

PublicSector

MANAGER

THE MAGAZINE FOR PUBLIC SECTOR DECISION-MAKERS

PSM

MARCH 2017

State of the Nation 2017

Creating an inclusive economy

Protecting the public

Adv Busisiwe Mkhwebane fights for the underdog

Honouring heroes

Remembering the tragedy of the SS Mendi

Provincial focus

Hope for KZN's vulnerable groups



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THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT IN INCULCATING LEADERSHIP

The National School of Government (NSG) is established as a schedule 1 department in terms of the Public Service Act, with the legal mandate to provide and facilitate training and education in the public service. Positioned within the Ministry for Public Service and Administration, the school aims to build the capacity of the state to improve service delivery in communities.

Building capable leaders is a focus area of the NSG and this is done through the various courses aimed at enhancing leadership capabilities in the public service. One need not be in a high ranking position in order to be called a leader. Leadership potential exists amongst the most junior positions found within the public service.

The National Development Plan's expression on leadership denotes it as a significant requirement for active citizenship at all levels of society. In order to fully appreciate leadership within this context, it should be understood that leadership transcends beyond one individual or a specific group of individuals. Leadership is therefore each citizen's prerogative in that it rallies citizen participation, thus strengthening the state's accountability mechanism. Therefore, improved service delivery can further be achieved where the citizenry holds public servants and politicians accountable.

Capacitating Unemployed Graduates

Moreover, the school has looked further than the confines of the public service to capacitate leadership by focusing on young and unemployed graduates. The Breaking Barriers to Entry into Public Service (BB2E) is an orientation programme aimed at improving the knowledge and skills of unemployed graduates and newly-appointed interns in departments with a post National Senior Certificate qualifications (National Diploma or Degree). The five-day long programme orientates participants to the public service, how the public service is organised and the way the public service functions. Underpinning the programme are the basic values and principles governing public administration found

in Chapter 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

Leadership Training

The NSG also provides a variety of leadership-orientated courses based on the needs of client departments. Through its Leadership Stream, the NSG focuses on developing programmes aimed at senior managers in the public service, is responsible for developing, updating and rolling out courses, workshops and seminars. These interventions are aimed at developing public servants into leaders who care, serve and deliver, thus building leadership capacity across the public service.

Among the leadership seminars offered, is the Leadership Dialogue Platform, a participatory and innovative space that draws all sectors together to harness local and global thought leadership. The platform uses various interactive modes, including live and virtual format. The various interactive modes promote dialogue and interface on a range of themes on matters of national concern, such as the energy mix, public transport, quality education, social security, land reform, industrial development, social cohesion, and fighting prejudice and racism.

Executive Induction

Government induction directives require the NSG to design, develop and facilitate a compulsory induction programme for all newly-appointed Directors-General and Heads of Department from both national and provincial spheres. The Executive Induction Programme (EIP) for salary levels 15-16 was piloted in March 2016. The inaugural EIP took place in March 2017. This programme is a response to the Directive on Compulsory Capacity Development, Mandatory Training Days and Minimum Entry Requirements for Senior Management Services, approved by Cabinet in October 2014 and signed into effect by the Minister of the Department of Public Service and Administration in November of the same year.

“These interventions are aimed at developing public servants into leaders who care, serve and deliver, thus building leadership capacity across the public service.”





The goal of EIP is not only to familiarise participants with their specific work environments but also to inspire participants to build a public service which responds effectively and as a collective. It is about building a capable and committed public service cadre with the necessary knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to perform tasks effectively.

Furthermore, the EIP will also provide participants with access to additional learning and development opportunities as arranged by the school through:

- Mentorship by experienced former executives
- Thought leadership series addressing topics of interest
- International study programme opportunities

Capacitating Local Government

In August 2016, the NSG and South African Local Government Association entered into a Memorandum of Understanding, with the aim of collaborating on the area of capacity building in local government, targeting mayors, councillors and executive leaders in local government. Subsequently, the Integrated Councillor Induction Programme was designed and developed to ensure that councillors appointed after the August 2016 local government elections are capacitated in their new roles.

International Relations

Forging international partnerships is important in the education, training and development space to ensure that the country is globally competitive and that learning networks and the sharing of knowledge and experience are deepened. In December 2016, the NSG hosted the American University, Washington DC in rolling out the eight-day Master Instructor Train-the-Trainer: Foresight, Leadership and Innovation Programme. The programme is a venture between the NSG, American University, Washington DC and the Institute for Leadership Development in Africa who together developed the programme specifically for the South African landscape.



The programme is designed to instil both a mind-set and the needed behavioural competencies to enable participants to better address the increasingly complex challenges they face. Successful governments require the capability to address complex contemporary challenges by negotiating and working with an active citizenry rather than by imposing solutions.

Among the departments that participated in the programme were the Public Service Commission, Department of International Relations and Cooperation, Gauteng City Region and KZN Provincial Public Service Academy. The Master Instructors emerging from this programme will make it possible for the school to deliver the Foresight, Leadership and Innovation Programme regionally and beyond, while also optimising the school's international partnerships.

Public service cadres across all spheres of government need to acknowledge and understand the significant role they play towards improved and sustainable service delivery. This acknowledgement assumes the importance of leading oneself in daily tasks. Public servants who are capable of leading themselves will therefore continue to contribute towards building a nation whose citizens will recognise, appreciate and proactively reciprocate efforts from government.

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NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN

CNBC Africa pioneered the annual All Africa Business Leaders Awards (AABLA) in 2011 to salute and recognize remarkable business leaders, who through strength, innovation and foresight induce positive changes in an evolving corporate Africa. These business leaders are recognised at this annual awards ceremony as well as in special AABLA programming that is broadcast across the continent.

Now in its 7th year, the AABLA are Africa's premier business leadership awards presentation, that bring together some of the best-known personalities in corporate Africa today. More than 100 business leaders from around the continent have already been recognized for their vital business contributions through the AABLA.

The 2017 Categories for East, West and Southern Africa are:

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- Industrialist of the Year
- Philanthropist of the Year
- Entrepreneur of the Year
- Company of the Year
- Business Leader of the Year
- Lifetime Achievement Award

Visit www.aablawards.com and vote for your business leader.



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"A nation that
does not take
care of its youth
has no future and
does not deserve
one."

— OR Tambo



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On the path to radical economic transformation

Government has made significant inroads in reviving the economy despite the tough economic times.

This much was evident when President Jacob Zuma reported back on the progress of the Nine-Point Plan and highlighted areas where things are moving forward in his State of the Nation Address.

The Nine-Point Plan, which was introduced in 2015, focuses on the key areas of industrialisation, mining and beneficiation, agriculture and agro-processing, energy, small businesses, managing workplace conflict, attracting investments, growing the oceans economy and tourism.

Some of the progress singled out by the President include the CEO Initiative through which government, business and labour were able to address challenges by working together. This helped the country avoid a credit ratings downgrade.

In addition, an agreement was finalised in February on the national minimum wage and on measures to stabilise labour relations.

Last year also saw the launch of Invest SA, government's new investment one-stop shop.

To date 40 projects have been approved and 10 will be launched by the President during 2017. Provincial centres will now be rolled out in KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and the Western Cape.

In a further boost to the economy, the country recorded nine million tourist arrivals between January and November, an increase of just over a million arrivals, or 13 percent, from the same period in 2015.

Other efforts to drive economic growth include Operation Phakisa which has, since 2014, been implemented in the ocean economy, health, education and mining sectors.

Meanwhile, the country has been spared load-

shedding thanks to the successful execution of Eskom's maintenance programme and the coming online of new power, while about 10 000 unemployed youth are being trained as plumbers, artisans and water agents to combat water losses. Fresh recruits this year will increase this number to 15 000.


Even with all the successes achieved so far, more needs to be done to boost the economy. The President noted in his address that on average white households earn at least five times more than black households. Only 10 percent of the top 100 JSE companies are owned by black South Africans, while whites make up 72 percent of top management.

One can't have a sustainable economy if the majority continues to be excluded from participating.

To address this, President Zuma has called for radical economic transformation, where the state will use a mix of legislation, regulations, licensing, budget and procurement as well as Black Economic Empowerment charters to influence the behaviour of the private sector.

A provision, gazetted on 20 January, allows for state entities to make it compulsory for big contractors to subcontract 30 percent of business to small and black-owned enterprises.

To address the high levels of concentration in the economy, collusion and cartels, new legislation will be introduced later this year, while a draft Property Practitioners Bill will be published for public comment to establish a more inclusive property sector.

It is quite symbolic that government has declared 2017 the Year of Oliver Reginald Tambo. It was Tambo who said our drive towards national emancipation as a country must result in more than just political emancipation, and should also include economic emancipation. Let's honour his legacy by doing all we can to achieve radical economic transformation. 





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New Traditional Courts Bill to promote fairness

For centuries many South Africans have sought to resolve disputes that arise within their respective traditional communities in accordance with their cultural practices and customs.

The mechanism for resolving these disputes are traditional courts. Known as *makgotla* or *inkundla*, there is currently no law that ensures that such courts follow the values of the Constitution. And this is precisely what the Traditional Courts Bill, now greatly reworked, seeks to correct.

The latest version of the Bill has been tabled in Parliament.

The Bill initially drew concerns from civil society and was rejected by the National Council of Provinces when it was introduced in 2008 and again in 2011 – primarily out of fear that it would give too much power to chiefs and that the rights of women would be compromised.

The new version, which draws on consultations with a reference group made up of chiefs and members of civil society, aims to address much of these concerns.

Crucially, the latest version of the Bill allows community members themselves to decide whether to voluntarily submit to justice under the traditional courts or not.

The previous versions of the Bill did not allow parties to opt out, which raised concern from some that the Bill would entrench the former Bantustan boundaries. But under the new version, traditional courts are not confined to any specific boundaries. Added to this, any person can approach the court to resolve a dispute.

To guard against the abuse of women, the revised version of the Bill provides women and other vulnerable members of society with assistance and states that

the courts must be constituted by both women and men.

Ultimately, traditional courts aim to achieve conciliation between affected parties and grant compensation, if need be, to the aggrieved party for minor disputes (such as theft and malicious damage to property not exceeding R5 000, defamation and assault). Traditional courts won't handle criminal convictions.

They will be able to hand out fines or task the guilty parties to perform community service, provided that this not be for the benefit of any chief.


Importantly, there will be no need to have a lawyer or advocate present at traditional court proceedings. A party can instead be represented by any person they choose; be it a family member, friend or councillor. Should a person not be happy with the decision of a traditional court, they will be able to escalate the matter to a structure within the customary law environment.

The Bill also aims to ensure that traditional courts are in keeping with the Constitution by insisting that chiefs and those who guide court proceedings take a pledge to uphold the Bill of Rights. A code of conduct will also be compiled for members of traditional courts.

Chapter 12 of our much lauded Constitution recognises the institution, status and role of traditional leadership according to customary law, subject to the Constitution,

while Schedule 6 of the Constitution recognises the

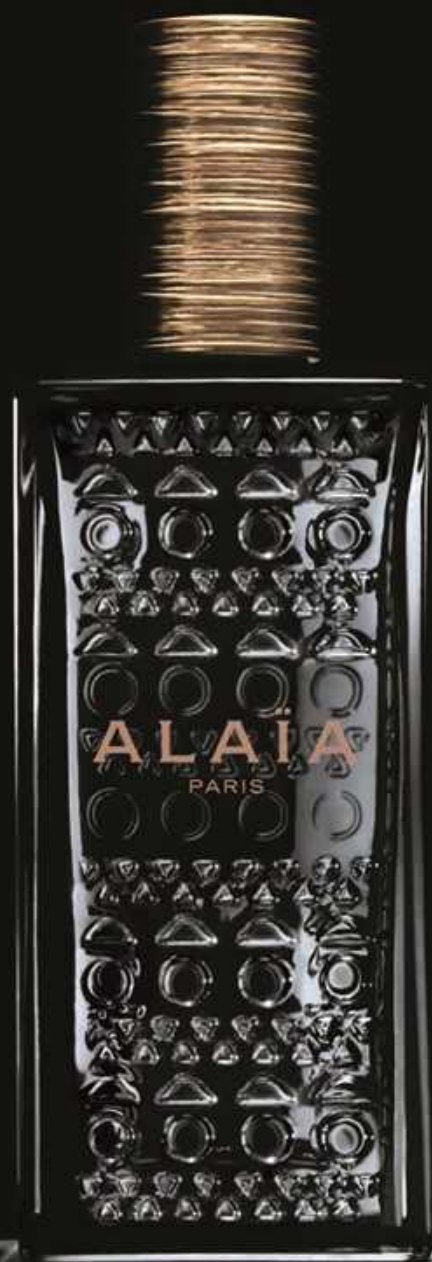
existence of traditional courts. What we lack in South Africa is a legal framework to ensure that such courts are in keeping with the Constitution – that they enshrine the right to dignity, equality, non-racialism and non-sexism, freedom of sexual orientation and identity enshrined in the Constitution so many of us

bravely fought for. As such, the Bill will help close that gap. 




ALAÏA

PARIS



Transformation to benefit **all South Africans**

A close-up photograph of President Jacob Zuma of South Africa. He is wearing a dark grey suit, a white shirt, and a red tie with white polka dots. He has glasses and a small microphone clipped to his lapel. He is gesturing with both hands, palms facing up, as if explaining something or making a point. The background is plain white.

“We want the country to move forward. We want to get rid of the three challenges that face us – poverty, inequality and unemployment, and these are the critical challenges. If we do not resolve them, we have not resolved the issue of freedom.”

President Jacob Zuma says government is committed to transforming the economy.

As government intensifies efforts to address persisting levels of poverty and narrow the inequality gap, it will need to "interrupt" economic activity to benefit the masses, says President Jacob Zuma.

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He said for this to change, government cannot sit idle and that radical steps are needed.

"We can't sit and think [radical socio-economic transformation] is going to happen on its own. "We are now [asking] what can we do?"

"If you take the mines for example, there are very huge companies that deal with mining and that's where the riches of this country are. Now what do you do? Do you allow it to go on hoping that one day they will have good hearts and say: 'Ok, let us now share, we have had enough'?"

Making the economy more inclusive

Having identified two main challenges that hamper transformation efforts as the high levels of concentration in the economy as well as collusion and cartels, in his SoNA the President added that legislation would be introduced to address these.

During the SABC interview, the President said these interventions, among others, would help small players enter the mainstream of the economy.

He added that there is a need to transform all sectors, especially the finance sector, which is dominated only by four major banks.

For the economy to grow, the local financial services sector needs more players, including more black-owned banks, to disrupt the monopoly.

Addressing key challenges

The President noted that despite efforts by government to introduce progressive transformative policies over the past 22 years of democracy, challenges still persist at an economic level.

For this reason, government would aim at ensuring that women and youth are given an opportunity to participate in the economy.

He also highlighted another important issue that needed to be urgently addressed – that of land.

"There is an issue that is very important to the nation"



President Jacob Zuma says government will ensure that women and youth are given an opportunity to participate in the economy.

that has a very serious historical background – the land question... We need to address the issue of the land.

"If we deal with these... we will actually be dealing with the fundamental areas that will help us to change completely."

Government intends to continue implementing the Strengthening of Relatives Rights programme, also known as the 50-50 programme.

Through this programme, the farm workers join together into a legal entity and together with the farm owner a new company is established and the workers and the owner become joint owners.

Partnerships are key

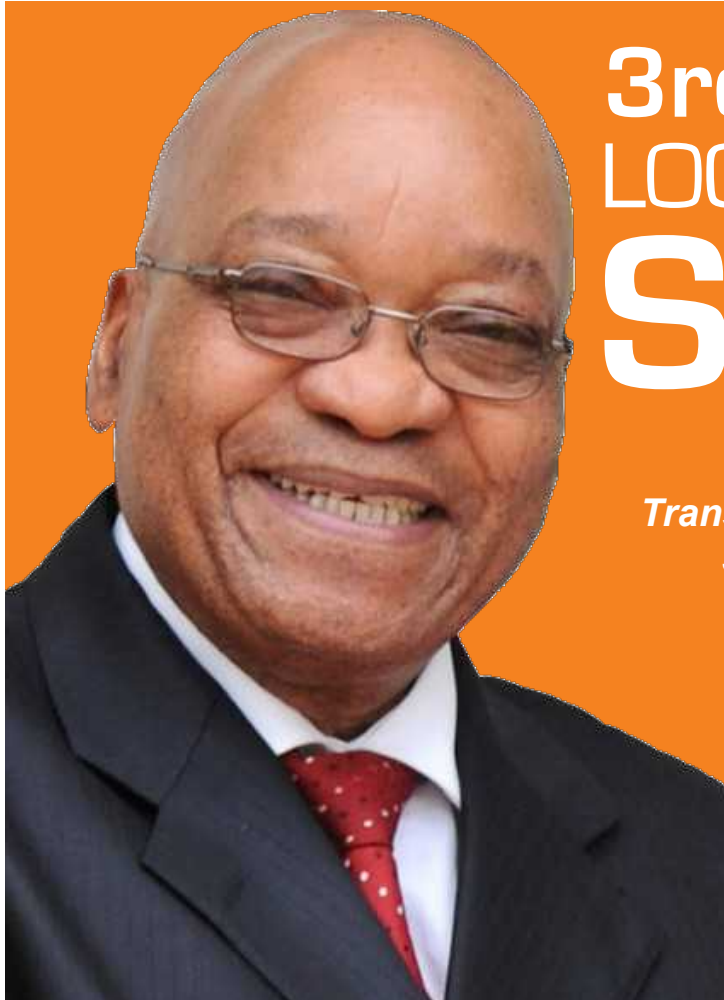
Partnerships between government and all sectors of the economy are needed to fast-track transformation

and build the country, President Zuma added.

"Firstly, we would like to see South Africa reconcile, unite, work together to press even harder for unity and work together as South Africans, as a country.

"We fought hard to get our freedom and it is important that now that we are free; there is a good Constitution; we have democracy, we must strengthen it, we must defend it, we must continue preaching unity and be patriotic to work hard to develop South Africa to prosperity.

He stressed the need for South Africans to work together, urging citizens not to behave as if they were at war with each other but rather unite as a family and nation to move the country forward. ●



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HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT JACOB ZUMA, WILL HOST THE 3RD LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUMMIT AS PART OF GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN THE SYSTEM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE SECOND PHASE OF THE BACK TO BASICS PROGRAMME.

SUMMIT OBJECTIVES:

- To strengthen the system of local government in the second phase of the Back to Basics Programme, reflecting on successes and challenges.
- To set new strategic frame for intergovernmental contribution to the realisation of NDP goals: *Managing Municipal Spaces for Radical Social & Economic Transformation.*
- To discuss the implementation of the Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) and other critical government developmental programmes.
- To provide an opportunity for the president to interact with leaders in national, provincial and local spheres of government.

Attendance is restricted to invited guests.



President Jacob Zuma delivering his State of the Nation Address.

SoNA 2017: New chapter of radical economic transformation

Radical economic transformation will be at the centre of government's priorities for 2017, as the state seeks to overhaul the economic structure of the country for the benefit of all citizens.

This was announced by President Jacob Zuma when he delivered his State of the Nation Address (SoNA) to a joint sitting of Parliament in Cape Town recently.

"Today we are beginning a new chapter of radical transformation, the state will play a role in the economy to drive that transformation," he said.

His comments come at a time when the economy is not growing fast enough to create much-needed jobs in the country.

Government anticipates an economic growth rate of 1.3 percent in 2017. But unemployment remains a huge challenge, hence government's Nine-Point Plan to reig-

nite growth so the economy can create jobs, he said.

The time had come for the state to move a step further to ensure an overhaul of the economic structure of the country for the benefit of all citizens – not just a few.

Fundamental change needed

There needs to be fundamental change in the structure, systems, institutions and patterns of ownership, management and control of the economy in favour of all South Africans, especially the poor, the majority of whom are African and female, he pointed out.

Of concern was that 22 years into democracy, the majority of black people were still economically disempowered.

"The gap between the annual average household incomes of African-headed households and their white

counterparts remains shockingly huge. White households earn at least five times more than black households, according to Statistics SA.

"The situation with regard to the ownership of the economy also mirrors that of household incomes. Only 10 percent of the top 100 companies on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange are owned by black South Africans, directly achieved principally, through the black empowerment codes, according to the National Empowerment Fund," President Zuma noted.

He spoke at length about a cluster of issues that still faced the South African economy and these need to be addressed if the country is to address the socio-economic challenges it faces. These include, among others, the issue of inequality in the workplace and an uneven redistribution of wealth.

The skewed nature of economic ownership and leadership patterns needed to be corrected and there could be no sustainability in any economy if the majority is excluded, he stressed.

