BR-V joins the long-established CR-V and the highly popular HR-V.

Bold and sporty

While instantly recognisable as a member of the Honda family, the new BR-V features bold, distinctive styling and a sporty, agile appearance, linked to the raised stance and rugged appeal expected of a SUV. Front and rear bumper garnishes, roof rails and 16-inch wheels are key visual elements, while the striking front grille, with its bold, chrome-embellished cross-bar, prominent Honda logo and streamlined headlights, endow the BR-V with a distinctive personality that is unmistakably Honda.

Inside, the cabin's roomy dimensions allow the introduction of a third seating row, boosting the BR-V's occupant seating capacity to seven. Access to all seating positions is easy and convenient, thanks to split seat rows that can be tumbled forward at the pull of a lever.

Exceptional versatility

The fold and tumble convenience of the middle and rear

seating rows also provides exceptional versatility, allowing BR-V owners to configure the vehicle in different ways, depending on the seating capacity and luggage space required.

The interior is comprehensively equipped, and utilises premium materials and finishes for a smart, upmarket ambience. Even the entry-level Trend derivative offers air-conditioning, front and rear electric windows and remote keyless entry. A four-speaker audio system with USB connectivity is also standard, and mobile phones can be linked to the system via Bluetooth.

Active and passive safety are also addressed via ABS anti-lock brakes, dual front airbags and inertia reel seat belts for all but the second-row centre seating position (which gets a lap belt).

All derivatives of the new Honda BR-V are powered by the same, efficient 1.5 litre four-cylinder engine. The SOHC unit uses Honda's i-VTEC variable valve technology to produce 88 kW of maximum power at 6 600 r/min, together with a torque peak of 145 Nm at 4 600 r/min.


A range of options

BR-V buyers get to choose between a six-speed manual gearbox and Honda's refined Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT). In the case of the latter, paddle shifts are provided for manual shifting between the CVT's virtual ratios.

The new BR-V is available in four colours: White Orchid, Urban Titanium, Alabaster Silver and Carnelian Red.

The price includes the standard Honda five-year/200 000 km warranty and three years of AA Roadside Assistance.

Comfort and Elegance models benefit from a two-year/30 000 km service plan. Services are at 15 000 km intervals.

If I was looking for a mini SUV that can also double as a multi-purpose vehicle, I will certainly put the BR-V on my shortlist. Reliability, longevity and good resale values will ensure that you will remain cheerful, even five years down the line. What's more this one really looks the part. Well done, Honda! 



The model line-up and pricing is as follows:

Honda BR-V 1.5 Trend Manual	R238 900	Honda BR-V 1.5 Comfort CVT	R268 300
Honda BR-V 1.5 Comfort Manual	R252 900	Honda BR-V 1.5 Elegance Manual	R272 900
		Honda BR-V 1.5 Elegance CVT	R288 300.

Going underground

If you're not living on the edge you're taking up too much space' is a quote many adrenaline enthusiasts live by, and in South Africa there's certainly plenty of opportunities to live on the edge.

Our many natural adventure sites, as well as a few created tourist attractions, means those looking for excitement have a range of options to choose from.

One way to get out of your comfort zone is to go underground, either on land or in the water. We take a look at a few underground attractions available in the Western Cape, which are all sure to offer plenty of adventure.

Caving in Kalk Bay

Most tourists visit the Cape to climb to the top of Table Mountain, saunter through the waterfront or relax on the beautiful beaches. Not quite as high on the must-do list, but just as memorable, is the caving in the mountains above Kalk Bay. Cape Town's South Peninsula is home to more than 100 caves, the most famous of which is named Boomslang. Adventurers will be relieved to know that the cave gets its name from the way it slithers its way for 200 metres through the mountain, not because of snakes that live there.

After hiking up into Echo Valley, visitors enter the network of caves. It becomes immediately noticeable that this would be the perfect setting for a horror movie. The first 20 metres are very tight and claustrophobic, involving lots of wriggling to get through. There is quite a bit of dirt and dripping water and it's very dark so you are the activity is a lot of fun.