"In my discussions with the business community, they accepted these transformation imperatives. Today we are starting a new chapter of radical socio-economic transformation. We are saying that we should move beyond words, to practical programmes.

Maximising strategic levers

"The state will play a role in the economy to drive that transformation. In this regard, government will utilise to the maximum, the strategic levers that are available to the state," the President said.

This includes legislation, regulations, licensing, budget and procurement as well as Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment charters to influence the behaviour of the private sector and drive transformation.

State spending, which includes R500 billion a year, buying goods and services and having a R900 billion infrastructure budget, must be used to achieve economic transformation, he added.

As a start, the new regulations making it compulsory for big contractors to subcontract 30 percent of business to black-owned enterprises have been finalised and were gazetted in January.

"Through such regulations and programmes, government will be able to use the state buying power to empower small enterprises, rural and township enterprises, designated groups and to promote local industrial development."

Concentration in the economy

The President also highlighted other key challenges such as the high levels of concentration in the economy as well as the collusion and cartels, which squeeze out small players and hamper the entry of young entrepreneurs and black industrialists.



To address these, President Zuma last year signed into law a provision to criminalise the cartels and collusion, which came into effect on 1 May. It carries jail sentences of up to 10 years.

Efforts are now underway to deal with economic concentration, where a small grouping controls most of a market.

"During this year, the Department of Economic Development will bring legislation to Cabinet that will seek to amend the Competition Act. It will among others address the need to have a more inclusive economy and to de-concentrate the high levels of ownership and control we see in many sectors. We will then table the legislation for consideration by Parliament."

By doing so, government hopes to open up the economy to new players, give black South Africans ↻

opportunities in the economy and help to make the economy more dynamic, competitive and inclusive.

Making the property sector more inclusive

Having provided more than four million houses since 1994, government is also seeking to make the property sector more inclusive.

"This sector in our country is valued at approximately R7 trillion, with the subsidised sector valued at R1.5 trillion.

"However, less than five percent of the sector is owned or managed by black people and Africans in particular."

President Zuma announced that the draft Property Practitioners Bill will be published by the Department of Human Settlements for public comment with the purpose of establishing a more inclusive, representative sector, towards radical economic transformation.

Government will also address the increasing delays and backlogs in registration and issuing of title deeds to beneficiaries of housing projects funded by the capital subsidy.

Opportunities for SMMEs

In addition, opportunities will be created by the property maintenance projects of the Department of Public Works.

"The department will invest approximately R100 million this year on critical capital and maintenance programmes to modernise harbours. They will also continue generating revenue from letting state-owned harbours and coastline properties, which will benefit black-owned SMMEs."

He added that government would also continue to pursue policies aimed at increasing the participation of black people and SMMEs, including those owned by women and the youth, in the Information and Communications Technology sector.

"We assure the youth that the lowering of the cost of data is uppermost in our policies and plans," he noted.

Land redistribution

Another notable aspect of the President's address is his announcement that government will increase its power to use the Expropriation Act to pursue land reform and

land redistribution, in line with the Constitution.

"It will be difficult if not impossible, to achieve true reconciliation until the land question is resolved.

"Only eight million hectares of arable land have been transferred to black people, which is only 9.8 percent of the 82 million hectares of arable land in South Africa.

"There has also been a 19 percent decline in households involved in agriculture from 2.9 million in 2011 to 2.3 million households in 2016."

Since 1994, government has transferred millions of hectares of land back to the black majority who were removed from their ancestral land. But some feel that the pace of redistribution has not been fast enough.

President Zuma said going forward, government would continue to implement other programmes such as the Strengthening of Relative Rights of People Working the Land programme, also known as the 50-50 programme.

In this programme, farmworkers join together into a legal entity and together with the farm owner, a new



“Government has provided funds to ensure that no student whose combined family income is up to R600 000 per annum will face fee increases at universities and Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges for 2017. ”



company is established, and the workers and the owner become joint owners.

Addressing students' concerns

The President also acknowledged the plight of students who pointed out that accumulated debt and rising fees were making it harder and harder for those who come from less-privileged households to enter and stay within the education system until they complete their studies.

He said government responded appropriately by taking over the responsibility to pay the fee increase for the 2016 academic year.

Government also settled all debt owed by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) students and extended the coverage to larger numbers of students than ever before.

“Government has provided funds to ensure that no student whose combined family income is up to R600 000 per annum will face fee increases at universities and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges for 2017.

All students who qualify for NSFAS and who have been accepted by universities and TVET colleges will be funded, President Zuma stressed.

The university debt of NSFAS qualifying students for 2013, 2014 and 2015 academic years has been addressed and in total government has reprioritised R32 billion within government baselines to support higher education, he added. ●

Honouring OR Tambo

Government has honoured former ANC President Oliver Reginald Tambo by declaring 2017 the Year of Oliver Reginald Tambo.

In his SoNA, President Zuma lauded Tambo as an illustrious son of the country.

Tambo passed away in 1993 and would have turned 100 this year.

“This selfless patriot [dedicated] his adult life to a tireless pursuit of the liberation of our country and its people. He left a lasting legacy for all South Africans, and not only for his organisation, the ANC.

“In his honour, we have declared the year 2017, the Year of Oliver Reginald Tambo. It is the year of unity in action by all South Africans as we move South Africa forward together,” said President Zuma.



THE BREADBASKET OF SOUTH AFRICA IS MAKING BIG STRIDES

In his State of the Province Address in February 2017, Limpopo Premier Chupu Mathabatha emphasised the province's numerous accomplishments over the last year.

HEALTH

Over the last four years, the province has seen a 0.9% decrease in maternal HIV vertical transmission – from 2% to 1.1%. The TB success rate is 82%, and the Multi Drug Resistance TB treatment rate is 87.7%.

The malaria fatality rate has also dropped from 1.68% in 2014/15 to 1.04% in 2015/16. There has also been a reduction in malaria cases – a drastic decline from 8 045 to 1 538.

The National Health Insurance (NHI) pilot programme has implemented the Centralised Chronic Medicine Dispensary and Distribution Programme in the Vhembe district.

In his budget speech, Minister of Finance, Pravin Gordhan spoke of his commitment to see the planning of the Limpopo Academic Hospital and the new Medical School take shape, which will allow the province to move ahead with the planning and building of these projects.

Since quality healthcare is at the top of the priority list of the province, it's exciting to note that the Polokwane Municipality

has made land available for the construction of the Academic Hospital. The construction of the Siloam Hospital is also underway.

CRIME AND CORRUPTION

The Limpopo government is at the forefront of fighting crime and corruption. To aid the fight, the province is strengthening the Provincial Anti-Corruption Forum in an attempt to bring all relevant stakeholders on board.

A key factor in the fight against corruption is to identify and address the social enablers of crime which include:

- the ubiquity of liquor outlets in communities, especially those within the vicinity of schools and religious buildings.
- the abundance of illegal substances such as dagga and deadly nyaope.

Progress has been made in curbing the illegal sale of alcohol and illegal substances. To this end, approximately 250 unlicensed liquor stores had been closed down by September 2016 and police have arrested 14 gang members.



EDUCATION

The turnaround strategy of the education system in Limpopo has made a noticeable impact. A new Head of Department of Education has been appointed, and a number of senior management positions are well underway to being filled.

The province has invested heavily in the education sector over the last three years to ensure universal access to basic education. The number of schools offering Grade R has rapidly increased to 2 339 which means more than 123 356 children have access to Early Childhood Development education.

Teacher development programmes are also enjoying great emphasis with more than 1 400 teachers being trained through the Continuous Professional Development Centre, between the 2012/13 and 2015/16 financial years. In the coming financial year, another 80 curriculum advisors and 300 science and commerce teachers will be trained.

In addition to this, 3 600 teachers will be trained in content and methodology in Maths and languages.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND HOUSING

The Provincial Infrastructure Hub – which helps coordinate the delivery of strategic socio-economic infrastructure across the province – has been established and 68 people have already been appointed. The upgrading and rehabilitation of certain roads are in progress. Construction in Ga-Phasha, Mampuru, Makuya, Masisi, Pelangwe-Atok, Ga-Nchabeleng-Mphanama-Jane-Furse and Mabuella is well underway.

Four more roads will be completed at the end of the 2017/18 financial year. The plan for the next three years is to upgrade 296km of gravel roads to tar and to rehabilitate 303km of surfaced roads.

As a province, Limpopo has succeeded in building 9 561 rural housing units and 211 disaster housing units.

Another milestone was the rectification, completion and delivery of 286 abandoned housing units to beneficiaries. Upgrading the informal settlements around mining towns in the next five years is also a priority. To date, 78.8% of households have been connected to functional water services, and approximately 1.4 million people have connected to the power grid – whilst an additional 105 000 households are connected to the non-grid.

In terms of access to proper sanitation services, there has been an increase from 38% of households in 2011 to 54% in 2015.

ECONOMY

The average economic growth rate of the province – from 1996 to 2015 – is 2.8%. The province grew by 1.1% in 2012, 2.4% in 2013 and 0.8% in 2014, according to StatsSA's growth rate analysis.

Limpopo recorded the second highest employment gains, as recorded in the latest StatsSA Labour Force Survey for Quarter 4, having successfully created 64 000 new jobs in the fourth quarter, and approximately 103 000 unemployed people received jobs by the fourth quarter of 2016. The main sectors for employment were construction, mining and agriculture.

Owing to the increase in employment, the rate of unemployment in the province reduced to 19.3% in the fourth quarter of 2016, compared to 19.8% during the same period in 2015.

In terms of Special Economic Zones (SEZ), Musina-Makhado has successfully been declared a SEZ. An application to have Tubatse also declared a SEZ has been submitted. With these two SEZs, the province could potentially attract R44-billion worth of investments.

The Musina SEZ is projected to create about 20 800 direct jobs, whilst the Tubatse SEZ is expected to create approximately 2 000 permanent jobs.

The private sector plays a massive role in the economic growth and development of the province. In conjunction with the private sector, Limpopo has identified 10 investment projects worth R46-billion, which will go a long way in expanding the productive capacity of the province's economy.

SoNA 2017 ticks all the right boxes

“I think this has been the most youth-oriented speech since I first came to Parliament in 2009.”



With President Jacob Zuma making bold announcements on radical economic transformation in his State of the Nation Address, Ministers believe the interventions are a call to action for government to make the economy inclusive.

President Zuma announced that government would use different levers of the state – from legislation to budgeting – to step up the pace of radical economic transformation and to ensure that the majority of the population participate in the economy.

Water and Sanitation Minister Nomvula Mokonyane said it could no longer be business as usual.

“We must impose quotas and make sure that the 30 percent is now legislated. It is not a negotiable that we must open up the space for those who must come and learn and also invest in skills development so that those who come in also have the acquired skills and are not just shareholders.

She also welcomed the President’s comments regarding the country’s participation in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) grouping.



"I am also quite excited about how [President Zuma] has repositioned and reaffirmed our relationship with the BRICS countries and how as emerging and developing, we are also going to have our own peer assessments in terms of ratings but also open up trade in the SADC region."

Deputy Minister in The Presidency responsible for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Buti Manamela said he was pleased that the President's speech had a bias towards young people.

"I think this has been the most youth-oriented speech since I first came to Parliament in 2009. It focuses on the fact that young people are unemployed, young people don't have jobs and how government will use the Nine-Point Plan to ensure that we create jobs for young people.

"[Radical economic transformation] means ownership and control of the economy, it means black people must have a stake in their

economy," he added.

Deputy Minister Manamela said the speech was a call to action to the entire government to make education a top priority and ensure issues like the access to information and technology are top of the agenda.

Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga was glad to hear the President commend the country's education system for improving in terms of its international competitiveness.

"What was more important was

when he mentioned our international results – both in the region and internationally.

"We were the most improved system among all the countries that were participating, which confirms that our remedial actions are beginning to yield results. Yes, we started on a low base, but we are on an upward trajectory so it is very encouraging and exciting."

In his speech, the President said that going forward, government will continue to implement programmes such as the Strengthening of Relative Rights of People Working the Land programme, also known as the 50-50 programme.

Through the programme, farmworkers join together into a legal entity with the farm owner and with the help of the National Empowerment Fund a new company is established and the workers and the owner become joint owners.

Minister Gugile Nkwinti said the programme was a tool to achieve radical economic transformation faster, as it uplifts farmworkers turning them into owners. ●



Working together to enhance health

No single sector in South Africa, albeit the public or private sector can successfully confront the immense challenge of the quadruple burden of disease. It requires combined forces, shared vision and commitment to working together.

The Social Compact Forum and the Public Health Enhancement Fund (PHEF) had one goal in mind – to establish a social compact in healthcare.

Since 2012, we have been joined by 22 companies who have helped us in realising our vision of enhancing healthcare for all South Africans by initiating and running with several projects.

The PHEF is managed by the private sector through the establishment of a not-for-profit entity to leverage and contribute to strengthening the health sector that will lead to a stronger relationship between public and private sectors to the benefit of all our people.



Science For A Better Life



**Public Health
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health

Department
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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LISTING FOR GROWTH

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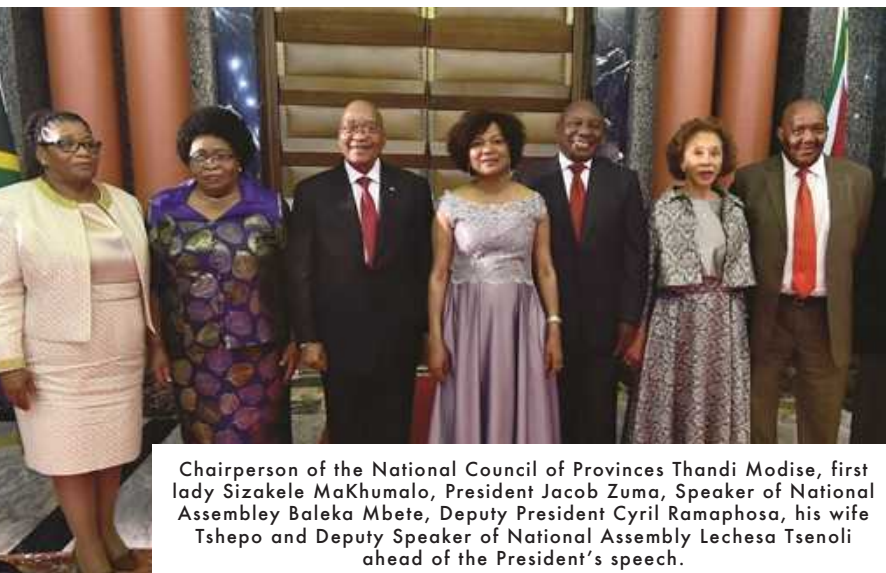
CONTINUING TO SERVE

Alexander Forbes listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange on 24 July 2014. We are confident this will accelerate the growth of our business while providing for new investors to support us. The listing will serve to strengthen our pledge to create, grow and protect our clients' wealth and assets. We thank you for your support and remain committed to securing your financial well-being.





President Jacob Zuma and first lady Sizakele MaKhumalo at the SoNA.



Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces Thandi Modise, first lady Sizakele MaKhumalo, President Jacob Zuma, Speaker of National Assembly Baleka Mbete, Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, his wife Tshepo and Deputy Speaker of National Assembly Lechesa Tsenoli ahead of the President's speech.



State of the Nation Address 2017

President Jacob Zuma delivered the State of the Nation Address (SoNA) to a joint sitting of Parliament on 9 February 2017.

During his speech, the President reflected on government's achievements over the past year and set out government's priorities for the year ahead.

PSM captured all the highlights of the SoNA, including all the glitz and fashion on the red carpet.



Home Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba and his wife Norma.



Mandla Mandela and his wife Rabia arrive at the SoNA.



Minister in The Presidency responsible for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Jeff Radebe and his wife Bridgette.



Arts and Culture Minister Nathi Mtshwa together with his wife Philisiwe.



Dali Tambo, his wife Rachel were with their son Oliver.



Public
Protector
Advocate
Busisiwe
Mkhwebane.

Holding those in power accountable

Writer: Albert Pule | Photographs: Oupa Segalwe

When Advocate Busisiwe Mkhwebane worked as a senior investigator and subsequently head of operations in Gauteng (at the Office of the Public Protector), the thought of leading the institution was a bridge too far for her.

A little more than a decade down the line, Advocate Mkhwebane is heading the Chapter 9 institution.

A graduate of the former University of the North (now University of Limpopo) Advocate Mkhwebane is South Africa's fourth Public Protector and the second woman to lead the institution, taking over from Advocate Thuli Madonsela, who stepped down after a seven-year term in October 2016.

A busy time

In a recent interview with *PSM*, Advocate Mkhwebane says since taking the helm, the number of complaints lodged with her office has increased.

The Office of the Public Protector has the powers to investigate any conduct in state affairs or in public administration at any sphere of government that is alleged to be improper or to result in any impropriety or prejudice.

"It has been quite a busy time on the investigations front. Internal statistics show that the quarter ending December 31 of 2016, was busier compared to the three months preceding it.

"The total workload for the quarter under review was 7 556 matters compared to 7 147 in the previous quarter."

She adds that the increased number of cases is a result of the work done by her predecessor and the team working for the office.

"The work that my predecessor has done with the team has elevated the office to another level and people are more informed about the mandate of the Public Protector."

Of the 7 556 cases, 2 083 were finalised and 5 365 were carried over to the current quarter for further investigation.

Highlights and challenges

Advocate Mkhwebane says the journey so far has been a mixture of turbulence and smooth sailing.

"One of the highlights was to inherit a highly-skilled and committed team that works hard even though, as I indicated, there was a low staff morale because of the challenges of salary scales and payments.

"On the other hand, they are a team that is very committed. I was impressed with the quality of work they produce. We've been working hard for the past 100 days and increased the level of performance from 11 percent

to 32 percent," she said.

One of the main challenges facing the the Office of the Public Protector is that of funding.

"The office is not fully funded. We have a staff complement of around 700, but only around 350 funded posts," she notes.

In addition, the salary scales of employees also need attention.

"The levels of our investigators needs some attention because the cause of the low staff morale was that some of the senior managers earn less than the people they manage. These are some of the issues that we are trying to resolve," she explains.

Advocate Mkhwebane would also like to see more government departments cooperating with her office.

"Another key challenge is the issue of government departments that are not cooperating and responding on time to our questions. We can't finalise cases because they don't respond."

Among the challenges she has to deal with so far, include questions about her character, but

Advocate Mkhwebane says she will not allow this to deter her from carrying out the important work of her office.

"Throughout it all, the team and I stood our ground and refused to play along to what we believed and still believe are attempts to unsettle and defocus us from what we really are here to do, which is to be a resource to the people of South Africa to hold their leaders to account," she stresses.

Implementation of remedial actions

The Office of the Public Protector will also be doing more to follow up on the remedial action it recommends in its investigations.

The Constitutional Court previously ruled that the powers of the Office of the Public Protector are binding.

Advocate Mkhwebane says since the Constitutional Court ruling, her office is capacitating a compliance section that will follow up on the remedial actions of the Public Protector.

The section will remind all parties that have been ordered to implement remedial actions to do so and in cases where they do not agree with the remedial actions, they have the option of going for a judicial review. ➡

She adds that Parliament also has an oversight role to play.

"In the Constitutional Court decision, it was indicated that Parliament should assist us with the enforcement of remedial actions. Our last resort is to take these institutions to court, for the court to make them implement our remedial actions."

Stakeholder engagement

The Office of the Public Protector is crisscrossing the length and breadth of the country, talking to various stakeholders and communities.

The intention of these meetings is to introduce the Public Protector to stakeholders and to outline her vision for the institution.

In her first engagement, Advocate Mkhwebane and her team visited Johannesburg and she says one of the major things she has been telling stakeholders, especially municipalities, is to establish a complaints directorate.

"If it's not a complaints directorate, it can be an office of the ombudsman and we can help establish it. This will be where people can lodge their complaints, within the institution, before taking matters outside. When I engage stakeholders, I will request them to cooperate and handle these matters internally before coming to us."

Leaving a legacy

In seven years' time, Advocate Mkhwebane will leave the Office of the Public Protector and a new Public



Public Protector Advocate Busisiwe Mkhwebane responds to service delivery grievances brought up during her interaction with the community of Ratanda, Heidelberg, recently.

Protector will take over.

At the end of her term, she says she would like to see every South African holding the government accountable and fighting for their rights.

"I would like to leave each and every South African empowered so that they are able to engage government departments on their rights and services that are due to them," she said.

While Advocate Mkhwebane never envisaged herself as a leader of such an important institution, she believes that with her dedicated team, she is on the right track to fulfilling its constitutional mandate. ●

According to the Constitution, the Public Protector has the power, as regulated by national legislation, to investigate any conduct in state affairs, or in the public administration in any sphere of government, that is alleged or suspected to be improper or to result in any impropriety or prejudice. The Public Protector also has the power to report on that conduct and take appropriate remedial action.

The Public Protector has the additional powers

and functions prescribed by national legislation.

The Public Protector may not investigate court decisions and must be accessible to all persons and communities.

In addition, any report issued by the Public Protector must be open to the public unless exceptional circumstances, to be determined in terms of national legislation, require that a report be kept confidential.



PROVIDING EFFECTIVE SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

The Independent Development Trust (IDT) is a public entity that is mandated to support all spheres of government with social infrastructure management and programme implementation. The IDT reports to the Ministry of Public Works and supports the work of the Department of Public Works.

In the past financial year the IDT supported 40 government departments, built 18 schools and created 20 000 work opportunities for the community members through its implementation of social infrastructure programmes.

Access to quality education



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Telephone number: (012) 845 2000 (EXT 2101)

E-mail address: ceo@idt.org.za

Website address: www.idt.org.za

Access to Quality Education



Mgezeni Comprehensive High School in Ntambanana district in KwaZulu-Natal

Access to quality health care



Maternity and postnatal wards at Letaba Hospital in Limpopo



Kimberly hospital in Northern Cape

Access to effective justice system



Mpumalanga High Court in Nelspruit



Plettenberg bay magistrate court in Western Cape

Creating work opportunities



Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) in Gauteng and North Cape province



Protecting the vulnerable

Ntombizodwa Matjila's job requires her to deal with the harsh realities of society, particularly that of sexual abuse, but at the same time, it also allows her to help protect vulnerable groups.

She is the Registrar of the National Register for Sexual Offences (NRSO), which is a record of all those found guilty of sexual offences against children and the mentally ill.

Her work helps ensure that convicted sexual offenders do not work with children and the mentally ill.

The NRSO is a unit located within the Promotion of the Rights of Vulnerable Groups at the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development.

Giving vulnerable groups a voice

Matjila says one of the unit's objectives is to protect those who cannot protect themselves and don't have a voice.

"We are trying to be that voice that can try to put an end to the scourge of sexual offences which is a societal problem," she adds.

NRSO was established in 2009 as a result of the high number of sexual offences committed against children and the mentally ill in particular.

The register gives employers in the public or private sectors such as schools; crèches and hospitals the right to check that the person being hired is fit to work with children or mentally disabled people.

According to Matjila, currently there

are more than 25 000 convicted sexual offenders on the NRSO. About 8 500 of these were convicted prior to the NRSO being established.

She adds that this number is extremely high and a cause for concern.

"This means that we have a problem in our society but at the same time by registering these sexual offenders, it shows that the system is working and that people are getting convicted."

Accessing the NRSO

To protect the right to privacy of those on the registry, only certain groups may apply to find out who is on the registry, Matjila explains.

Employers can apply to find out if those they intend hiring to work with children or the mentally ill are on the register, while a person can also do so if this is a prerequisite of a potential employer.

The courts can also check the register to ensure that those applying for foster care and adoption are not on it, as well as authorities that grant licenses to crèches or non-government organisations working with children and the mentally ill.

Matjila explains that parents who hire drivers or care givers for their children can also check if these employees are on the register.

"Each and every parent has an obligation to get a certificate from the NRSO ensuring that people who work with their children are not sex offenders."

She adds that parents need to bear in mind that sex offenders are not only men.

Child pornography is also a sexual offence and most female sex offenders groom children for pornography, Matjila points out.

According to the Sexual Offences Act, if an employer finds out that an employee is a convicted sex offender they have the right to dismiss that person.

"For example, if someone is employed by the Department of Basic Education and their day to day work requires them to interact with children, upon the employer finding out that this person is a convicted sexual offender they can remove them from an environment that requires them to interact with children."

The employer must look for other duties for the employee that do not include interacting with children and mentally ill people. Should the employer not find such a role for the employee, the employee can be dismissed, she says.

Removing a name from the register

While some categories of sexual offenders can request to be removed from the NRSO, others will remain on it for the rest of their lives.

"Sexual offenders who will not be removed from the register are those who have been convicted for more than 18 months or have two or more sexual offence convictions." ➔



Those whose sentences range from one to six months stay on the NRSO for five years, after which they can apply to have their names removed from it.

Those who have been sentenced for more than six months remain on the register for seven years.

"Offenders who have been sentenced for more than six months but less than 18 months remain on the register for 10 years, after which they can apply to be removed from it."

All in a day's work

On a personal note, Matjila says her job requires her to have a strong character because she interacts with different people on a daily basis.

Part of her job is keeping track of the register itself because it is a system that is integrated and managed electronically and it can be found at court level.

"For instance, if the case is already in court and there is a conviction for a sexual offence, we have a system

that records everything. Once a magistrate convicts and sentences the offender, the clerk of court registers this conviction on the system, which is then sent to us.

"We are then informed of where the conviction was made, the type of sexual offence committed and duration of the sentence."

Court orders and convictions get transferred directly to her desk where the electronic format of the NRSO is situated.

Matjila says she is very proud of her work particularly because she can make a difference in the lives of other people.

"My work helps ensure that children and the mentally ill are protected from sexual offenders. It is important that we do all in our power not to expose these vulnerable groups to possible harm. It is also important for society to create an environment where children are loved and have the opportunity to enjoy their childhood," she adds. ●

This and that

How do you relax?

I enjoy spending time with my family and playing with my children.

Favourite food?

I love ikota also known as a township burger.

If you were not in law what would you be doing?

I would be a psychologist. I like helping people.

Favourite holiday destination?

I love the Seychelles, Durban, Mpumalanga and Venda.

Ntombizodwa Matjila is originally from Meadowlands in Soweto. She holds a Masters in Constitutional and Administrative Law from the University of Pretoria. She has worked for numerous government departments in the legal sectors. In 2007 she joined the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development as the Director: Legal in the Gauteng region. She was appointed as the Registrar of the NRSO in 2009.



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

GLORIA SEROBE

Minister Davies, in congratulating Ms Serobe said, "Ms Serobe has always reached for the glass ceiling, aiming to shatter it for herself and women after her. Her efforts over three decades aimed at transforming the national socio-economic fabric culminated in her establishing Women's Investment Portfolio Holdings Limited (WIPHOLD), an investment and operating company owned and managed entirely by black women. South Africans like Ms Serobe inspire the nation that when excellence is a way of life, success is assured."

4th ANNUAL
— SA PREMIER —
BUSINESS AWARDS
2016



Understanding the science of space weather

Space weather can disrupt the technology we rely on daily, such as mobile phones, the internet, navigation and communication systems on-board aircraft as well as our electrical power grid.

It is for this very reason that the work being carried out by 31-year-old, Dr Rendani Nndanganeni, a space science researcher at the South African National Space Agency (SANSA), is so important.

Her work involves collecting data and using available data provided by ground based instruments and satellites to analyse space weather events.

Space weather refers to conditions on the sun, in the solar wind, magnetosphere, ionosphere, and thermosphere that influence the performance and reliability of space-borne and ground-based technological systems.

Dr Nndanganeni and her colleagues at SANSA collaborate with the aviation sector and government to develop the necessary space weather capability to address the nation's requirements.

The impact of space weather

She explains that ground base support and aircraft are currently vulner-

able to the impact of space weather.

Her focus is on four key areas – communication, navigation, aircraft avionics and radiation exposure.

"I spend most of my time collecting data to determine the impact of space weather on the aviation sector.

"This is a new research field and it is extremely interesting to uncover new results and provide important information to the aviation industry."

This field of research is one that has not been explored fully in South Africa when compared to other countries, Dr Nndanganeni points out.

"It is important to do this research and create our own knowledge base within this field."

Dr Nndanganeni is currently working on a research study which looks at understanding the underlying causes and impact of space weather on the aviation sector to provide decision-makers and role players with the correct information in addressing space weather-related issues.

"This research plays a vital role in helping South Africa align itself with international standards in the provision and access of space weather information to meet the International Civil Aviation Authority recommendations and to protect the vulnerable areas within the aviation sector,"

explains Dr Nndanganeni.

Space weather monitoring

She adds that the importance of space weather monitoring lies in the global dependence on technological systems for economic vitality and national security.

"Space weather can disrupt technological systems such as satellite and airline operations, communication networks, navigation systems and the electric power grid.

"Space weather monitoring is essential for the improved understanding and forewarning of solar events that could lead to severe space weather on Earth.

"Although impending space weather cannot be halted, constant monitoring allows for industries that may be affected to be on standby and provides important scientific information to make the necessary decisions."

Stimulating work environment

Dr Nndanganeni says she loves working for SANSA as she is working with "some of the best minds in the world".

She adds that SANSA affords employees an opportunity to work on cutting edge research, which contrib-



Dr Rendani Nndanganeni is a space science researcher at the South African National Space Agency.

utes to the development and growth of the South African economy.

"SANSa is also extensively involved in educating and empowering local communities with knowledge through public lectures, World Space Week and National Science Week.

"I really enjoy being involved in motivating disadvantaged learners from rural schools to take up science, technology, engineering and mathematics at school and university."

The space science industry offers many exciting career opportunities for young people, says Dr Nndanganeni.

A love for exploring

Dr Nndanganeni's love for exploring new things is what led her to pursue a career as a space science researcher.

"While growing up, I would open things up or try to fix broken items in the house, which is when I realised that I really enjoy finding solutions to problems, and science is all about problem solving, that is why I love it.

Having recently completed a PhD in Space Science at the North-West University, Dr Nndanganeni specialises in heliosphere physics. This is the study of theoretical, numerical modelling and experimental research on the acceleration, transport and modulation of charged particles (mainly cosmic rays) in the turbulent plasmatic environment around the sun, which is called the heliosphere.

She also holds a BSc in Computer Science and Physics, which she obtained from the University of Venda.

"One of the highlights of my career is publishing three articles in top international scientific journals and presenting research papers to the Minister of Science and Technology and at conferences across the world," says Dr Nndanganeni.

Looking to the future

Her plans for the future include "becoming a highly respected expert in the space science field".

"I know I still have a long way to go

and will have to work extremely hard to achieve this goal but I am determined to do my best.

"I also want to share the work I do with the world so that it continually inspires young learners to follow a career in science and technology," she adds. ●

This and that

Favourite food?

Beef curry, rice and salad.

What do you do for fun?

I go to the park with my daughter and take long walks on the beach.

Describe your job in three words?

Exciting, thought-provoking and captivating.

How do you relax?

I enjoy watching movies, working in my garden and crocheting.

Favourite holiday destination?

Locally it is the Mpumalanga highlands (Northern Drakensberg) and internationally it is Hawaii.



the dti

Department:
Trade and Industry
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

ANGIE ONTONG **WINS** **BIG** AT AU AWARDS

By Ryan Hoffmann



Ms Ontong was awarded the Silver AAPSIA Award, coming second out of 54 countries.

Ms Angie Ontong won the Silver Award at the prestigious African Union (AU) All Africa Public Sector Innovation Awards (AAPSIA).

The awards were held at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on Friday 9 December, 2016.

The All Africa Public Sector Innovation Awards is the first Africa-wide awards programme that celebrates innovation in the public sector. The programme recognises and rewards the achievements

of public servants and their partners from the private and not-for-profit sectors who have successfully

developed innovation solutions to service delivery and government challenges.

The aim of AAPSIA is to award successful and effective service delivery improvement projects and initiatives that have been achieved through the application of innovative approaches, methodologies and tools.

Ms Ontong was selected as a finalist in the awards for the automation and implementation of an Online Project Management Office for donor-funded projects in the National Treasury before she joined **the dti** in November 2014. She is currently Director: Human Resources Development at **the dti**.

Her project was selected in the category "Innovations in the Systems and Processes of Governance", which focuses on building accountable, transparent and ethical public services that value the input and participation of citizens. The selection process for the finalist project revolved around four criteria, namely Innovation, Impact, Sustainability and Eligibility.

This project was a first for South African and Africa as whole, and saved the National Treasury more than R8 million in consultancy fees by implementing the service in-house.



**BY CHOOSING TO
BUY LOCAL
WE BUY BACK JOBS
AND THE FUTURE
WE ARE DESTINED FOR**

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Lending a hand to KZN's vulnerable groups

“Foster care grants go a long way in meeting some of the basic needs of children in accordance with the Children’s Act...”

KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) is one of the biggest provinces in South Africa, boasting numerous tourist attractions and tourist-friendly weather conditions.

And while there is a buzz of economic activity at the province’s Durban and Richards Bay harbours, which has elevated it to the status of world-class economies, this is a province of extremes as KZN is also home to many of the poorest of the poor.

It is up to KZN Social Development MEC Weziwe Thusi’s department to provide support to the province’s poor and vulnerable.

“Our core business is tackling the unenviable consequences of poverty, unemployment, the HIV and AIDs pandemic, drug addictions, alcohol abuse, and many other social ills. We do this by directing support pro-

grammes and services to children, the youth, people with disabilities, the elderly, women, people in conflict with the law, among others,” she explained.

Support for deserving children

The MEC adds that the department is stepping up efforts to reach out to many children in need of care as a result of destitution, death, diseases and many other causes, through child grants.

“Foster care grants go a long way in meeting some of the basic needs of children in accordance with the Children’s Act, which focuses on the social welfare of the child, including education, health nutrition, among others.

“Our Minister of Social Development Bathabile Dlamini



MEC Weziwe Thusi interacting with members of the community in eSikhaleni, near Richards Bay.

has prioritised reversing the number of deserving children who do not get state support or foster care grants. In KZN we are tackling the backlog head on, regardless of challenges on the way."

One of these challenges is fraudulent claims for social grants.

The MEC notes that while trying to deal with the backlog in issuing social grants to many deserving children, the department has to also contend with government officials who collude with some community members to defraud child grant budget allocations.

"In those isolated instances, instead of fast-tracking the roll-out of social grants to deserving children and their families, we have found ourselves having to halt the issuing of foster child grants in order to reestablish the legitimacy of claims that are being made at community level as evidence suggests that fraudulent claims are sometimes made.

"Regardless of such challenges, foster care remains one of the department's priorities. By working closely with the South African Social Security Agency, the Departments of Justice and Constitutional Development and Home Affairs as well as the non-government organisation sector, great strides have been made in reducing the foster care backlog."

The major part of the department's budget goes towards Early Childhood Development (ECD) – a national government priority to ensure that the children of the rural poor have access to elementary education.

MEC Thusi says the focus is on increasing the number of children at registered ECD sites across the province that are being subsidised by the department.

"We are also funding child and youth care centres (CYCCs), which play a crucial role in providing alternative care and support services to vulnerable children, hence more than 4 000 children are housed in CYCCs funded by the department.

Isibindi Model

In further efforts to support those in need, the department also runs a programme known as the Isibindi

Model, in partnership with the National Association of Child and Youth Workers (NACCW).

"NACCW has pioneered the Isibindi Model in partnership with the national Department of Social Development. The Isibindi Model is about deploying trained child and youth care workers to provide care, protection and developmental support to vulnerable children and families in communities," notes the MEC.

The Isibindi Model was conceptualised by Minister Dlamini, as a direct response to social challenges of the HIV and AIDs pandemic and other challenges facing children.

"It provides training and a stipend of R1 700 to 2 143 CYCWs. The initiative contributes to job creation as part of the Expanded Public Works Programme, which reaches more than 30 000 vulnerable children in communities," adds MEC Thusi.

Tackling substance abuse


Substance abuse is another serious challenge in various communities across the province.

The department manages two state-run treatment centres – the Newlands Park Treatment Centre in Newlands and Madadeni Rehabilitation Centre in Madadeni – and also funds non-profit organisations (NPOs) offering substance abuse services.

The department is also working with various stakeholders to ensure the functionality of Local Drug Action Committees in local municipalities and Substance Abuse Forums at provincial and district levels.

Taking services to the people

MEC Thusi says the department has prioritised improving infrastructure, to ensure that it builds its offices where the people are, so that they can access social welfare services easier, cheaper and quicker.

"The department is spending R172 million towards social welfare community facilities and service offices throughout the province. We have been able to complete the construction of a number of office buildings and community facilities. This included centres for the elderly, a school of industries for children, places of 

MEC Weziwe Thusi with members of faith-based organisations in Umlazi.



MEC Weziwe Thusi with community members at one of the department's service offices.

safety, service offices, youth and EDC centres, among others.”

Fourteen ECD facilities are expected to be completed across the province soon.

The Department is also partnering with the German Development Bank to construct six community care centres (CCCs) to the tune of R30 million. These CCCs are due for completion in the current financial year and will provide a package of services to orphans and vulnerable children and youth.

Caring for the elderly

The MEC points out that the department is at the forefront of efforts to raise awareness about the rights of vulnerable groups such as the elderly, women, children, youth and people with disabilities and those infected and affected by HIV and AIDs.

It has also adopted a ward-based approach in which social workers and community care givers (CCGs), who are placed in various wards, provide social welfare services to the elderly.

“Sustained partnerships are maintained with NPOs that provide social welfare services to the elderly, coupled with the Victim Empowerment Programme and Older Persons Electronic Register to improve the management of cases of abuse.”

There are a number of community-based centres throughout the province where the elderly are cared for during the day, provided with meals, and can participate in physical exercises.

“These community-based centres are playing an important role to counter the vulnerability of the elderly who are prone to sexual, financial, verbal and physical abuse. The elderly find refuge in these centres which run luncheon clubs where they gather together and enjoy their twilight years in the company of congenial and suitable people with whom they share a common frame of reference and destiny,” says MEC Thusi.

Focus on HIV and AIDS

Through a partnership with the Office of the Premier, the department plans to implement the Global Fund HIV Prevention programmes, targeting young women between the ages of 10 and 24.

“We have a programme known as the Social Behaviour Change (SBC) programme, which is being piloted in three districts – Ugu, uThukela and uMkhanyakude. Through this programme, we seek to decrease risky sexual behaviour amongst the youth and reduce new HIV and AIDS infections,” adds the MEC.

Ultimately, MEC Thusi’s department is all about caring for KZN’s vulnerable.

“The department’s holistic approach to serving the needs of children, youth, women, adults and the elderly qualifies it to be recognised as the heart of government,” she says. ●

***Vukani Mbhele is the spokesperson for KZN Social Development MEC Weziwe Thusi.**

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Fast facts at your fingertips

In his 2017 State of the Nation Address, President Jacob Zuma updated the nation on progress made in the implementation of government programmes. These include developments in the areas such as education, land redistribution, water and sanitation, infrastructure development and employment, among others. *PSM* takes a look at some of the important numbers from the President's speech.



Economy

- 1.3 percent – the anticipated economic growth rate in 2017.
- 0.5 percent – estimated economic growth achieved in 2016.

Energy

- 7 million – households that have been connected to the grid and now have electricity.

Water and sanitation

- 37 percent – the national average of water losses in some municipalities.
- 10 000 – unemployed youth being trained as plumbers,

artisans and water agents.

- 15 000 – the total number to be trained as plumbers, artisans and water agents by end of 2017.

Education

- 173 – the number of inappropriate school structures that have been eradicated since 2011.
- 895 – new schools that provide a conducive learning environment for children.

Science

- 8 – African partners who supported South Africa to win the bid to host the Square Kilometre Array telescope.
- R2 billion – the cost of constructing the MeerKAT telescope.
- 75 percent – local content used to construct the MeerKAT telescope.

Roads

- R4.5 billion – the cost of the project to upgrade the Moloto road.

Tourism

- 9 million – the number of tourist arrivals from January to November 2016.
- 13 percent – growth in tourist arrivals.

Social development

- 17 million – people receiving

social grants, mainly older persons and children.

Employment

- 2 million – work opportunities created by the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) since 2014.
- 6 million – target of EPWP work opportunities by the end of March 2019.
- 1 million – EPWP work opportunities benefiting the youth.
- 61 000 – work opportunities created through the environmental programmes such as Working for Water, Working for Wetlands, Working on Fire and Working for Ecosystems.
- 60 percent – young people who benefited from environmental programmes such as Working for Water, Working for Wetlands, Working on Fire and Working for Ecosystems.

Health

- 14 – the number of years over which the National Health Insurance is being implemented in three phases.

Procurement

- R500 billion – the amount spent by the state per year to buy goods and services.
- R900 billion – government's annual infrastructure budget.
- 30 percent – compulsory amount of business to be

subcontracted to black-owned enterprises by big contractors.

Housing

- 4 million – houses built by government since 1994.
- R7 trillion – the value of the property sector in South Africa.
- R1.5 trillion – the value of the subsidised property sector in South Africa.