The caves soon open into large caverns with fascinating lichen, 'fools-gold' or iron pyrite rock and plenty of space for a picnic. Entrance to the caves is free and



unregulated, but visitors should appreciate the dangers of the activity, making sure they each have two torches with them and only explore the caves with someone who knows the area. Interested cavers should see the Cape Peninsula Spelaeological Society website (cpss.caving.org.za) for more information, including how to become a member.

Cango Caves

The better-known caving option is a tour of the Cango Caves close to Oudtshoorn. The caves are found in a limestone ridge parallel to the Swartberg Mountains, and stone artefacts show that the caves were used for shelter as long ago as the Stone Age.

Today they are a world-famous tourist attraction, with many people coming to admire the elaborately preserved stalagmites.

For an adrenaline-inducing tour of the caves, look no further than the adventure tours. If the names of some of the obstacles don't intimidate you (for example Ice Chamber, Devil's Workshop and Coffin) then the facts certainly will. Devil's Chimney is a 3.5 metre long stretch that is only 45 centimetres wide, while the Tunnel of Love narrows to a very cosy 30 centimetres in width. However, despite the adventurous nature of the tour, there is still time to appreciate the wonder of the caves. Delicate helictites and magnificent roof crystals make one appreciate both the beauty and the history of this natural wonder. Booking is essential for the tours, which are all led by cave guides. Tours cost R150 per adult and last 90 minutes.

Shark cage diving

Most tourism brochures featuring scuba-diving show pictures of smiling, relaxed divers admiring colourful fishes as they swim contentedly past beautiful coral reefs. And South Africa does have those in abundance, as visitors to Sodwana Bay can testify to. However, if its adrenaline you are after under the water, you would be well advised to experience shark cage diving in Gansbaai.

Gansbaai has been transformed from a small coastal holiday town into the shark capital of the world. The



reason for its fame is Shark Alley, a deep stretch of water off the coast which has 60 000 Cape fur seals calling it home and plenty of great white sharks keeping that population constant. Visitors get kitted up (wetsuits are a crucial weapon against the infamously cold Cape waters) and head out on a boat to the areas frequented by the sharks. They are attracted to the boat by the scent of chum (a mixture of fish oils) and a decoy wooden seal, which is attached to a rope and thrown into the water.

Divers hop into the cage and watch in fascination as the curious sharks glide past, occasionally darting to catch the decoy wooden seal. The cage fits eight divers at a time, and is completely sealed off from the sharks. Divers can fit their fingers through the bars, but for obvious reasons this is a bad idea. Trips can be booked through



Marine Dynamics and cost R1 750 per person. The trips generally last between three and five hours depending on the number of sharks in the area.

Crocodile cage diving

For those looking for a unique thrill, crocodile cage diving is a relatively new activity which delivers plenty of memorable moments. Adult male Nile crocodiles can weigh more than 1 000 kilograms, reach four metres in length and have a bite pressure of over two tonnes per square inch. Reassuringly, the cages used for crocodile dives are extremely strong. This is just as well, as crocodiles view the divers as a tasty meal. They kill more humans each year than lions do and are very interested in the contents of the cage.

Cango Wildlife Ranch in Oudtshoorn is home to over 90 species of animals such as white lion, serval, cheetah, tiger, pigmy hippo and lemur. It started out as a commer-