Agriculture and land reform

- 8 million – hectares of arable land that have been transferred to black people.
- 9.8 percent – percentage of the eight million hectares of arable land in South Africa that has been transferred to black people.
- 82 million – total hectares of arable land in South Africa.
- 19 percent – decline in households involved in agriculture between 2011 and 2016.
- 2.9 million – number of households whose involvement in agriculture declined in 2011.
- 2.3 million – number of households whose involvement in agriculture declined in 2016.
- 13 – approved proposals for the Strengthening the Relative Rights of People Working the Land programme (50-50 programme).
- 921 – farm-dweller households benefiting from the Strengthening the Relative Rights of People Working the Land programme (50-50 programme).
- R631 million – value of the Strengthening the Relative Rights



- of People Working the Land programme (50-50 programme) benefiting farm dweller households.
- 90 percent – land claims settled through financial compensation.
- 450 – black smallholder farmers expected to benefit from government's commercialisation support programme.
- R2.5 billion – amount made available for the provision of livestock feed, water infrastructure, drilling, equipping and refurbishment of boreholes, auction sales and other interventions.
- R500 million – funding provided by the Industrial Development Corporation and the Land Bank to distressed farmers to manage their credit facilities and support with soft loans.

Higher education

- R600 000 – the combined family income of students who will not face fee increases at universities and Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges in 2017.
- R32 billion – the amount government has reprioritised to support higher education.
- R122 000 – the National Student

Financial Aid Scheme threshold considered too low by students.

Anti-corruption

- 98 percent – compliance levels with parole and probation conditions achieved by the Department of Correctional Services.
- 389 – asset forfeiture cases completed by the Asset Forfeiture Unit.
- R349 million – the value of asset forfeiture cases completed by the Asset Forfeiture Unit.
- 326 – freezing orders obtained by the Asset Forfeiture Unit.
- R779 million – the value of freezing orders obtained by the Asset Forfeiture Unit.
- R13 million – the amount recovered in cases where government officials were involved in corruption and other related offences in 2016.

Foreign trade

- 99 percent – South African products that will have preferential market access in the European Union.
- 96 percent – South African products that will enter the European Union market without being subjected to customs duties or quantitative restrictions.
- 1 000 – tariff lines being provided preferential access by the Southern African Customs Union Mercosur Preferential Trade Agreement.
- 20 000 – tons of beef to be exported to China per year for 10 years. ●

US affirms commitment to working with SA

President Jacob Zuma and his United States counterpart, President Donald Trump, have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the already strong bilateral relations between the two countries.

The two discussed this during a telephone conversation recently. The call was requested by the White House.

It was the first conversation between the two leaders since President Trump's inauguration in January.

President Zuma used the opportunity to congratulate President Trump on his election as the 45th President of the US.

The leaders also discussed the need to work together on global issues, especially in the quest for peace and stability in Africa.

Relations between the two countries are solid, with about 600 US companies operating in South Africa.

It is reported that President Trump also made a call to Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari. South Africa and Nigeria represent two of Africa's largest economies that attract thousands of investors.



Top accolades for outstanding SA citizens

Struggle stalwarts Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and Gertrude Shope, Olympic gold medallist Caster Semenya and one of South Africa's youngest innovators, Siya Xuza, received top awards at this year's Ubuntu Awards.

The awards, hosted by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, are held to celebrate South African citizens who play an active role in projecting a positive image of South Africa internationally through their good work.

This year's awards marked the centenary of struggle icon, Oliver Reginald Tambo, who was the longest serving President of the now governing ANC. Born in 1917, the late

struggle stalwart, who passed away in 1993, would have turned 100 years old this year.

For her contribution to the struggle, Madikizela-Mandela was honoured with the OR Tambo Lifetime Achievement Award for her sacrifices and the pain endured while fighting the apartheid government.

She could not travel to Cape Town to receive the award - a family member received the award on her behalf. In a special message conveyed through the relative, Madikizela-Mandela thanked South Africa for "allowing her to lead a worthwhile cause to a great future", saying she is "far from done".

Semenya thanked God and her parents for the part they played in her success.

Xuza, who conducted research geared towards making cheaper solar cells, received the Ubuntu Youth Diplomacy Award for his work.

The energy engineering Harvard University graduate was rewarded for his passion of harnessing the power of the sun for clean, affordable energy.

Only 28 years old, Xuza has already had a planet named after him for developing a record-breaking rocket and creating safer, more energy-efficient rocket fuel.

Other winners on the night included Pretty Yende (Ubuntu Arts and Cultural Diplomacy Award: Youth); Esther Mahlangu (Ubuntu Arts and Cultural Diplomacy Award: Veteran) and Chinese Ambassador Tian Xuejun (OR Tambo Lifetime Achievement in Diplomacy Award).

Organisations that were recognised for sterling work in their fields include Sasol, which was honoured in the two Ubuntu Economic Diplomacy Award in the Africa and global categories.

Non-profit organisations Babies Behind Bars and the Desmond Tutu HIV Foundation each received the Ubuntu Social Responsibility Award.

2017: Kruger Lowveld's year of tourism

The Mpumalanga government has declared 2017 the 'Year of Tourism', given that the province has been awarded the opportunity to host World Tourism Day on 27 September.



According to Mpumalanga's MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Eric Kholwane, tourism is an integral part of most communities' lives.

"Tourism carries significant weight in South Africa's and Mpumalanga's economy, and is one of the leading elements of international trade," he said.

For this reason, the department will be focusing on tourism infrastructure and tourist attractions in particular, as well as aggressive marketing of the province in 2017.

"Concrete steps will be taken to address the issues of routes' development; investment in anchor products; enhancement of training and skills development; improving safety measures and the promotion of small, medium and micro enterprises.

"The province will further leverage on the existing Memorandums of Understanding with Swaziland, Mozambique, Angola, China and Russia through

developing packages according to their needs, investing in infrastructure to improve tourism products, identifying and training tourism operators and working with the Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport to conclude the Air Transport strategy," said MEC Kholwane.

According to MEC Kholwane, Kruger Lowveld's occupancy/booking statistics over the festive season – a combination of the total day visitors and bed nights – indicate fluctuating statistics compared to the same period in 2015.

"The Kruger National Park recorded an increase of eight percent (from 140 676 in 2015 to 152 974 in 2016); whilst in and around Hazyview there was an increase of

percent (from percent 2015 to 63 nt in 2016). In d around the Canyon, the n terms of added.



SAA celebrates 83 years

South African Airways (SAA), which is one of the oldest airlines in existence, celebrated 83 years of air transport services in February. SAA was formed in February 1934.

The carrier had only 40 staff members and a handful of aircraft when it first launched. In its first year of operation, SAA serviced 3 000 passengers. Over the years the airline has evolved and now transports more than nine million passengers and 114 000 tonnes of freight per year.

"SAA connects South Africa to all of its major trade and tourism partners and, in doing so, supports 34 000 jobs within the country and contributes R9.2 billion which is approximately 0.3 percent of the national Gross Domestic Product every year," SAA spokesperson Tlali Tlali said.

Through its affiliation with Star Alliance, which is the world's largest international airline network, SAA provides its customers with access to 1 300 airports in 190 countries.

With a fleet of 57 aircraft, SAA is also one of the leading carriers in Africa, serving 74 destinations in partnership with SA Express, Airlink and SAA's low-cost carrier, Mango. The partnership serves the entire continent and nine intercontinental routes.

"SAA is a globally ranked four-star airline and continues to deliver excellent products and service. The airline wins numerous awards every year and boasts being awarded the best airline in Africa for 14 consecutive years," he added. ●

15th Annual Savanna Science Network Meeting

12–17 March 2017

The 15th Annual Savanna Science Networking Meeting provides an opportunity for scientists to share their latest research findings conducted in national parks and other conservation areas within the savanna biome.

This includes numerous research projects from conservation areas mostly within South Africa (with Kruger National Park the best represented), but also drawing on relevant research and understanding from other savanna protected areas across the globe, including Australia, South America, USA and Asia.

The conference is also an important forum for dialogue and debate about ecological science and conservation matters; and a pivotal point for future research collaborations.

It will be hosted by South African National Parks' Scientific Services at the Mdluli Conference Centre, Skukuza, Kruger National Park.

For more information email: reservations@sanparks.org or call 012 428 9111.

Power & Electricity World Africa 2017

28–29 March

The 20th annual Power & Electricity World Africa is the leading marketplace and ideas exchange for African power producers, large energy users and governments, hungry for innovative solutions.

The event, which is endorsed by the Ministry of Energy and Eskom, will provide an opportunity for sellers and their partners to do deals that drive Africa's energy sector.

The conference will also provide its partners with access to over 500 African energy utility and independent power producer decision-makers.

It takes place at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg.

For more information call Courtney on **011 516 4017** or email: courtney.harty@terrapinn.com

Local Government Tourism Conference

3–4 April 2017

Taking place under the theme, "Tourism Planning is Everybody's Business", the Local Government Tourism Conference (LGTC) will provide a platform for the public and private sector to engage and map a way forward for tourism development at local government level.

The conference is aimed at tourism stakeholders and industry players to assist the tourism sector in planning and aligning its development and contribution to eradicating unemployment.

The LGTC will reflect on progress made since the 2015 conference; the state of tourism at local government level, including integrated planning as well as destination development and sustainable tourism development in the context of local government.

Stakeholders and tourism industry players will also deliberate on policies, legislation and strategies of local government and their impact on tourism planning.

The LGTC will be hosted by the Department of Tourism and takes place at Emperors Palace in Gauteng.

For more information contact Thami Mandlazi on **012 444 6352**, Boitumelo Mathabathe on **012 444 6300** or email: localgovconference@tourism.gov.za •

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Reform improves the AU

The African Union (AU) is on the road to fiscal independence. The AU has long been dependent on foreign funding to bankroll the union but all that is set to change thanks to reforms, which also will improve the way the organisation is run.

The reforms were approved by African leaders at the AU summit in Addis Ababa recently. Speaking from the sidelines of the summit, President Zuma said the reforms had benefited the organisation.

"You feel there is a new breeze in the manner that we are going to run the union," noted President Zuma. The reforms were presented in a report by Rwandan President Paul Kagame at the summit, the New Partnership for Africa's Development will be fully incorporated into the development agency and underpin the monitoring framework.

In addition, the African Peer Review Mechanism is strengthened to track implementation and evaluation in key areas of development.

The reforms also include that the AU will focus on women and youth across its various programmes and appropriate way to bring in private sector investment.

Heads of state will only be allocated funds by officials not lower than the



Rwandan President Paul Kagame presented a report on new reforms that are set to improve the AU at the recent summit.

lection of the chairperson of the committee to be enhanced by a robust and transparent process backed, for example, by a referendum.

Reforms at the AU

The reforms include a decision taken at the summit held in Kigali, Rwanda last year that will introduce a 0.2 percent levy on all eligible exports from the continent to finance the AU's programmes and operations. Currently, around 73 percent of the AU's US\$782-million budget was drawn from contributions from external donors such as the European Union and the World Bank. The contributions from the levy will allow African countries to cover two-thirds of the AU's total funding needs. "There's been a very strong feeling that we need to raise money on our own so that we can do what we want. Because at times when other people give money tend to in a sense dictate where they want their money to be used," said President Zuma. The levy will also provide an equitable and sustainable source of financing for the AU as at least 50 African countries provide three-quarters of the AU's contributions from the continent. Currently, only half of member states pay their contributions in full, leaving the organisation with less than half of the possible funds it is able to raise from African countries.

Strengthening governance

African leaders have now agreed on stronger decision-making procedures to ensure the effective implementation of decisions. "There has been no system that says if a decision is taken, this is the route they take; this is how it will happen; these are the timeframes," said President Zuma. A decision was taken at the summit

to implement the various proposals within the next two to six years. This, he pointed out, indicated the willingness of the organisation to transform and "do things differently".

The technical committee, which President Kagame is a part of, has been tasked to work on how the decisions will be implemented. A high-level committee made up of African heads of state will supervise the implementation of the reforms, while a subcommittee of the secretariat will deal with day-to-day operations.

At a retreat before the start of the summit, President Kagame told African leaders that the institutional quality of the AU has been a concern for some time, almost since its founding in 2002. "Indeed, the problems documented then are not so different from those on our minds today, namely poor execution, lack of focus, overdependence on external funding, an unclear division of labour with other continental organisations, and a perception of irrelevance for African citizens," he said.

Time for change

Presenting a report he had been instructed to draft on how to restructure the organisation to African leaders (aided by a nine-member advisory committee, made up of, among others, former Reserve Bank Governor Tito Mboweni), the Rwandan President noted that in the past, reforms that had been tabled and agreed upon by AU members were never implemented. This had to change, he said.

"Without an AU that delivers, the continent cannot progress, and we face the likelihood of yet another generation of lost opportunity."

He emphasised the importance of working together. "Just look at how other regions are organised, where states with more economic production than much of Africa combined find benefit in joining together with neighbours to go even further."

Meanwhile, remarking that African leaders at the summit had voted to welcome Morocco into the AU as the 55th member country of the organisation, former AU Commission Chair Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma ➔

stressed the importance of unity on the continent.

"When our forebears united, Africa was able to win its independence from colonialism against countries with armies and economies far bigger than ours. We should, therefore, never allow ourselves to be divided by

anyone or by anything," she said.

Dlamini Zuma has been succeeded by former Chadian Foreign Minister Moussa Mahamat.

He was elected as the new AU Commission Chair at the summit and was due to officially takeover in March.

In a closing statement Dlamini

Zuma said the experience of serving as commissioner had been a humbling one.

"For us as Africans to serve, there is no service more important, more honourable or more rewarding than to serve our continent and the citizens of Africa." ●

Providing opportunities for Africa's youth

Africa must do more to harness the power of its 200 million youth between the ages of 15 and 24 years, says former AU Commission Chair Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma.

Addressing the AU summit, she pointed out that Africans are set to make up a quarter of the world's youth who are under 25 by 2025.

"As the rest of the world ages, Africa will remain a young continent. This is the comparative advantage we have, which must be translated into a demographic dividend," she said.

Dlamini Zuma said African countries must provide the youth with opportunities to be in school, complete secondary education and access to vocational training and universities.

They must also provide the youth with the opportunity to expand their knowledge of science, mathematics, engineering and technology, she said.

"Within this, we must pay special attention to creating opportunities for girls and young women, so that we use the full potential of all our resources," she added.

Also addressing the summit, UN Economic Commission for Africa Executive Secretary Abdalla Hamdok said the youth bulge could be a huge opportunity for economic and social transformation.

"Alternatively, it can be a source of instability if countries fail to harness their potential through design and implementation of appropriate policies that unlock the demographic dividend and explore new economic opportunities," he noted.

The African Development Bank's Strategy for Jobs for Youth in Africa 2016-2025 estimates that lowering Africa's youth unemployment rate to fall in line with that of adults can boost the continent's gross domestic product by between 10 and 20 percent.

The strategy aims to create 25 million jobs and impact 50 million youth, by increasing inclusive employment and entrepreneurship and strengthening human capital.

The AU will host the African Economic Platform in Mauritius from 20 to 22 March, which aims to foster closer engagement between business and academia.



Morningside



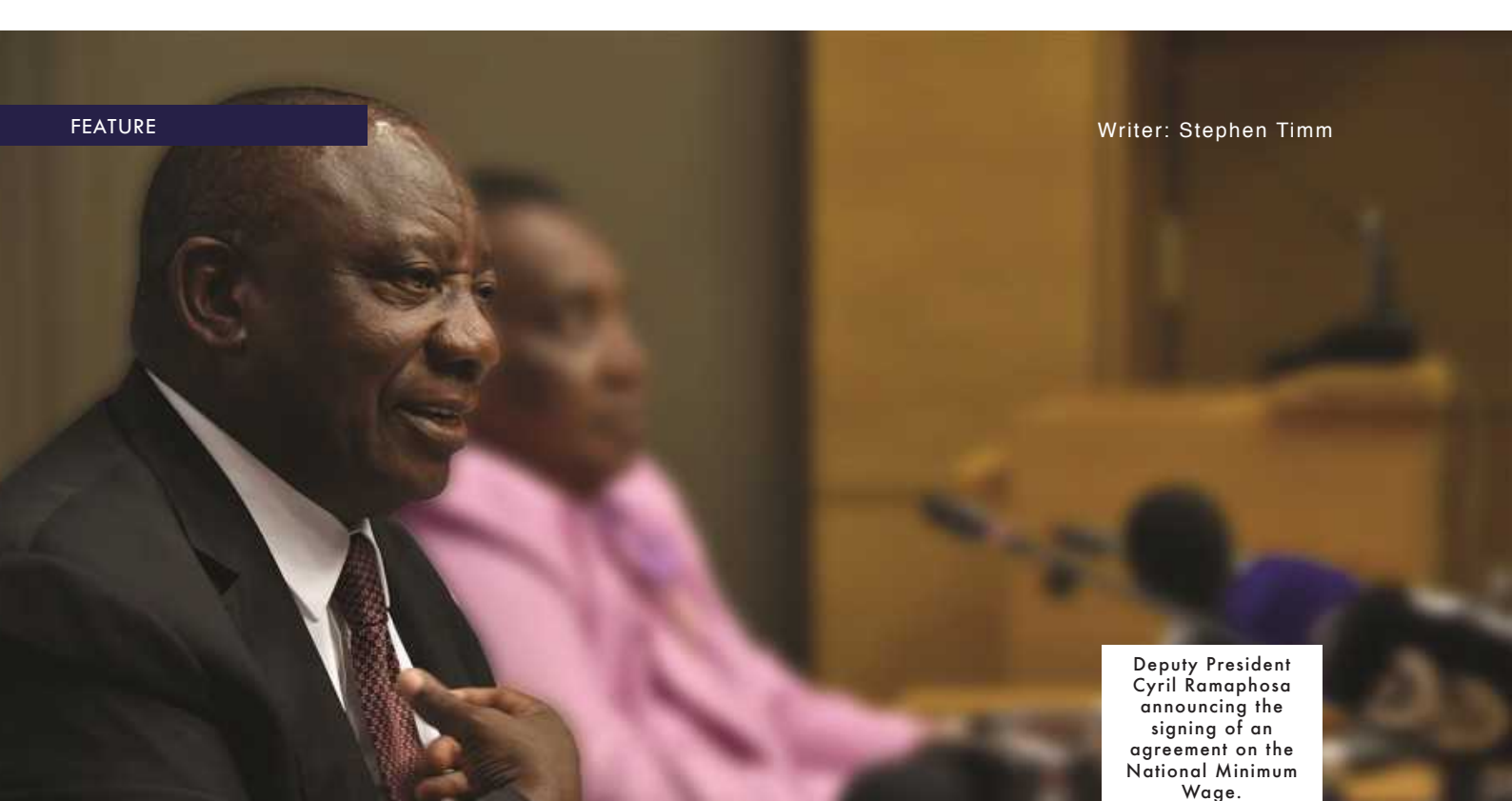
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Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa announcing the signing of an agreement on the National Minimum Wage.

National Minimum Wage

an instrument for development

An agreement on the National Minimum Wage, signed in February between the government, labour, business and civil society, will help address wage inequality and labour instability, says Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa.

The Deputy President oversaw the signing of the agreement, along with an accord on measures to strengthen labour stability and collective bargaining.

The social partners also signed a declaration on wage inequality and labour stability, pledging to combat the country's extreme wage inequality that contributes to poverty and constrains economic growth and social development.

"Our deliberations in the course of two years show that social dialogue in our country remains necessary, relevant, vibrant and concentrated on the best interests of all sections of our society," noted Deputy President Ramaphosa.

The central agreement, which targets a National Minimum Wage of R20 an hour to be implemented on 1 May next year, was signed by all of the National Economic Development and Labour Council's (Nedlac) social

partners – with the exception of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, which will first report back to its central executive committee before signing.

Addressing wage inequality

The R20 an hour minimum wage will translate into a monthly salary of R3 500 for those working a 40-hour week, and R3 900 for those working a 45-hour week.

"The National Minimum Wage, which is a floor below which no worker may be paid, will significantly improve the lives of millions of low-paid workers and begin to address the challenge of wage inequality.

"At its introduction next year, South Africa will join several countries around the world that have implemented a National Minimum Wage as an instrument of economic and social development," said the Deputy President.

The agreement paves the way for the National Minimum Wage Act to be introduced and debated in Parliament, along with any amendments to relevant labour legislation. Following a process of public consultation, it will be sent to the National Assembly and thereafter to the National Council of Provinces to be voted on.

If implemented at R3 500, the minimum wage will affect up to 6.6 million people or 47 percent of workers who earn below R3 500, the Deputy President said.

Careful balance

The level of R3 500 was chosen as a careful balance to ensure that the negative impact of many workers losing their jobs through the introduction of an overly high minimum wage is minimised, he added.

When it kicks in, domestic workers will be paid 75 percent of the minimum wage and farm workers will be paid 90 percent of the minimum wage. It is proposed that these sectors will be brought up to 100 percent of the minimum wage level within two years, pending research by the National Minimum Wage Commission on this timeframe.

Participants in the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) and Community Works Programme will not be included, at least initially, until a Nedlac task team conducts a review to assess whether to include the two under the minimum wage regime.

Currently, EPWP participants are paid a R83 a day stipend. Public Works Deputy Minister Jeremy Cronin pointed out recently that if the minimum wage of R20 an hour was applied, 310 000 people would likely be unable to access work opportunities in a year.

The increase would mean that the government would have to find an extra R10 billion, which Deputy Minister Cronin believes is unlikely to happen in the current economic situation.

Commission to oversee implementation

The agreement signed by the Nedlac social partners on 7 February states further that the commission will oversee the implementation and setting of the National Minimum Wage.

Over the coming weeks the social partners are also expected to finalise discussions on issues, such as the commission's institutional arrangements and minimum daily working hours under the National Minimum Wage.

Government will also conduct a socio-economic impact assessment, considering existing research on

the minimum wage for South Africa and the report of the advisory panel.

Following the conclusion of the assessment, government will brief social partners on the results so that the parties can jointly look at creative ways to speed it up and ensure that implementation is not delayed.

Applying for exemptions

Those businesses that cannot afford the minimum wage will be able to apply for an exemption of up to 12 months – even before the implementation date, to provide firms with sufficient time to put in their exemption applications.

The agreement states that a 30-day turn-around time on exemptions should be put in place. Those businesses that apply for an exemption will have to provide a detailed plan. Exempted businesses will be required to pay a determined percentage of the national minimum wage.

The agreement also stipulates that the government will explore ways in which exemptions could provide access to tax incentives.

"Government will circulate a plan on readiness for enforcement, compliance and processing exemptions. This plan will include details on the publicity and information campaign, which shall include the social partners," reads the agreement.

The University of Cape Town's Development Policy Research Unit estimates that between 200 000 and one million jobs would be lost if a National Minimum Wage was set at R3 400, while the National Treasury reckons it could be over 700 000 jobs if set at R3 200.

However, the National Minimum Wage panel points out in its report to the Deputy President in November that in most countries where it has been implemented, the introduction of a National Minimum Wage has not lead to largescale job losses.

The chair of Nedlac's National Minimum Wage panel, Imraan Valodia, says it is only after a subsequent review that the National Minimum Wage Commission will know the real effects of setting the minimum wage at R3 500.

"We hope that by this time our country will be on a firm growth path, which will allow for a greater increase in the National Minimum Wage," says Valodia, in the *Mail & Guardian* recently. ➔

Adjusting the minimum wage

The National Minimum Wage is expected to be regularly reviewed to take into account the impact of the level on employment, poverty and inequality.

Centre of Development and Enterprise Executive Director Ann Bernstein notes that when it comes to adjusting the minimum wage, there are trade-offs between using a system of automatic adjustment (in response to inflation, growth, and productivity) or one driven by a commission of experts.

"On the other hand, a system in which minimum wages are adjusted by regulatory fiat allows officials to adjust the rate of increase to the needs of the economy.

"The danger with this approach, however, is that it risks politicisation of these decisions," she points out in a CDE report recently.

In its proposal, the panel has recommended that changes be driven by a commission composed of experts as well as representatives of organised business and labour, which would consider various factors before making a proposal to government on any adjustments that might be needed.

Bernstein says this has the benefit of avoiding the potential of wage indexation, which can lead to inflationary spiral, and of allowing adjustments to the minimum wage to reflect economic conditions.

"It does, however, create the risk that debates and decisions of the commission might be politicised so that wage adjustments reflect the political cycle more than the business cycle," she adds.

Strengthening labour stability

Meanwhile, in signing the accord on measures to strengthen labour stability and collective bargaining, the

social partners pledged to take all steps necessary to prevent violence, intimidation and damage to property and improve the capacity of the social partners and other agencies to resolve disputes peacefully and expeditiously.

The parties also adopted a Code of Good Practice on Collective Bargaining, Industrial Action and Picketing that provides practical guidance on collective bargaining, the resolution of disputes of mutual interest, the resort to peaceful industrial action and picketing processes.

The deliberations have resulted in an agreement on a number of proposed amendments to the Labour Relations Act to strengthen provisions on the extension of bargaining council agreements, picketing rules, strike balloting and the resolution of industrial disputes through mechanisms like advisory arbitration.

Cooperation bearing fruit

In his State of the Nation Address, President Jacob Zuma singled out cooperation by the social partners in the platinum sector and said the country's labour market environment has begun showing signs of stability.

Improving labour stability forms part of the government's Nine-Point Plan initiated in 2015.

The declaration on wage inequality and labour stability notes: "Accelerated economic growth, higher rates of investment, improved productivity and faster job creation require a stable labour market environment, in which the rights and responsibilities of all stakeholders are respected and promoted."

The implementation of a National Minimum Wage could therefore prove critical to improved labour relations in South Africa. ●



STUDY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION AT WITS



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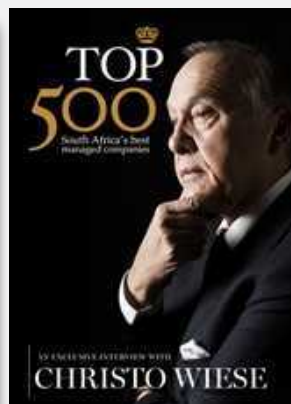
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Top Women in Business, Impumelelo – South Africa's Top Empowered Companies, Top 500, Vision 2030, Top Performing Companies.

Promoting and protecting human rights

Our country has a history of unity against bigotry. From a colonial and apartheid era to a negotiated settlement, South Africans have always found a way to unite and assert their rights. At the height of the apartheid era in 1955, South Africans of all colours and creeds converged in Kliptown and emerged with a Freedom Charter that asserted human rights and dignity.

A year later, it was the women of our country who showed us that unity surpasses diversity and led a march to the Union Buildings to demand the abolition of the oppressive pass laws. This march sent a strong message to the apartheid government – that its people would not tolerate any abuse of human rights.

Four years later, unarmed protestors demanding the abolition of the pass laws faced a strong police contingent in Sharpeville. As history will tell, the peaceful march was met with brutality that left 69 people dead and many more severely injured.

Despite the massacre of protestors in Sharpeville and the execution of human rights champions across the country, in 1976 young people in Soweto rose to challenge the imposition of the Afrikaans language as a medium of instruction in schools and, in the process, asserted the right to quality education.



Commitment to human rights

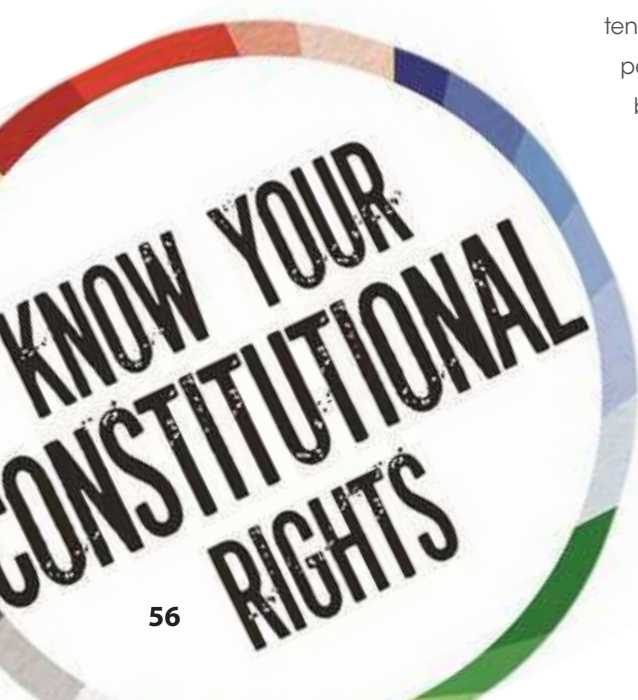
Even during the difficult and often tenuous negotiation and transition periods that characterised our birth as a nation, South Africans chose negotiations to avert the inevitable corrosion of human rights that often accompany a civil war. This process ushered in democracy in the country and culminated in the development of a Constitution that continues to enjoy

international acclaim for its human rights assertion.

As a testimony to the incorrigible determination of our nation to confront and deal with our difficulties, South Africans courageously undertook the process of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The work of the commission, which spanned a few years, brought to light painful revelations that were needed to heal all South Africans; victims and perpetrators alike.

These historic moments epitomise the character of our nation and our collective commitment to promote human rights. This character is even more evident now as the country faces incidences of racial discrimination, intimate femicide, homophobia, sexual violence and xenophobia.

Although these elements of bigotry expose differing views, especially on social media, South Africans have shown that they remain committed to the Constitution and Bill of Rights. Our strong institutional democracy has also made it possible that such incidents are reported and deliberated upon by appropriate institutions such as the South African Human Rights Commission and Equality Courts.



Promoting constitutional rights

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development continues to harness the strong human rights culture of our nation to mobilise support for the promotion of constitutional rights.

Together with representatives of civil society organisations in the National Task Team, the department formed a Rapid Response Team to urgently attend to any emerging incidents of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons.

In 2016, government in partnership with the South African Human Rights Commission, hosted the first-ever regional seminar aimed at finding practical solutions to violence perpetrated on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Through collaboration with various stakeholders, every effort is being made to ensure that all pending cases are finalised in the next 18 months.



National Action Plan

Last year, the department drew from the nation's aspiration to build a human rights society and helped ensure that South Africa fulfil its international obligation to draft and develop a National Action Plan (NAP) to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

The draft NAP arose from intensive and broad public consultations that were conducted throughout the country between February and August 2016. Various engagements, dialogues, presentations and workshops on a number of different platforms, and in collaboration with a diverse group of stakeholders and partners, were held to promote awareness of, and mobilise all sectors of society to support the NAP. The NAP is currently being finalised and will be submitted to Cabinet for approval to be deposited to the United Nations, during 2017/18.

The department has also engaged various stakeholders and developed and introduced into Parliament the Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill. The Bill proposes the creation of statutory offences of hate crimes and hate speech.

Assisting victims of domestic violence

In consultation with civil society organisations, the department has led the process of developing a Safety Plan to assist victims of domestic violence to escape the abusive environment unharmed and respond to the growing phenomenon of intimate femicide.

As studies have shown, many victims are unable to leave their violent relationships due to denial, shame, economic dependency or loyalty to the family. The Safety Plan outlines some of the methods that victims can use to escape unharmed. To augment this effort, the de-

partment will facilitate dialogues on intimate femicide across the country with a view to again harness the collective power of the nation to rise against any infringement on human rights.

The department is aware that the depth of the nation's human rights orientation may be eroded if government and all stakeholders renege on constitutional education. Hence, over the past two dec-

ades, the department has printed and distributed the Constitution across the country. The Constitution has also been translated into all official languages, as well as in Braille.

In partnership with the Department of Basic Education, the department also launched a booklet called the Constitution Made Easy for Learners and distributed over 500 000 copies to Grade 12 learners throughout the country in 2016.

It is important that, as a nation, we continue to treasure our deep-rooted culture of human rights and draw from it to nurture a better future for our country. As we celebrate Human Rights Month, we remind the nation of the enormous strides we have made as a collective and enjoin all South Africans to recommit to promoting and protecting human rights so that we can all enjoy a better South Africa. ○

***Lawrence Ngoveni is Director: Media Research and Liaison at the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development.**

Working towards an improved 2017 pass rate

The Ministry of Basic Education has set its sights on underperforming provinces and will provide them with additional support, as it aims to improve the overall National Senior Certificate (NSC) pass rate.

The Class of 2016 achieved a national pass rate of 76.2 percent without the inclusion of progressed learners. When progressed learners are included, the pass rate is 72.5 percent, an increase from the 70 percent of the previous year.

PSM recently spoke to Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga to find out how national and provincial departments planned to ensure that the Class of 2017 also records an improved pass rate.

For their part, Minister Motshekga and Deputy Minister Enver Surty have already started visiting targeted provinces to help them improve outcomes.

KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and Eastern Cape will receive more attention from the national department, as they recorded the lowest pass rates of the 2016 NSC examination results. They all achieved pass rates of less than 70 percent.

A turnaround is on the cards

The Minister is confident that the three provinces can turn things around in

2017 going forward.

"I am very comfortable with the three provinces in 2017. Limpopo has for the first time since 2011 appointed a Head of Department (HOD). The HOD was appointed in 2016. The Eastern Cape has never had an HOD since my term in office as the Education Minister, but they also appointed one last year. KZN also has an HOD," says the Minister.

She is also pleased with the calibre of people appointed to those positions.

"I have a good feeling that we are going somewhere with those provinces. We will be working with them province by province because they have different dynamics," the Minister added.

Deputy Minister Surty is responsible for Limpopo, while Minister Motshekga is responsible for the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

The Ministry also sent teams to deal with matters affecting these provinces, including infrastructure, and legal and budget issues, among others.

The Minister said that the national department is sharing ideas with provinces through reports to discover how best they can together improve the sector's performance and address remaining issues.

More must be done to address low participation rates and poor learner

outcomes in mathematics, physical science, accounting and languages; and the sector must redouble efforts to ensure that learners have age-appropriate reading and numeracy skills, she added.

Some, if not most, schools that produced zero percent pass rates were unviable schools and serial underperformers, Minister Motshekga noted.

The national department has encouraged provinces and schools to engage with communities regarding the closure of unviable schools.

With regard to functional schools that produce zero percent pass rate, the Minister says principals have to be held accountable.

Underperformance will not be tolerated.

No room for incompetence

During the recent Basic Education Sector Lekgotla, President Jacob Zuma also sent out a stern warning to schools that produce a zero percent rate.

"I wish to emphasise that there must be consequences for principals and School Management Teams who recorded a zero percent pass rate.

"We must not allow any room in the public service for ineptitude and incompetence. Everyone must strive for excellence, more so in education.

"I urge this meeting to pay special attention and develop concrete plans to attend to whatever problems exist in the underperforming districts, provinces and schools," said President Zuma.

The Lekgotla was aimed at aligning the sector's plans with the National Development Plan and saw representatives from the Basic Education Ministry, MECs, HODs from provincial education departments, district directors and other stakeholders come together to share ideas on improving the sector.

The President also urged stakeholders to work together to stem the tide of school dropouts.

"Our own analysis shows that only less than 50 percent of all the learners who joined our education system reach matriculation level after 12 years of learning."

The President said while there were many factors behind this anomaly, most were socio-economic in nature.

"Whether it is financial reasons,

abuse of drugs or other social challenges, we need to tackle them together. We must keep our youth in school.

"We collectively call upon all sectors of society to play their meaningful role to keep our youth in school. That is one of the key issues that this Lekgotla will look into.

Challenges in the Eastern Cape

Reflecting on the challenges facing the Eastern Cape, Education MEC Mandla Makupula said: "The process of appointment and recruitment has been very slow in the Eastern Cape for some years. Things only started changing 2014. Before then, we were dealing with temporary educators."

In addition, since 2010, the department has had four temporary HODs and of the 5 537 schools in the province, more than 2 000 are unviable.

The population in unviable schools is also small and educators usually have to teach all subjects, even

those they do not specialise in, which impacts badly on teaching and learning.

The department has started to discuss the closure of unviable schools with parents and communities. But some communities have sentimental ties with the schools and resist closure.

"They [parents] would tell you that the school was named after their great grand chief or it produced prominent people in society so it cannot be closed.

"We have decided to change our approach to the communities. We show them implications of having a school with a population of seven learners."

This approach, the MEC says, has so far assisted in closing approximately 500 schools since 2010.

By November 2016, the department had conducted about 188 public hearings, and out of these, about 64 communities are still refusing to close unviable schools in their areas.

More than 120 communities have however agreed with the department to close schools, but have conditions.

"They have various conditions ranging from provision of scholar transport, learners' accommodation, and a host of other demands before we can actually close the schools."

MEC Mandla Makupula says his department has developed a three-year Education System Transformation Plan (2016-2018) to address problems affecting schools. ●



UMZUMBE MUNICIPALITY GROWS IN LEAPS AND BOUNDS



Clean Audit Award handed over to Umzumbe Municipality Mayor Cllr Sizwe Ngcobo by Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs MEC Dube-Ncube and Human Settlement MEC Ravi Pillay

The Mayor of Umzumbe Municipality, Cllr Sizwe Ngcobo, and Municipal Manager Nokuthula Mgijima speak about the rapid growth of the municipality, owing to the dynamism of the community they serve.

"We serve a diverse community that travels across the country. And when people come to visit their families here, they expect the comfort they experience in large municipalities," said Ngcobo.

All of this requires dedicated political and administrative leadership and Cllr Sizwe Ngcobo banks on his years of experience in local government to weather the local government storms. "I joined this municipality in the genesis of local government as a young and energetic youth wanting to see the OR Tambo and Nelson Mandela vision of a better life realised.

Ngcobo said that he has seen a lot of growth in the municipality over the years. "Starting from the time when we had a small Municipal Infrastructure Grant and seeing it grow, buying our own plant and seeing our own fleet grow in numbers annually due to the demands of the community." He said that when all these changes happened, it demanded even more dedication from politicians.

"There is nothing as fulfilling as seeing our communities having electricity, running water and dignified sanitation," said Ngcobo. He added that these are the things that seemed far off. He said that roads continue to be a challenge because they are all gravel, "except some minor roads that we had no option but to put concrete on. We hope that in the near future we are able to tar on our local roads." Ngcobo praised the good working relationship with traditional leadership. "Seven Amakhosi are part of our full Council. They serve on different committees."

He attributes a lot of these successes to the staff led by Municipal Manager Nokuthula Mgijima. Mgijima has been with the municipality for five years and the council recently extended her contract for a further three months. She said that joining Umzumbe Municipality as Municipal Manager has been very interesting. "I was very happy, meeting new people, keen to understand the environment of a local municipality because I had worked for the Metro and district municipalities before coming here."

The position brought with it new responsibilities – being the accounting officer in charge of everything in terms of how the municipality is running, how it performs, its mandate, and reporting directly to Council. Mgijima believes in working together with her staff. "I had to analyse situations from the different departments to ensure that all the programmes implemented fulfil the challenges and also have practical solutions that benefit the community of Umzumbe." She said that achieving a clean audit three times in a row was the result of a concerted effort by all, "A number of goals were set, a number of which were critical. One of them was sustaining an unqualified audit opinion of the municipality which was done successfully."

"We have had an unqualified audit opinion and three consecutive clean audits. The other was developing a five year Integrated Development Plan which was implemented without being outsourced. I remember when I had to fill two director positions, it was challenging but I did it," she smiles. She adds that one of the most pleasing accolades was being named the Best Performing Local Municipality in KZN. "Having achieved the clean audit challenged us to up the bar. We had to present the municipality in the best way we could and that earned us this award," she said.

Small as it is, Umzumbe Municipality has serious long-term flagship projects including the Nkanini Indoor Sports Centre, Ntelezi Msani Heritage Centre, the new municipal office building and Ntashana Access road. "We also have the Turton Beach Establishment project in the pipeline which will be one of our tourist attractions," said Mgijima.



Umzumbe won Best Local Municipality at the Municipal Excellence Award. In the photo L-R Ms Nokuthula Mgijima (Municipal Manager), MEC Nomusa Dube-Ncube (Cogta), Ms Nokuthula Shongwe (Senior Manager: Municipal Finance, Cogta) and Cllr Sizwe Ngcobo (Mayor)

She added that there are plans by the provincial Department of Arts and Culture to build a library on the Heritage Site so that the school-going youth are able to access information easily, "We will equip the youth centre with computers for easy access to the Internet."

"Our MIG stands at R30 million per annum. Due to our good spending of our MIG, KZN Cogta gave us an additional R15million in the 2014/2015 financial year which made a huge difference in our budget. Our total budget is R208 million including all grants."

Umzumbe Municipality has no revenue base and solely depends on equitable share. Currently, however, there are tourism projects that are being developed as income generators and the building of the mall in Turton is seen as a future revenue stream for the municipality. "I must mention that in our wall-to-wall scheme we have identified four business nodes for development and we hope all of them move with speed to ensure that our local people get jobs and improve themselves," said Mgijima.

Umzumbe Municipality Communications Manager Trevor Khanyile said that there is sound cohesion between political and administrative leadership. "It makes things easy for all to share ideas that are going to take the municipality forward." He added that public participation is one of the strong pillars. "That has resulted in having few service delivery protests."