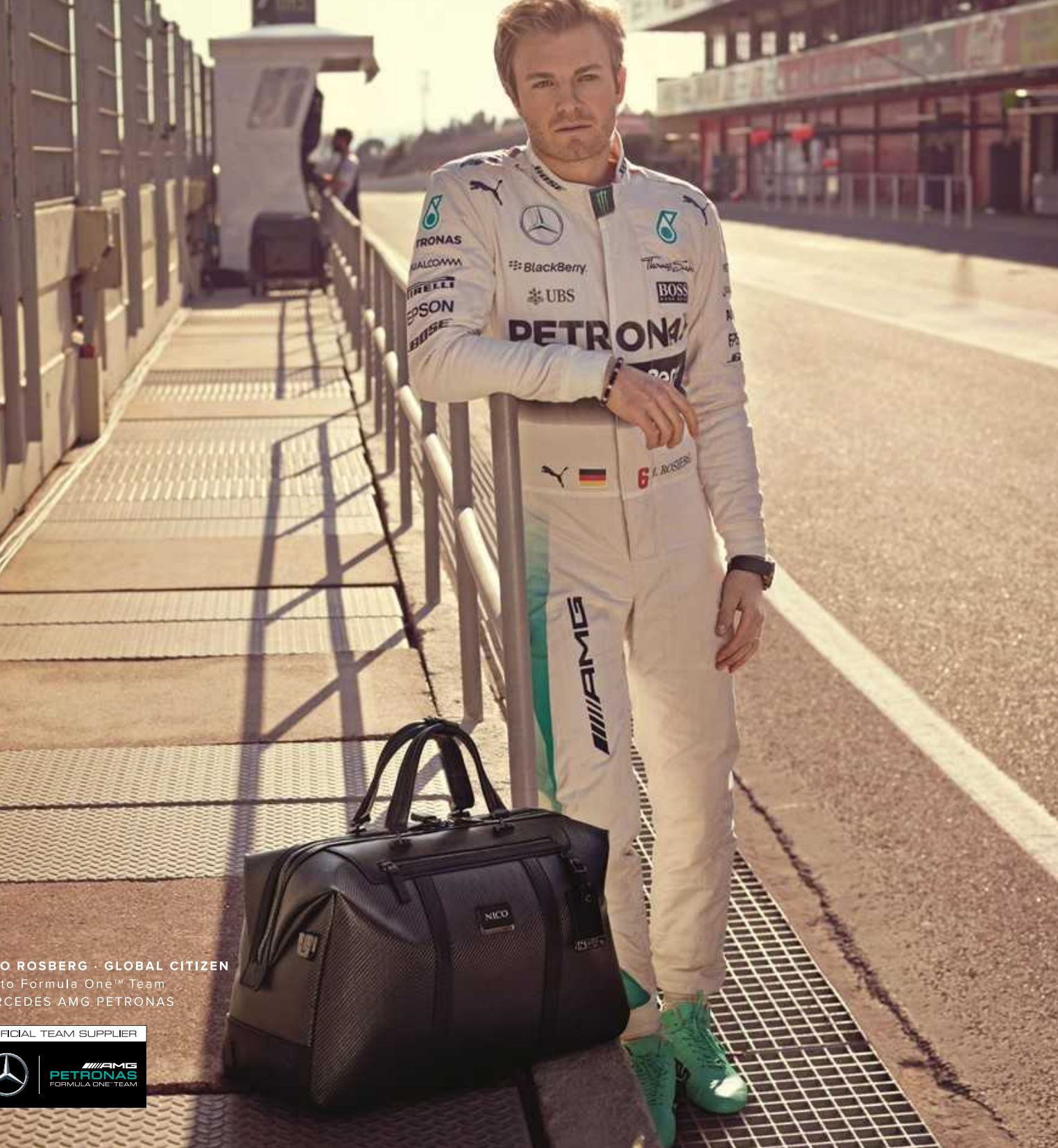
cial crocodile farm. Visitors to Cango Wildlife Ranch, who are brave enough to attempt the adrenaline-pumping croc cage dive, are slowly lowered into the crocodile pool.

They are protected from the crocs by a specially designed cage and are equipped with goggles and a snorkel (no need for any scuba diving experience). Visitors get to enjoy the sight of the crocodiles sizing up their next meal, and can also purchase photographs of the experience afterwards. The crocodile cage dive costs R210 per person, and divers must be over 14 years of age (or over five years of age if with a guardian).

Le Bonheur Crocodile Farm, located just a short drive from Cape Town in Paarl, has more than 1 000 crocodiles. The crocodile cage dive is a great way to see these fearsome animals up close, although with the safety of a strong cage as protection. Dives cost R750 per person with all diving equipment supplied. Divers spend about 20 minutes in the cage, which can take up to 10 divers at a time. Visitors can also choose to watch the action from the underwater dry viewing box, which costs R180 and lasts 30 minutes.

It goes without saying that anyone brave enough to tick off all these items on the bucket list will have some great stories to tell around the campfire. They would have also seen some of the more remote, breathtaking and unique sights our beautiful country has to offer. Go on, have an adventure. As they say, 'you only live once, but if you do it properly, once is enough'. ●





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