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SS Mendi:

A 100-year voyage to peace

One hundred years and the deepest recesses of the coldest sea could not bury the spirits of the valiant troops who lost their lives when the SS Mendi sank not far from the Isle of Wight in the midst of the First World War.

On 21 February, South Africa marked the 100th anniversary of what has been described as one of the 20th century's worst maritime disasters in UK waters. On 21 February 1917, a large cargo steamship, Darro, collided with the SS Mendi in the English Channel, south of the Isle of Wight. The SS Mendi sank killing 646 people, most of whom were

black South African troops.

About 616 South Africans, 607 of which were black troops plus 30 crew members, mostly from Britain, died in the tragedy. One hundred and thirty-nine of the soldiers who died were from the Eastern Cape.

The SS Mendi was chartered by the British government as a troop carrier to serve in World War 1, carrying 823 members of the fifth battalion. They had completed 34 days of the voyage from Cape Town to England, and were on their way to France to the war when tragedy struck in the English Channel.

Paying homage to the fallen

South Africa marked the tragedy during Armed Forces Day, which is held annually to display the country's military prowess. It was a fitting tribute to the troops whose lives were lost in pursuit of a better world at peace.

The day was accompanied by a regal military parade from the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), in honour of the SS Mendi troops.

Addressing the crowds at Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban, President Jacob Zuma paid homage to the troops who lost their lives a century ago.

"Black people had volunteered to join the First World War in order to fight against fascism. They were ahead of their time. They were internationalists who loved peace and justice.

"They also joined the war believing that their contribution would lead to better treatment back home after the war by the colonial masters."

He noted that their sacrifice did not earn them any respect from the rulers of the time.

"They were not allowed to carry weapons and were to be utilised as labourers rather than as fighting soldiers. They were also never decorated or awarded any medals at the end of the war.

"This is the painful history we come from, a history of brutal and blatant racism and colonialism," said President Zuma.

The sinking of the SS Mendi is a tragedy second only in scale to the tragedy at Deville Wood in France the year before in 1916, when 776 men of the South African Battalion died.

In 2016, the President travelled to France with a delegation to pay tribute to those who fell in Deville Wood to ensure that black soldiers are honoured and recognised in the South African monument to the war in that country on an equal footing with white soldiers.

The commemoration of these great military events, President Zuma said, is meant to restore the dignity and humanity of the black soldiers who perished.

"We salute their courage, bravery and commitment. We salute their quest for a more equal and just world, for the better world we are still working to achieve 100 years later."

Armed Forces Day

President Zuma said Armed Forces Day should be understood in the context of promoting a better understanding of the SANDF.

"It provides an opportunity to promote better understanding of the SANDF and its role in the consolidation and defence of our democracy and our people... Through the Military Skills Development System, the SANDF has continued to recruit healthy and fit young people to join it.

"They can be artisans, doctors, nurses, engineers or whatever they want to be within the armed forces. Over the past three years, the SANDF has recruited over 11 000 young people into the ranks of the defence force."

The SANDF has trained 6 000 students, who are part of the National Rural Youth Service Corps, on behalf of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, he added.

The Chief of the SANDF, General Solly Shoke, authorised the hosting of Armed Forces Day Celebration 2017 and the centenary commemoration of the sinking of the SS Mendi to be held concurrently.

As part of the event, President Zuma awarded medals to some members of the SANDF.

An appreciation for the SANDF

Locals were pleased that Armed Forces Day was commemorated in their city.

"I am happy that today I was able to see the army and what they are capable of doing. I have also learnt a lot from this event," said Mzwakhe Nkambule from KwaMashu.

Jabulani Skhakhane from Stanger said it was important for people to know what the army does. "We need the army to protect us."

The event was marked by a parade by all spheres of the SANDF, a flypast and demonstration of military vehicles.

In 2012, President Zuma proclaimed that 21 February each year will be observed to expand public understanding of the military's role and its purpose to society as well as to demonstrate the military combat readiness against threats and to support government during peace time.

The event was also attended by army representatives from neighbouring countries. ●

SIU fights corruption by safeguarding state funds



Head of the Special Investigation Unit Advocate Andy Mothibi.

Advocate Andy Mothibi sits at the head of the table in a darkened room at the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) headquarters in Silverton, Pretoria.

Even without the electricity, due to a power cut in the area, it's hard to miss his warm smile and calm presence.

The power cut does not deter him as he tells *PSM* about his work. After all, as head of the SIU, he is used to bringing to light acts of corruption, fraud and maladministration against the state.

His previous experience as a public prosecutor, magistrate, tax administrator, banker, airline compliance manager and medical aid administrator places him in good stead to lead the more than 300 investigators, lawyers and forensic accountants who work at the SIU.

The SIU was established in terms of the Special Investigating Units and Special Tribunals Act No. 74 of 1996.

The unit is a public entity with powers of investigation and litigation. Its primary

mandate is to recover and prevent financial losses to the state caused by acts of corruption, fraud and maladministration.

Such investigations are authorised through the issuing of a Proclamation by the President.

Mothibi explains that the unit can take civil action to correct any wrongdoing it uncovers in its investigations. For example, the SIU can obtain a court order to compel a person to pay back the wrongful benefit received and recover the money for the state. The SIU also works with the department concerned to cancel contracts when proper procedures were not followed.

"When we conduct our investigations, we've got the power to subpoena witnesses to give evidence and statements under oath.

"We also have powers of search and seizure and we've got powers to subpoena documents that are required for purposes of our investigations, so we've got sufficient powers to enable us to do our work effectively," he says.

The unit does not have power of arrest or prosecution or to take disciplinary actions but works closely with other relevant agencies where its powers fall short, Mothibi adds.

Uniting to fight corruption

Government has taken a multi-agency approach to fight corruption and maladministration.

"This multi-agency approach finds expression in the National Development Plan," explains Mothibi.

Agencies such as the SIU, Hawks, Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Public Protector work closely together in a forum called the Anti-Corruption Task Team (ACTT).

"This is a forum that enables cooperation between agencies so that we can rule out duplication. If a matter is brought to us and we are of the view that it can be dealt with better by the Public Protector, we refer it to that office and vice versa."

Mothibi says the ACTT allows for "forum shopping", where in a multi-agency approach, citizens have the option of reporting corruption to more than one agency.

or cash paid into trust accounts following acknowledgements of debt after investigation by the unit.

The unit has also instituted civil claims amounting to R583 million between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016.

Mothibi says some of the current investigations include the SIU instituting civil action proceedings in the High Court in the Nkandla-matter. The SIU is claiming R155 million from the principal agent, the architect, that the SIU believes is responsible for the losses to the state.

The unit has also instituted review proceedings in the High Court to seek a declaration of invalidity of a lease of premises for the South Africa Post Office at Eco Point. The lease contract is to the value of R493 million.

In another matter, the SIU has instituted civil proceedings in the High Court in the Media Corner matter. This relates to a contract between the Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services and a service

"It will fast track the process because at the moment we go through the ordinary courts and there's a backlog. The Special Tribunal will make a huge impact and help us in reducing the turnaround time."

Dealing with cases quicker

One of the things that delays SIU investigations is the backlog at courts. Mothibi says the SIU is in talks with the Department of Justice and Correctional Services to establish a Special Tribunal that will only deal with civil matters instituted by the SIU.

"It will fast track the process because at the moment we go through the ordinary courts and there's a backlog. The Special Tribunal will make a huge impact and help us in reducing the turnaround time."

He says though the process is still in its infancy, the SIU has had fruitful discussions with the department.

Recovering state funds

In the current financial year, the SIU has recovered R717 million of state money; this includes final forfeiture orders

provider. The court has already found the tender (to the value of R752 million) to be irregular and currently consequential relief is pursued.

In addition, the SIU has also challenged the validity of a contract between SITA (on behalf of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform) and Gijima regarding the provision of e-Cadastre. The contract to the value of R364 million has already been set aside and consequential relief is now being pursued.

Mothibi is confident that the SIU can deal a blow to corruption and maladministration and ultimately wants to ensure that the SIU is a well-established unit that has a positive impact.

As he voices his intentions, the lights come back on.

"Maybe that's a good sign and I'm confident we are on the right track," he adds. ●

PROMOTING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WATER AND ENERGY BY USING INTELLIGENT TECHNOLOGY



With high electricity costs and water shortages as a result of the ongoing drought conditions, innovative technologies have become crucial to conserve and preserve the country's resources.

South Africa is a water scarce country with severe water shortages in some areas. This problem is compounded by an unintended consequence of making water available affordably across the spectrum of South African citizens – water is not always perceived as a scarce commodity.

Moreover, owing to the way in which information on water consumption is disseminated, awareness of consumption per action and per unit of time is severely constrained.

Given the historic inequalities in the country, in some cases the water consumer may not be the same person who is paying the bills, which further compromises the feedback loop.

The Department of Science and Technology is leading and supporting research and development geared towards producing sustainable technology. One such initiative is the 'Smart Geyser' project, which falls under the department's Innovation Partnership and Rural Development Programme (IPRDP).

The IPRDP is aimed at improving service delivery through science, technology and innovation within the priority rural district

municipalities. In support of the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform Comprehensive Rural Development Programme, the IPRDP prioritises innovative technology solutions that aim to improve the access and quality of public service in the areas of water, sanitation, energy, information and communications technologies and human settlements within the prioritised district municipalities.

The 'Smart Geyser' project seeks to address these water scarcity challenges through a technological intervention by leveraging another consumable commodity, one which has been managed to communicate its scarcity through pricing – electricity.

The initiative is currently being piloted and already the Mkhondo Local Municipality in Mpumalanga is seeing the benefits. Developed by Stellenbosch University and funded by the Department of Science and Technology, the system aims to reduce geyser energy and water usage by at least 30-50%. Ordinarily, household water heating makes up roughly 34% of electricity consumption and about 70% of household water consumed passes through or right by the geyser. The geyser system can monitor and control a significant proportion of the water consumed by each household.



Known as "geasey", the device is attached to a geyser to control electricity. About 150 devices have been installed by various local plumbers and electricians in the municipal area. "Geaseys" are also installed with a sim card and a modem, which automatically reports to the server where the data is processed and feedback is relayed to the user.

The system uses telemetry – an automated communications process by which measurements and other data are collected at remote or inaccessible points and transmitted to receiving equipment for monitoring – that gives remote access to your geyser through a mobile device or personal computer.

It analyses consumption patterns, recommends and applies optimised control schedules, gives water and energy costs for each bath or shower taken and controls the water temperature. It also mitigates a burst through shutting off the water supply when a burst is detected.

The devices record usage of approximately 171 000 litres of water

and about R15 000 of electricity per month. This intervention is saving about R45 000 per month for Mkhondo Municipality in electricity alone, through scheduling. By making information about the relationship between water and electricity consumption publically available, the users are made aware of their water consumption patterns, which leads to a change in behavior patterns and, hopefully, a more sustainable use of the resource.

According to Professor Thinus Booysen of Stellenbosch University, the system benefits the user, the utility (Eskom) and third parties in various ways. "The project has enabled us to put the product on the market and, through it, numerous people have been employed", adds Booysen.

For instance, the user gets the benefit of remote access to their geyser, allowing them to switch it on, off, and to schedule the geyser. Also, the system will protect against geyser mechanical failure. It measures water and electricity consumption in real-time, giving the economically-involved user awareness of consumption patterns



and a way to adjust behavior. Finally, it recommends an optimal control strategy with which to control the element.

"The system continues to save electricity costs for all participants and helps them to make informed decisions about making water and energy resource savings through behavioral changes," says Booysen.

Booyesen emphasises the significance of building relationships with the users and training them, as they need to be technology-savvy. For Mkhondo municipality, researchers from Stellenbosch University ran a full marketing campaign through different media, including print platforms, pamphlet distribution at local schools, churches, shops and a massive Facebook campaign.



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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

The paradox of

improving healthcare and unabated social violence



If you thought democratic indifference was an upper middle class and elite phenomenon, wait until you enter the hallways of Osindisweni Hospital nestled in the sugar cane plantations about 15 km from King Shaka International Airport.

Osindisweni reminds you that there are working class people who can sever ties with class solidarity, much to the defiance of politics and sociology theories we learnt at school – that the working class tends to care more and act in group interest than other classes with propensity to be driven predominantly by self interest.

The filth and carelessness I witnessed recently at Osindisweni is nauseating from the entrance hall to the general ward where my elderly aunt was admitted.

One or two outsourced cleaning staff on duty seemed to do better cleaning their data bundles than the hospital floors. The security guard wasn't bothered that she had directed us to the neonatal section even though we

had explained that we were looking for ugogo. Perhaps she had seen Janet Jackson on social media and thought miracles could happen in KwaZulu-Natal too.

In the end we found gogo in a dormitory-type ward. She said she was feeling better and complimented the nurses, although one suspects the Health Ombudsman might be uncomplimentary about infection control standards.

We just wished she could immediately get out of this depressing place, recalling her own historical refrain that Osindisweni is a hospital where people 'come back dead', not healed as its name suggests. She thinks Ghandi Hospital in Phoenix is the best as it has managed her heart condition for over 15 years when private doctors had given her two years. She believes the two days spent 'next to a talking computer at the hotel-like Chief Albert Luthuli Hospital has a lot to do with my long life. Those nurses punched computers like children play-

ing with cellphones'.

But this story doesn't begin here. It starts in 2014 at about 20:00. The then 74-year-old gogo was nauseous. She had collapsed twice that day. In fact, she had been seriously ill since noon but as rural people often do, those around her moved in slow motion, believing it would pass, although gogo was clearly deteriorating.

Many people in such rural communities die due to general apathy about health emergencies. Often they say 'uzoba right, mushayiseni ngomoya nim'phuzise amanzi' (she will be okay, give her fresh air and water). Others would say 'we can't call the ambulance because even if it comes it would be too late and the person will be dead'. After all, emergency medical services (EMS) are a post-apartheid phenomenon in rural South Africa and still a rare sight in some regions.

The emergency services were eventually called and arrived within 15 minutes – a significant milestone for this deep rural area in the north of Durban. I got there a few minutes later whilst gogo was being wheeled into the ambulance – all coincidental.

Two young and friendly paramedics were in attendance. They had stabilised the old lady and told her she was 'looking younger and healthier'. She didn't believe them but nodded in appeasement. They took her to Osindisweni District Hospital about 22 km away. I followed with the grandchildren.

We arrived just before 22:00 (meandering gravel roads prolong the distance). Two nurses, senior and trainee doctors were in attendance. Two general assistants and a porter were also doing rounds in the hallways. Few senior citizens on wheelchairs and moving beds curiously look on as we fiddle with paperwork.

The cleaning lady was polishing the floors so well you'll swear kuza abakhwenyana – a tongue and cheek reference to unusually thorough cleaning that takes place on the eve of lobola negotiators visiting the would-be bride's homestead.

Stretchers and wheelchairs are visibly tired and need urgent fixing at this hospital. The volume of the television in the corridor is at full blast with security guards enjoying kwaito music. No ailing person can rest in this noise.

Whatever the procedure and circumstance, I can't believe these people are so lax when it comes to using gloves even as they handle medical equipment – especially the auxillary nurse.

One of the senior sisters in attendance is visibly irate. It can't be overload, 'there is no overload at all tonight' – the cleaner tells us. The sister could just be tired. It's been a stressful year especially in the trauma unit.

The young Indian doctor treating gogo is cool. He speaks isiZulu fluently, which excites us very much for there won't be any misunderstanding in the diagnosis and prescription.

So is the young general assistant, pleasant health worker she is. They are interested in both the medical history and symptoms of the new patient. They perform various tests. Like the young paramedics, they reassure her she'll be fine. They put her on treatment to reduce high blood pressure and dehydration. To my surprise, she gives them her medical records explaining chronic medication she is receiving from Ghandi hospital. She has internalised this protocol from her previous visitations to public health facilities.

Whatever the procedure and circumstance, I can't believe these people are so lax when it comes to using gloves even as they handle medical equipment – especially the auxillary nurse. What happened to the rules about infection control? She just free-styled throughout the procedures she performed, with bare hands.

We had been there for about two hours as treatment is administered in a paint-hungry room. We have all read the news about how the province's capital budget had been misspent.

Tired and reassured by the doctor that she would be fine, we waited patiently for her to be admitted or discharged.

Meanwhile the mind wondered towards a conclusion ➡

that, all things being equal, healthcare is improving in rural South Africa.

I made that assertion because a few years ago another relative died here at Osindisweni, under similar circumstances (blood pressure, short breath and dehydration caused by vomiting). Nobody cared. It was just routine. The ambulance never came. Another villager drove her to hospital. Because she did not make it, most people in her neighbourhood became cynical of EMS and this hospital.

But on this chilly Friday night we are treated humanely, as are other patients.

As we warmed the cold benches of Osindisweni, waiting for feedback, a middle-aged woman came rushing with a teenager who had a steak knife stuck on his skull. Doctors rushed to help. It was clearly a rare case this one: wondering how they'll remove this steak knife from the skull.

The woman shed no tear as she waited for the doctors to update her on the teenager's condition. She then decided to volunteer the story to us. Her son was stabbed by the uncle. There was some argument in the household and he became violent toward his nephew.

Suddenly her voice changed and she declared: 'I am going to take revenge. I am going to kill my mother.' Another bench warmer enquired: 'Why kill your mother when it's your brother who did this?'

She exclaimed: 'I'll kill her because it is her son who did this. Why did she give birth to such a cruel person who did this to my son? If I kill her, my brother will come to the funeral. Then I'll catch him because tonight I know he'll run to Inanda squatter camps and we won't find him...'

So this fellow will run to my township, which features in the top five of murder and violent crimes national stats!

Disturbed by this we take leave of the benches to wait in the car, visibly shaken by this experience. I have seen people die in political violence. I have seen the worst car accidents in my days as *uscabha* (taxi conductor). But not this: a butcher knife stuck in the skull of a helpless teenager!

It became evident to me that not even the national health insurance will resolve this. Neither can the police. Yes the doctors and nurses were hard at work. Our patient had stabilised. So were few other oldies there. But now this emergency!

Clearly the health system can't cope with such levels of violence in our society. On such occasions, overstretched health workers have to leave their stations to intervene in such anomalous situations.

This is the South African story, of post-colonial Africa, where a library is built, burnt and a march held to demand another. And you think violent colonialism and murderous apartheid were some sick jokes that can be erased in two decades.

We are just too accustomed to violence that it's the natural response to family feuds and other disagreements, as witnessed in this case.

Dire socio-economic conditions drive the rage we see in our communities and determine the health outcomes. They rob people of agency; hence they die of preventable or curable diseases.

Additional staff and healthcare facilities can bandage wounds, but only a new psyche can stop the bloodshed. A severely wounded society like ours requires a



great deal of social re-engineering and economic liberation. It requires that we intensify interventions designed to promote economic inclusion and social cohesion, in addition to providing quality basic services.

If what I saw that night did not shock me because I grew up experiencing political violence, why would I expect the health workers to care when their lived experience is that of dealing with the aftermath of violence every evening and especially on weekends? What makes them superbeings engineered to be immune from trauma of witnessing the aftermath of violence?

Mind you: some of these health workers are parents and partners to people who may not really appreciate what is going on at work. And yet they are still expected to perform as wives and husbands, mothers and fathers. Better still: how do we change our culture and cleanse it of violent behaviour, the notion that we must stage a war to end all wars?

In the four hours I spent at that hospital, there were nine emergencies – four of them injuries, one girl child with an allergic reaction and the rest were aged women needing rehydration and oxygen. How does the health system cope under these circumstances? How many more ambulances are needed to service all these avoidable emergencies?

A few years ago Statistics South Africa reported that after each Soweto Derby, the number of unnatural deaths increase either due to stabbing at taverns or through road accidents mainly involving j-walking pedestrians. A month after reading that report I lost my cousin just after the Soweto Derby. He was hit by a bus ferrying fans celebrating Orlando Pirates win over Kaiser Chiefs.

Although such things as homicide remain high especially among black males (like this young person who came to the hospital), fewer people are dying of AIDS and more TB cases are successfully managed. All of these are signs of a stabilising healthcare system. Yet lifestyle diseases are on the rise.

Sadly, this recent experience was nothing like that of the memorable events of 2014.

No teenager was rushed in with stab wounds but either the cleaning company has changed or the service level agreement has been torn. The conduct of security

guards remains the same – they just don't care.

The infection control manual might still be in the locker room – it just doesn't make sense that health workers could risk their lives too working in such conditions when there is a cleaning company and nursing assistants who could help elderly patients with soiled clothes. Used bandages are medical waste, not ornaments to decorate the floor.

Maybe the noisy gogo with fractures from a drunken spree discourages these workers, just like these teenage girls who return to birth second babies.

This is the South African story, the story of change and continuity, the tale of hope, rage, alcohol, apathy and activism, life and death.

Gogo lives. She collects her grant and chronic medication monthly. She feels very much affirmed by Mandela's children as she refers to the healthcare workers who treat her at Gandhi hospital.

The stabbing victim most likely died and so the cycle of social violence continues.

This is a paradox of improving healthcare in a violent and unequal society, the latter negating advancements in the former. It is also a paradox of service and care providers who consider themselves purely as functionaries in a job; who don't consider themselves as members of communities who pay them to dispense care and compassion to the best of their abilities. No ambulance, patient record or remedy exists for the social injury they inflict on the communities they are meant to serve.

They are depriving poor people of a better life as outlined in the National Development Plan.

The good story South Africa tells so often can do without the chapters induced by such dereliction of duty and disrespect for fellow citizens. It can be more captivating if social violence abated, thus reducing its burden on the overstretched healthcare system. ●

***Busani Ngcaweni is editor of Sizonqoba: Outliving AIDS in Southern Africa (AISA, 2016). He works at The Presidency. The views expressed in the article are private.**



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Dr Thulani Dlamini

Chief Executive Officer, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research

Dr Thulani Dlamini has been appointed Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) effective from 1 February 2017.

He holds a PhD in Chemistry from the University of the Witwatersrand and a Masters in Business Leadership from the University of South Africa. He has also completed advanced courses in several aspects of technology management in the chemical industry, offered by institutions such as the International Institute for Management Development in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Dlamini joined the CSIR in 2005 as the head of the National Laser Centre and in 2008 he was appointed Group Executive for Research and Development, a position he held until 2011 when he left the CSIR to join Sasol.

At Sasol he was the Executive Manager: Research and Development and later became Vice-President for Strategic Research and Technology.

Dlamini was instrumental in the establishment of the Photonics Initiative of South Africa and the development of a national strategy for photonics research, development and innovation. He is a member of the Academy of Science of South Africa and has served on a number of boards, including the Sasol Pension Fund, Automotive Industry Development Centre, as well as Sasol Technology UK and Netherlands.



Nazreen Pandor


Head: Communications and Stakeholder Management, Special Investigating Unit

Nazreen Pandor has been appointed as Head: Communications and Stakeholder Management at the Special Investigating Unit (SIU).

She holds a Bachelor of Arts majoring in law, english and philosophy as well as a Bachelor of Laws, both of which were awarded by University of Cape Town. Pandor is an admitted attorney of the High Court of South Africa.

Pandor is also a certified fraud examiner and qualified arbitrator, with extensive experience in the forensic environment, having led investigations in both the private and public sectors.

She was previously a National Business Development Director for a leading international audit firm, where she managed the national marketing and communications team and generated significant business development leads, which resulted in growth of their public sector division, including the forensics unit, which she also previously led.

In her new position Pandor will focus on business development, supported by external stakeholder management, brand management and the communications strategy for the SIU and identification of future business development through project opportunities in line with the strategy of the SIU. 



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Keep a close eye on your money

I often receive emails from people who are trying to locate their pension benefits from an employer several years after they have resigned, and I often wonder how people lose track of their money – that is until it happened to me.

Over the past few years I have neglected a very basic money management principle, which is creating a spreadsheet of all my investments and risk cover, including companies and account numbers, so that should something happen to me, my family has one piece of paperwork to show them where everything is.

A pleasant surprise

While pulling out all my files I came across a preservation fund that I had forgotten about. It was a transfer from a provident fund when I left an employer 16 years ago. The last statement I had on record was from 2008 and I realised that I had never notified them of my change of address.

Recently I contacted the company and discovered that the balance of R40 000 had grown to R102 000 over the past eight years, which is a compounding rate of 12 percent per year.

Firstly, that is a lot of money to have lost track of, and secondly, it shows what happens when you just put money away and leave it to grow; and why cashing out your retirement fund, even a small amount like R40 000, has a significant effect on your future.

That is an extra R100 000 that I can add to my retirement fund. Even if it grows at just four percent above inflation each year, for the next 20 years, it will be worth R223 000 in today's value, which will give me an extra R1 200 income each month in retirement.

Fortunately, due to changes in legislation as part of the retirement reform process, I can now transfer this money into my retirement annuity and consolidate it into a single investment.

I highly recommend you go through your paperwork and find all those policies and investments, make sure your details are up to date and write up a comprehensive list. Who knows, you may be in for a pleasant surprise.

How to track retirement benefits

If you contributed to a retirement fund you should have some paper trail, either a payslip or a statement.

If you have a statement, contact the company that administered the fund on your employer's behalf. If you only have a payslip, contact the human resources department of your former employer to get more details. Generally, they will put you onto the company that administers the fund.

If your employer no longer exists or you are unable to locate them, you can contact the Financial Services Board (FSB) at pension.queries@fsb.co.za or 012 346 5915.

Be very careful of using the services of people who charge a fee claiming that they can find unclaimed benefits on your behalf. The FSB is concerned about unethical practices where intermediaries offer to locate unclaimed funds for a fee, sometimes up to 20 percent of the amount of the benefit received by the member. Some of these intermediaries simply send their client's information to the FSB with a request that it finds out if there are benefits due to them. You can do this yourself without incurring any costs.

Some funds have employed tracing agents and intermediaries to find members on their behalf; these tracing agents have an agreement with the fund, which will also include the manner in which costs will be recovered. ●

Be on song this Autumn

This Autumn is all about layers, velvety fabrics, suede and leather. You can be on trend with these carefully selected timeless items that will make great additions to your wardrobe.



Bronx Vulcan suede, leather sneaker in chocolate, Zando, **R899.**



Leather Michaela lace-ups in mid grey, Errol Arendz, Spree.co.za, **R1 890.**



Brown, suede loafers, Fabiani, **R1 999.**



Nate leather, black Fossil watch, **R3 299.**



Camilla suede, leather cross-body bag in navy, Bloss and Co, Spree.co.za, **R1 119.**



Men's black, canvas sling bag, Big Blue, **R290.**



Steve Madden fringly suede brown heels, Zando, **R1 599.**



Turquoise and suede tassel necklace, Lacey Luck, Spree.co.za, **R160.**



Soviet shuttle leather belt, Zando, **R289.**



Soviet shuttle leather belt, Zando, **R289.**



G-Couture leather-look, detailed biker jacket, Zando, **R999.**

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The various industry sectors are covered by five chambers within the merSETA: Metal and Engineering, Auto Manufacturing, Motor Retail and Components Manufacturing, New Tyre Manufacturing and Plastics Manufacturing.

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Simply delicious recipes

Celebrity chef Siba Mtongana is all about delicious food with minimal fuss. And through her new cook-book, *Welcome to my Table*, she shares some of her mouth-watering recipes that can be whipped up in no time. This book is all about convenience and Mtongana shared three simple recipes with PSM to get you started.

Baked and stuffed salmon

Ingredients

- 3kg whole Norwegian salmon, filleted and pinboned, skin left on
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Seafood rub, to taste
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 6 tbsp butter
- 3-4 small onions, thinly sliced
- 1 green pepper, cored and sliced
- 1 yellow pepper, cored and sliced
- 200g cherry tomatoes
- A handful of fresh dill or oregano, roughly chopped.

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan.
2. Place each half of the fish on a layer of tin foil. Rub each half with garlic and dot with half the butter. Sprinkle over the seafood rub.

3. Layer both sides with the onions, peppers and tomatoes. Dot over the remaining butter and scatter with dill. Season with salt and pepper, if you wish.
4. Wrap both halves tightly in tinfoil. Place them in the oven and cook for 30 minutes or until when pressed in the thickest part of the salmon it begins to flake. The salmon should still be pink inside.
5. Place onto a serving plate and serve on the table still wrapped in the tin foil.

Red velvet delight

Ingredients

- 1 red velvet cake with cream cheese frosting (three layers)
- 500ml whipping cream
- 1 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 3 tablespoons caster sugar
- Juice of one lemon
- 500g raspberries
- 500g strawberries, sliced

For the garnish

- 50g white chocolate shavings
- 75g pomegranate rubies
- 3 tablespoons icing sugar, for dusting.





Method

1. Take the cake and carefully cut through the bottom layer of sponge and place the bottom layer aside.
2. Cut through the middle and top layers of cake and set aside yielding four pieces of cake.
3. Whip up the cream with sugar, vanilla and add the lemon juice.
4. Mix the raspberries and strawberries slices in a bowl. To assemble the delight, first put the bottom layer of the cake on a cake stand.
5. Spoon over a layer of whipped cream and top with a quarter amount of the mixed berries.
6. Now place the next section of the cake (one of the joined cake sections with frosting) on top.
7. Spoon with cream and top with berries; add the next layer and top with more cream and berries. Then add the last layer of the cake with the frosting top.
8. Finally pile a big spoonful of cream in the centre of the cake and top with berries.
9. Using a vegetable peeler, shave white chocolate over the delight and sprinkle with the pomegranate rubies.
10. Sprinkle with icing sugar just before serving.

Pineapple cooler

Ingredients

- 2 fresh pineapples, washed
- 175g white sugar
- 1 tbsp instant yeast
- 1.5l water

- 1 lemon, cut into slices
- Handful of fresh raspberries
- Pineapple chunks

Method

1. Remove the stems from the pineapples and discard.
2. Peel off the skins with a sharp knife and keep the pineapple flesh in the fridge until needed.
3. Place the pineapple skin in a large jug with the yeast and sugar.
4. Cover with water and stir continuously to dissolve the sugar and yeast.
5. Cover the jug with cling and leave in a warm place to ferment for 24 hours.
6. Strain the fermented pineapple mixture through a clean muslin cloth placed inside a strainer.
7. Discard the pineapple peels and other solids.
8. Either chill in the fridge until needed or if you are taking it to a picnic, transfer to plastic bottles and place in freezer to freeze overnight. Take it to a picnic frozen and they'll defrost en route.
9. When ready to serve, cut the pineapple flesh into chunks and add to the chilled cooler along with the lemon slices and raspberries. 



A photograph of Premier Ace Magashule, a man in a dark suit and red tie, walking outdoors. He is surrounded by several people, including police officers in blue uniforms with gold braiding and other officials in suits. The background shows a brick wall and some greenery. Overlaid on the image is the text 'FREE STATE LEADS THE WAY' in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

FREE STATE LEADS THE WAY

In 2016 Free State was host to a number of countries from around the world which will eventually bring significant changes to the province, and Premier Ace Magashule has indicated that he intends continuing the trend this year. During his State of the Province Address in Vrede, Mr. Magashule said the partnership between the Free State provincial government and countries from other continents will benefit the people of the province.

“Last year we successfully hosted inward trade and investment missions from Russia, China, Portugal and Turkey. These partnership-seeking missions continue to explore cooperation in various sectors to ultimately invest in our province. The second edition of the Free State Global Investors Trade Bridge, which was held in October 2016, bore witness to successful investment stories in various areas of the Free State, including the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Maluti-a-Phofung,” said Mr. Magashule.

The hosting of these events was not only aimed at financial rewards, but also at bringing about social cohesion.

“The inaugural Free State/Madeira Flower Festival took place in Parys in November 2016. The primary objective of this festival is to unlock further floriculture and horticulture opportunities for South Africa for both domestic and international export markets. Besides the economic spinoffs, it was an illustrious social cohesion platform which brought delegates from all walks of life, united behind a common mission. The festival had plentiful floral exhibitions and also featured a variety of family friendly entertainment,” he said.

Agreements are in place with a number of countries who have shown interest in investing in Free State.

“The Free State government has signed about 33 bilateral agreements with various states and governments in the world. We have used these people-to-people relations to harness opportunities in the areas of education and economic development. As part of these cooperation arrangements, we have more than 851 students studying in various universities across the world and some of the international companies have established operations in the country and are partnering with local black businesses.”

The province is ripe with opportunities for both women and young people and Premier Magashule has called on them to take full advantage of these opportunities.

“As at 31 January 2017, the Free State provincial government had spent R1.2-billion on SMMEs through our state procurements. Two thousand, six hundred and ninety three (2693) SMMEs benefitted from the province’s state procurement. Out of these SMMEs, 2101 (78%) are from Free State and 592 (22%) are from outside the province. Eight hundred and sixty two (32%) of these SMMEs are owned by women and 781 are owned by young people.”

He continued: “We call on young people, particularly black and female entrepreneurs, to take advantage of programmes and related incentives applicable to the manufacturing sector in order to influence the transformation of the economy and create jobs. There are 12 manufacturing companies that are currently housed in this industrial park,” he said.



caption

THE FIGHT AGAINST SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The government has intensified its fight against substance abuse and will continue doing so this year with the opening of a rehabilitation centre in eastern Free State.

“The menace of substance abuse poses a terrible threat to our society and also undermines our developmental and transformation agenda. Through various interventions and working with different stakeholders, we targeted and assisted the youth at the substance abuse treatment centers. We will continue to wage a rigorous campaign against substance abuse in our communities.

“In April this year, we will open the Beyers Naude Rehabilitation Centre in Clarens. After consultations with the family as well as the Angolan government, we will rename the Botshabelo Rehabilitation Centre after late Angolan struggle stalwart and former president Augustinho Neto,” the premier said.

FIGHTING CRIME

Crime, which is often the result of excessive alcohol and substance abuse, is also a priority for the provincial government. It is evident, according to crime statistics, that government’s efforts to combat crime have not been in vain.

“On 2 September 2016, the South African Annual Crimes Statistics for the period April 2015–March 2016 showed a decline in a number of crime categories for Free State. The statistics further maintain that the province is the number one crime-fighting province. There has been a significant decline in ... carjacking and truck hijacking,” he said, adding that curbing murder, which had shown a rapid increase, proved to be difficult.

HOUSING

The premier also said government has responded swiftly to address homelessness by acquiring land for housing. “The Sasolburg land parcel in Metsimaholo – at 494 hectares – was acquired and is currently being subdivided for future human settlement development. This has the potential of yielding in excess of 7 000 housing opportunities,” he said.

Thousands of people in Mangaung will also benefit and thus become home owners. “In Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality, 49 properties in Estoire totalling 192 hectares of land were acquired. Development of Caleb Motshabi in Mangaung will yield 7 500 housing units, vesting rights of ownership in many of our people,” he said.

SERVICE DELIVERY

Premier Magashule, while acknowledging that more still needs to be done to improve the lives of the people, also said that much has been done since 2009 when the current administration took office. It was for this reason that he feels that there is much to celebrate – and he plans on doing just that.

“We will convene a service delivery expo to showcase and highlight our service delivery achievements for both our municipalities and provincial government,” he said. One of those achievements is certainly the building of studios in different towns across the province.

“In our quest to develop new artists, we are building studios in Parys, Ficksburg, Welkom and Bethlehem to help artists record their music, poems and comedy so that their work can reach the broader creative sector market. The main hub for recordings will be in Kroonstad,” he said. The premier has also recently revealed that the Winnie Mandela museum in Brandfort is expected to be opened this year.

COMBATTING XENOPHOBIA

In a move that could quell tensions between locals and foreigners, the premier said young people and students would get exposure to different cultures and be sent to Angola, Tanzania, Mozambique, Cuba and other countries that played a role in the fight against apartheid.



Premier Ace Magashule



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Corolla gets better with time

Remember the old Toyota jingle: "Everything keeps going right, Toyota"? Now well into its 11th generation, and more than 50 years since being introduced to the market, there is no doubt that Toyota's Corolla has what it takes to ensure it keeps doing well.

Given the great, new innovative products from the competition, it is surprising that this model continues to do so well globally. Not only does it remain the world's best-selling nameplate in automotive history, it's still one of the most popular vehicles in the Toyota line-up.

Global appeal

The Corolla is currently sold in about 150 countries, including South Africa, and accounts for approximately 20 percent of Toyota's global sales.

Some interesting Corolla facts include:

- 50 years on, Corolla remains true to the model's original DNA.
- It's been part of South Africans' lives for more than 40 years.
- More than one million Corolla units have been produced and sold in South Africa alone.
- About 45 million have been sold globally.
- 100 cars were built and sold every hour throughout

the past 50 years – one every 36 seconds.

What makes the Corolla model so popular is the combination of quality, reliability and simple, no-nonsense styling and features that represents excellent value for money.

While styling has always been somewhat boring, it appeals to many conservative buyers for whom value-for-money is far more important. The fact that there is a Toyota dealership in every town adds to the sense of security. All this translates into the all-important resale value which many people hold very dear to, when buying a new car.

Competent performance

Picking up where the current generation left off, the 2017 Corolla continues to deliver competent performance and consistently good fuel economy, all of which translates into attractive cost-of-ownership benefits.

The engine line-up remains unchanged, featuring a choice of a 1.4 litre D-4D turbo-diesel and three petrol engines – a 1.3-litre Dual VVT-i unit, a 1.6-litre Dual VVT-i engine and the 1.8-litre Dual VVT-i unit. All engines are fitted with six-speed manual transmissions.

Revised tuning of the CVT transmission delivers shifts





that are quicker, crisper and smoother with better matching to engine speed. The CVT also helps generate suitable engine braking when downshifting, including a deceleration control that activates the fuel-cut system and holds the pulley ratio to maintain revs and enable easier re-acceleration.

Other changes that reduce noise, vibration and harshness include beading on the front fender liner to reduce turbulence inside the wheel housing, a thicker inner silencer for the dash panel and denser material for the floor insulation.

A range of upgrades

The new Corolla upgrades include exterior front- and rear-end refreshments and enhanced interior modifications to give it classier feel.

The small upper grille is flanked by new headlamp clusters and there is a revised front bumper incorporating a lower grille. The design is further accentuated by the LEDs (Exclusive models).

The engine hood has also been raised and the bumper corners have been deeply sculpted to enhance the Corolla's 3D effect.

To improve passive safety, both VSC and HAC have become standard on 1.6 models and above.

Rear styling has been enhanced through the adoption of LED tail lamp clusters (1.8-litre models) and a redesigned chrome garnish that further emphasises the vehicle's width.

Inside, the instrument panel has been updated with a layered structure that hides joins, along with a redesigned climate control panel and circular air vents.

The Audio Touch Screen/DVD increased from 6.1" to 7" (Prestige models) and other upscale touches in the interior include a piano-black centre-cluster surround and chrome-plated ornamentation.

The Corolla does everything it's supposed to do. It's comfortable, well equipped and affordably priced for pretty much any budget – R 286 000 for the entry level going up to R 349 400 for the 1.8 Exclusive AT. All models are covered by a five-year/90 000km service plan and a three-year/100 000km.

If you're looking for peace-of-mind motoring that will provide good resale value, the Corolla should be on your shortlist. ●

The Daily Assortment of Astonishing Things and Other Stories

The short story form has always played a pivotal role in the landscape of South African literature. Literary greats such as Can Themba, Eskia Mphahlele and Nadine Gordimer have all used the short story form in their literary careers and have all written classics.

It is therefore not surprising that the current Caine Prize for African Writing was awarded to talented South African writer Lidudumalingani for his short story "Memories We Lost". This short story is as memorable as the writer's name.

It is a personal account of two sisters, one with a mental condition and the other as the observer. The story's power rests in the fact that it is written in the first person, through the eyes of a young girl trying to make sense of her sister's condition. The name of the condition is not revealed at first and the reader is then taken on a stressful journey around the girl's village.

"Men and boys emerged from their houses carrying their knobkerries as if out to hunt an animal. Women and children stayed behind, frightened children clutching their mother's nightgowns. The men and boys, disorientated and peeved, shuffled in the dark and split into small groups as instructed by a man who at the absence of a clear plan crowned himself a leader," reads the short story.

The story also rests in the innocence of the narrator; her choice of words is crucial. She is delicate, as if still afraid of this 'thing' that takes hold of her sister's body. She has a quiet resistance in her as she tries to protect her sister from her mother and the rest of the village.

"The medication and the rituals did not work, my mother said. The way she saw it, my sister needed to go see

Nkunzi. This thing is going to come back, she said. Nkunzi was a sangoma from a remote village in which houses were lined miles apart from one another; he was famous for 'baking' people like my sister, claiming to cure them. It is said that whenever there was a car approaching his village, people would shout for Nkunzi to come out. Your demons are here, they would say," it continues.

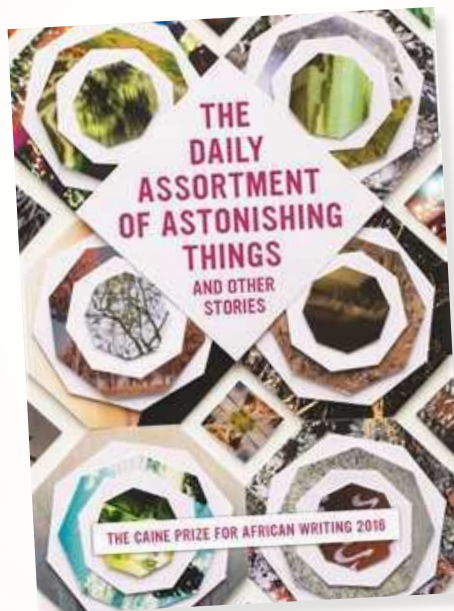
It is after this realisation that the young narrator decides to save her sister from the bondage of their mother and the village.

The mental condition is given a name towards the end of the story. The confusion and ignorance of the village is then laid bare after this realisation. After that, the reader can now view *Memories We Lost* as an advocate for mental awareness.

The Daily Assortment of Astonishing Things and Other Stories anthology is given depth and flesh by writers that were shortlisted alongside South Africa's Lidudumalingani. This collection brings together the five 2016 shortlisted stories, along with stories written at the Caine Prize Writers' Workshop.

The other writers shortlisted for the prize were Bongani Kona from Zimbabwe for his short story "At your Requiem", Tope Folarin from Nigeria for "Genesis", Lesley Nneka Arimah from Nigeria for "What it Means When a Man Falls" *From the Sky* and Abdul Adan (Somalia/Kenya) for "The Lifebloom Gift".

If you have always had a heart for the short story form, this collection is one of the important ones; as it tackles issues that are usually shunned by society. It is also well written, with traces of magical realism, brilliant prose and beautiful African voices. ●



Source: <http://caineprize.com/>

PAMPER PERFECTION



1

Everyone deserves a little bit of pampering but many of us have a million things on our plate and don't have the time to go out to a day spa. PSM has selected some products to help you set up a spa in the comfort of your own home. This includes treatments, body scrubs, foot spas to tasty treats to enjoy while you wait for your mask to dry. So sit back, relax and get pampered.

1. The Body Shop almond milk and honey body scrub, 250ml, **R190**.
2. Crabtree & Evelyn Fine Foods all butter lemon and white chocolate biscuits, 200g, **R250**.
3. Woolworths Bombay rose foam bath, R180.
4. Sorbet hydrating foot mask, **R53**.
5. Lancôme juicy shaker lip gloss, **R270**.
6. Sorbet fab foot spa 8-in-1 treatment, **R450**.
7. Vichy thermal cleansing oil, 125ml, **R269**.
8. Bioderma Hdrabio moisturising mask, 75ml, **R280**.
9. The Body Shop honey mania hand cream, 30ml, **R60**.



3



2



4



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8



6



GEMS adds value with a socially responsible healthcare cover option

Efficient and effective use of health resources – a global imperative

It is no revelation that healthcare remains a scarce and precious resource, both in South Africa and globally. Similarly, the pool of funds available for the healthcare of any medical scheme's membership is finite and must be put to the best possible use to ensure effective cover for all lives under a scheme's care.

Last year the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS), noted rising healthcare costs in the country alongside other medical schemes. "We explored a number of avenues for managing expenditure without compromising on the benefits our members are accustomed to, as GEMS prides itself on providing affordable quality healthcare cover for public servants and their families," says Dr Gunvant Goolab, Principal Officer of GEMS.

"We know that for our members, and indeed most South Africans, every rand counts and therefore any contribution increase would be cause for concern. To help alleviate such financial pressures for members, we had to provide viable alternatives to ensure GEMS adhered to its commitment to provide members with choice and value.

"Key to the effective management of medical scheme resources is minimising costs that are unrelated to the central responsibility of funding healthcare. GEMS already runs efficiently, with the Council for Medical Schemes' latest annual report showing that the Scheme's non-healthcare expenditure is only 5.1%. This means that for every R100 GEMS receives in contributions, R94.90 is spent on our members' healthcare needs. It is worth noting that this is significantly lower than the other restricted medical schemes whose average for non-healthcare expenditure stands at 6.3%," Dr Goolab notes.

"As a socially responsible player in the South African health arena, the Scheme is acutely aware of the scarcity of healthcare resources in our country. As a keen supporter of the principle of universal access to quality healthcare, we have long explored models that hold promise for maximising existing health resources without compromising on standards of care."

Analysis of GEMS claims revealed that more than two-thirds of members routinely visit the same general practitioner when they need medical care.



The use of primary healthcare services is globally recognised as key to making healthcare more accessible by directing patients to the appropriate level of care, thereby making the most use of rare skills and limited healthcare resources for the greatest benefit to patients overall.

“GEMS saw an opportunity to respond to members who follow this path when accessing healthcare, which led to the introduction of our new Emerald Value Option (EVO). In terms of this benefit option, members can access the same benefits as on our very popular Emerald Option at a reduced rate if they agree to use nominated network healthcare providers, and access healthcare services through their nominated general practitioner.”

This means that GEMS members on EVO first need to visit their nominated GP on the GEMS network for healthcare, and the GP co-ordinates their care through referrals to network healthcare specialists if required. Where hospitalisation is called for, members and their dependants on EVO must make use of network hospitals.

“Members on EVO therefore have access to quality healthcare at a more affordable rate, while practising responsible principles that will ultimately preserve resources, prevent unnecessary waste and thereby help minimise contribution increases in future,” Dr Goolab says.

“The new EVO has proved popular with members, with over 25 000 having signed up since we started marketing this new product, which began in January 2017. While the benefit option change health management closed in December 2016, we have extended the deadline for members to migrate to EVO to mid-March 2017 to accommodate the significant interest we have seen in this new product,” Dr Goolab concludes.



Cut back on “the Forgotten Killer”

Many South Africans are unwittingly putting their lives at risk by eating too much salt. This can lead to dangerous health conditions, including high blood pressure, which can lead to impaired kidney function and stroke.

With World Salt Awareness Week, from 20 to 26 March, the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) is encouraging its members and the public to reduce their salt intake. The theme of this year's awareness campaign is “Salt: The Forgotten Killer” because many people do not fully realise how damaging excessive salt can be for the body.

“There is far greater general awareness about the negative health effects of smoking, alcohol, sugar and saturated fats, than those associated with salt,” says GEMS Executive: Healthcare Management, Dr Vuyokazi Gqola.

Think before adding salt

“Many people are not even aware of how much salt they are consuming because there is a lot of salt hidden in the food we eat, especially in processed and convenience foods. This means that we need to think twice before adding salt to food when cooking or eating, and also be mindful of the salt or sodium content listed in the nutritional information on food packaging.”

She explains that our bodies need a small amount of sodium, contained in salt, but if there is too much salt in a person's diet then they have a higher chance of developing high blood pressure, which is also known as hypertension.

“Hypertension is a leading cause of heart disease and stroke, and reducing the amount of salt in your diet can significantly help to diminish your risk.

“Many people are not even aware of how much salt they are consuming because there is a lot of salt hidden in the food we eat”



High blood pressure is sometimes referred to as 'the silent killer' because often people who have this condition experience no symptoms until they have already sustained damage to their bodies, including kidney failure, visual impairment, cardiovascular problems and dementia."

The generally accepted daily allowance for salt is five grams, which is one level teaspoon, says Dr Gqola.

"This is the total amount of salt you should have in a single day, including the salt already contained in food. If you eat a packet of salty chips containing five grams of salt, then you should ideally not have any more salt or salt-containing foods that day."

Understanding salt content

The first step to reducing salt in your diet is to pay attention to how much there is already included in food.

"Fortunately, most food products in South Africa today have a list of nutritional information on the packaging," she notes.

Usually the nutritional information will include the amount of sodium in the product.

"The recommended daily limit for sodium is 2.3mg, which is roughly the amount contained in one teaspoon of salt. When you start to pay attention to how much sodium there already is in so many foods, this can help you to develop a healthy balance in your approach to salt that will gradually become part of your lifestyle by informing your dietary choices."

Foods that usually contain a significant amount of salt, and should therefore be eaten only in moderation, include bacon, cheese, instant gravy, olives, salami, anchovies, smoked meat and fish, salted fish, pickles, biltong, salted nuts, soy sauce, and stock cubes, among others. Many restaurant foods and supermarket ready-made meals are also high in sodium. ●

Tips for reducing salt intake:

- Check how much salt is in the products you buy by reading nutritional information pertaining to sodium on food packaging and making responsible dietary decisions accordingly.
- Avoid adding salt during cooking, rather add fresh herbs or lemon juice to enhance the flavour.
- Gradually reduce the amount of salt you add to your food. This will give your taste buds a chance to adjust and soon you won't miss it.
- Instead of eating salty snacks such as chips, salted nuts, pretzels or biltong, try vegetable sticks, cherry tomatoes, raw unsalted nuts and raisins.
- Add up your total salt consumption, and cut down to less than a teaspoon of salt per day, which equals 2.3mg of sodium per day.





ACCREDITATION ASSURING CONFORMITY



Chief Executive Officer: Mr Ron Josias

The South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) is the sole national body mandated through the Accreditation for Conformity Assessment, Calibration and Good Laboratory Practice Act (Act 19 of 2006) to carry out accreditations in respect of conformity assessment. Accreditation is a third-party attestation related to conformity assessment bodies conveying formal demonstration of their competence to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks.

VISION

To pioneer and lead the future of accreditation in Africa and deliver services with a spirit of excellence.

MISSION

To create an impartial and transparent mechanism for organisations to independently demonstrate their competence and facilitate the beneficial exchange of goods, services and

knowledge, and provide a service that is recognised as equitable to best international practice while reflecting the demographics of South Africa in all that we do.

SANAS OPERATES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS, CRITERIA, RULES AND REGULATIONS LAID DOWN IN THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS:

- The Accreditation for Conformity Assessment, Calibration and Good Laboratory Practice Act, 2006 (Act 19 of 2006)
- The requirements of the international standard ISO/IEC 17011: Conformity Assessment – General Requirements for Accreditation Bodies Accrediting Conformity Assessment Bodies
- The requirements as stipulated in the Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) and the Multilateral Recognition Agreement (MLA) by the international bodies
- The regulations provisions as stipulated by various national regulatory authorities that we provide accreditation support for

SANAS OFFERS ACCREDITATION OF:

- Calibration laboratories
 - Proficiency testing service providers
 - Producers of certified reference materials
 - Testing laboratories, which include: Medical, Veterinary, Forensic, Pharmaceutical, Chemical and Microbiological, Physical and Mechanical laboratories
 - Blood transfusion services
 - Verification laboratories
 - Inspection bodies
 - Certification bodies
 - B-BBEE rating agencies
 - Any other type of body that may be added to SANAS' scope of activity
- SANAS is also recognised as the national body to monitor GLP/GCP compliance with the principles adopted by the OECD for GLP facilities or the VICH principles of GCP.

SANAS' STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES ARE TO:

- Provide accreditation support for industrial development and the protection of the health and safety of the public and the South African environment
- Promote the acceptance of SANAS-accredited results nationally and amongst global partners to advance South Africa's trade and economic development objectives
- Support regional integration and relations to advance South Africa's trade, industrial policy and economic development objectives
- Improve SANAS' operational efficiency to deliver services with a spirit of excellence



Board Chairman: Mr Prags Govender

MANDATE AND FUNCTIONS

SANAS is the sole national accreditation body that provides an internationally recognised and effective accreditation and good laboratory practice (GLP) compliance monitoring system that enables the Republic of South Africa to do the following:

- Accredit or monitor organisations falling within its scope of activity for GLP-compliance purposes
- Promote accreditation as a means of facilitating international trade and enhancing the Republic's economic performance and transformation
- Promote the competence and equivalence of GLP-compliant facilities

IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE ITS MANDATE, THE ACT EMPOWERS SANAS TO PERFORM THE FOLLOWING FUNCTIONS:

- Promote the organisation as the sole national accreditation body in its scope of activity
- Encourage and promote the accreditation of calibration, testing and verification laboratories, certification bodies, inspection bodies, rating agencies and any other type of body that may be added to its scope of activity
- Encourage and promote GLP compliance with the principles adopted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) for GLP facilities

- Promote the acceptance of its activities and those of all bodies accredited by SANAS or its international counterparts
- Promote the recognition of accredited bodies by users of conformity assessments
- Liaise with regional and international standard bodies and with technical regulatory and metrology organisations in respect of any matter related to accreditation
- Liaise with national regulators in respect of any matter related to accreditation
- Promote the use of accredited bodies to facilitate trade
- Advise national, regional and international organisations on the conditions for accreditation and on other issues related to accreditation
- Establish and maintain a register of all accredited organisations in South Africa
- Initiate, negotiate, conclude and maintain multilateral recognition arrangements
- Support government in activities on multilateral recognition arrangements
- Obtain and maintain membership of national or international organisations that may assist SANAS in achieving its objects and actively participating in such organisations
- Participate in formulating international and regional guidelines and standards to facilitate the accreditation process
- Formulate and implement national guidelines and standards to facilitate the accreditation process
- Promote recognition and protect the use of the SANAS logo nationally and internationally
- Promote and protect regional and international arrangement logos, such as those of the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF)
- Establish appropriate technical committees
- Investigate methods of facilitating trade through accreditation

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER SERVICES

The knowledge transfer department provides training services to potential and existing accreditation clients. Training services are provided in the form of annual scheduled courses, national-provincial/regional, national and international and in-house courses (at a client's premises). The latest course schedule is available on the SANAS website: <http://home.sanas.co.za>



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At home *in the hills*



The Kruger Lowveld region of Mpumalanga must be one of the most scenic in South Africa.

This area is known as the Panorama Route for good reason. The mountainous terrain is carpeted in the dark green of one of the world's largest man-made forests. Patches of breathtaking indigenous forest with their towering yellowwood trees and prolific birdlife nestle into steep valleys, and voluptuous waterfalls tumble down every open cliff face.

Fanie Botha Hiking Trail

The Kruger Lowveld, named because of its proximity to one of the area's greatest attractions, the Kruger National Park, is an absolute paradise for nature lovers and outdoors enthusiasts. A well-known multi-day hiking trail traverses the forested slopes between Sabie and Graskop, and this was one of the highlights of our visit.

The Fanie Botha Hiking Trail was one of the first hik-

ing trails to be established in South Africa, and is still regarded as one of the best. Its full length covers five days of hiking with overnight accommodation in stone huts. There are a variety of ways to tackle this trail if the full five days isn't quite your cup of tea, with various start-and-end-points. After learning that the last day's leg is a slightly horrifying 23km, the decision to only complete part of the trail was a very easy one!

As usual, after weeks of sunshine and indeed partial drought conditions in the area, the day that we were to begin our hike dawned cold and wet. It is a bit of a joke of ours that everywhere we go we seem to bring the rain, but conditions like these on a hiking trail are less than ideal, considering that the terrain we were to cover was very steep and slippery at the best of times.

We set out about two hours behind schedule, another trait of ours, and then proceeded to cover the first few kilometres at an exceptionally slow pace. The simple rea-



Rivers, streams and waterfalls abound in these hills.



Setting off along the wet paths of the Fanie Botha Hiking Trail.

son for this was that the area we were hiking through was just too breathtaking not to stop for photographs. The trail very quickly left the starting point on a dusty forestry road and entered a magnificent indigenous forest. All of a sudden, we were the only people in a world of towering centuries-old trees, quiet underbrush and bird calls echoing through the swirling mist.

Waterfall wonders

A few hours later but not many kilometres on, we heard the sound of running water. In these hills that isn't uncommon. There just seems to be water everywhere – dripping off the tips of leaves, gathered in the moss on the forest floor or pooled in the hollow of a rock. As we pressed on, the sound only grew louder until we found ourselves making the slightly treacherous descent on a very slippery path, the gradient of which seemed to mirror that of the waterfall on the opposite cliff face. It was our very own secret waterfall, in the middle of an enchanted, mist-bathed forest!

The frigid air did little to encourage us to go for a swim, but it did make an excellent lunch spot. Tomatoes taste even better on a cheese and tomato sandwich after they have been washed in crisp mountain water although that might have also been the hunger generated by a few hours' worth of exercise.

Hunting for the hut

I am ashamed to admit that even such breathtaking environs didn't stop the inevitable "Are we nearly there

yet?" sentiment which neither of us dared to be the first to admit. It was with a great sense of relief though that we made the final ascent and found ourselves out of the forest and in a grassland bordered by pine tree plantations. The hut was surely close.

Imagine our dismay at passing a distance marker cruelly declaring we still had a further six of the 13 kilometres to go. What could we do except eat the last of our poorly-rationed hiking snacks and press on?

Do anything for long enough and consistently enough, and you will reach your goal. For us, it was placing one foot in front of the other enough times that we'd reach our little cabin in the woods. Eventually, at the bottom of a hill and through the trees we made out its welcome shape. The final curve of the path was just too much for us and we cut off through the pine trees towards the hut and finally, we were there.

With no electricity, all there was to do was shower, cook a delicious camping meal of smoked chicken and couscous, warm our hands on a cup of steaming hot chocolate and then hit the sack. That, and reflect on our location – a stone hut in a grassy clearing in the forest with mountains all around us and fresh air to fill our lungs with – this was the reason we had come.

Downhill and off the track

I'm sure I am not the only one who finds that hiking packs are never quite as comfortable on day two. With the only way out being on foot we had little choice the next morning but to set out for home after the most ➡

solid night's rest we'd had for a long while. Luckily this time it was all downhill.

I am a little embarrassed to admit that we somehow missed the path a little way into our return journey and ended up completing the rest of the hike on winding forestry roads through the pine plantation. Embarrassed, and a bit disappointed too, considering the amazing natural forest scenery that we no doubt missed out on. I have to add that that was completely our own fault, as the trail was clearly marked over its entire length.

Despite losing the path on our return leg and the miserable weather, we thoroughly enjoyed our time on the Fanie Botha Hiking Trail. Although it is maybe overlooked as an activity to complete during a tour of the area because of the time it takes, it is definitely one that should be added to your itinerary if getting out and exploring some incredible natural scenery is what you're about.

What to know before you go


Sabie is the best town to overnight in before and after your hike, although Graskop is only 30km away and within easy driving distance. Both towns are just over a four-hour drive from Johannesburg, on the N4 via

Nelspruit and then following the R37 towards Sabie and from there the R532 to Graskop. Both Sabie and Graskop have plenty of accommodation options for all budgets.

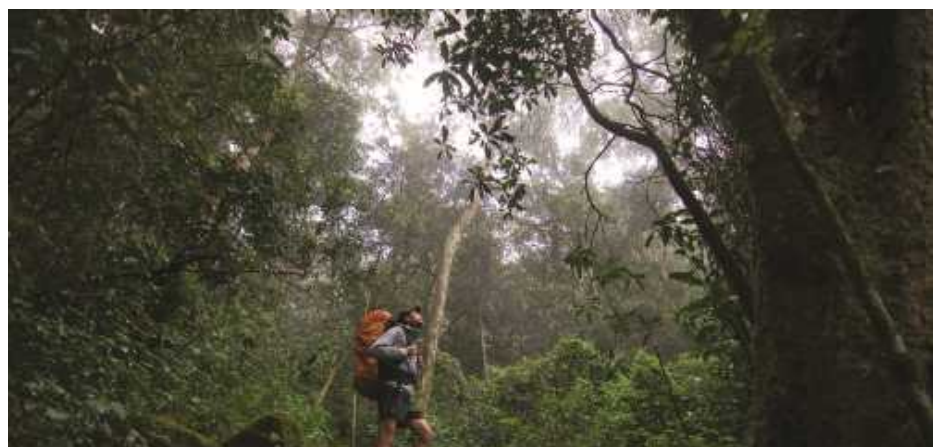
The Fanie Botha Hiking Trail has some fairly steep and strenuous sections, and is best suited to people with at least a moderate level of fitness. The five-day hike can be broken into a range of two, three, four or the full five night route, depending on your fitness level and time available.

For more information on the hike and its various route options or to make a booking contact: Komatiland Eco-Tourism on 013 754 2724 or email: ecotour@klf.co.za.

The best time to complete the hike is in the spring or autumn months of September-October and March-May respectively. Summer temperatures can be exceptionally hot while winters very cold overnight.

Sabie and Graskop are situated in an incredibly scenic area and after the hike, you should spend some time exploring the rest of the Panorama Route. Take in sights like God's Window and the Blyde River Canyon or learn about South Africa's gold rush history in the historical town of Pilgrim's Rest before continuing on to a safari in the Kruger National Park. 

The area around Sabie and Graskop has plenty of other natural sights to enjoy, such as the Lisbon Falls outside Graskop.





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