

# PublicSector

## MANAGER

### Preferential Procurement

Are we doing  
enough?

### Flying high

Major Louw among  
the first women to  
qualify as military  
free-fallers

### Breaking barriers

Another first for  
Justice Maya



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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



# Addressing the energy crisis

**A**fter the unfortunate inconvenience created by the intensity of load shedding in July, government has sent a positive message to South Africa – and the world – that it is serious about addressing the energy crisis in the short and long term.

The news that immediate action will be taken to reduce the severity and frequency of load shedding was welcomed by citizens who were fed up with being plunged into darkness, and by businesses wary of what the future holds because of the massive impact it has on economic growth.

President Cyril Ramaphosa's announcement that the electric-

ity supply industry will be transformed is a welcome relief. There have been some moves in this direction over the past few years, including municipalities being permitted to procure electricity from independent power producers (IPPs).

Government is further opening the market by making investment more attractive through doubling independent renewable energy procurement from 2 600 megawatts (MW) to 5 200 MW in Bid Window 6, the upcoming electricity supply tender. In addition, licensing requirements for private energy projects that feed into the grid will be scrapped and other legal and regulatory



**Mondli Gungubele**  
Minister in The Presidency





requirements for new generation capacity will be relaxed for a limited period.

This will positively impact the economy – which depends on a stable supply of electricity; and the environment – which is buckling under the strain of global warming as a result of the effects of fossil fuels.

Apart from measures taken to increase private sector investment, the energy plan announced by President Ramaphosa will see an acceleration in the procurement of generation capacity from renewables, gas and battery storage; improved performance of Eskom's power stations; and more businesses and households installing roof-top solar energy.

The plan involves all of society, from the private sector – through renewable energy investment and the provision of human capital; to the public sector – through the creation of the National Energy Crisis Committee to urgently address the crisis; the South African Police Service – through an Eskom partnership to prevent theft, sabotage and vandalism of infrastructure; to households and businesses – through an incentivising feed-in tariff that will encourage them to sell excess power to Eskom.

To ensure increased energy procurement in the short term, government also plans to import energy from neighbouring countries – talks with Botswana are already underway. Power will also be bought from private

producers and existing private generators, such as mines, paper mills and shopping centres.

Plans are underway to ensure that IPP projects that were given the green light in Bid windows 4 and 5 – and which are not yet feeding power into the grid – reach commercial close soon. Future bid windows will also be expedited.

To get power stations performing above the current rate of 59%, repair and refurbishment will be prioritised and maintenance budgets increased. In addition, red tape will be cut to ensure spares needed are speedily procured. None of this will do much good without skilled people overseeing operations, which is why government is roping in experts to help

turnaround power stations.

What can we, as public servants, do to support government initiatives to stabilise the energy sector? Firstly, let us create awareness of the steps being taken to lift the dark cloud that hovers over our nation by speaking to people about government's new interventions. We can also help, in our personal level, by installing solar panels, using electricity sparingly and advocating for others to do the same. Lastly, let us not look the other way if we are aware of any illegal connections.

In short, we should answer the President's call to be part of the solution and contribute in whatever way we can to end this national crisis.



**Phumla Williams,**  
GCIS Director-General.

# Celebrating Women's Month

**W**omen's Month is rooted in a historic event that unfolded in 1956 when more than 20 000 women of all races shrugged off years of colonial oppression, institutionalised racism and societal patriarchy to collectively protest the pass laws.

However, it is as firmly rooted in the actions of the extraordinary women of today who walk an equally trailblazing path – the remarkable entrepreneurs, leaders, scientists, activists and businesswomen.

Despite the daunting challenges of poverty, inequality, gender-based violence (GBV) and toxic masculinity, they have assumed the mantle from the women of 66 years ago. They too challenge the order of things, take risks and inspire.

In the Public Service, Tsakani Maluleke, the first female Auditor-General; Justice Mandisa Maya, the first female Deputy Chief Justice; and Lieutenant General Tebello Mosikili, the first female Deputy National Police Commissioner – among a long list of others – are worthy ambassadors for the 2022 Women's Month theme: "Women's socio-economic rights and empowerment: building back better for improved resilience".

Since that dramatic turning point in South Africa's history in 1994, when democracy triumphed over apartheid, government has been committed to empowering women. Former President Nelson Mandela once said, "As long as outmoded ways of thinking prevent women from making a meaning-

ful contribution to society, progress will be slow." His thinking was reflected in the first Cabinet, of which around 27% were women – a far cry from the under 3% pre-1994.

Today, women fill almost half the seats in Parliament. Close to half of our judges and magistrates are women and 44% of senior management posts in the Public Service are filled by women.

On paper, everything that can be done to advance women is being done. Female entrepreneurs and farmers benefit from government funding and empowerment programmes; 40% of the public procurement budget goes to women-owned businesses; women have access to contraception and safe abortions in the public health system; and

the discrimination against women based on motherhood, sexual orientation – or simply gender – is outlawed.

But underneath these policies and laws, lies the rot of male dominance and GBV, which undermines South Africa's noble efforts to have women take their rightful place next to men.

More women than men are unemployed, more girls leave school early to help run their homes and look after other family members and women on average earn less than men for the same job.

And then there is the constant fear that women live with. Between January and March, nearly 14 000 sexual offences were reported to the police. Of these, over 10 000 were rapes.

We refuse to accept that this will remain the norm for South Africa's women.

Over the past few months, government has introduced new laws to combat GBV and to provide greater support to victims of this scourge. In short, these will give more protection to GBV victims, ensure stricter bail conditions

and harsher sentences for perpetrators, give the police greater flexibility in responding to GBV calls, strengthen the National Register of Sex Offenders and make it a legal obligation to report the sexual abuse of a vulnerable person.

The second Presidential Summit on GBV and Femicide, to be held in November, will allow society to judge the effectiveness of these new measures – and to propose ways to address identified shortcomings.

This high-level gathering of public, private and civil soci-

ety shows the seriousness of government's determination to ensure women's rights – but what must be remembered is that real change needs to start at a grassroots level, by changing mindsets in our homes, schools and workplaces.

Together, we can create the South Africa dreamt of by Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Albertina Sisulu, Sophia Williams-De Bruyn and the thousands of women who so bravely stood beside them at the Union Buildings.





# Maya set to continue transforming the judiciary

Justice Mandisa Muriel Lindelwa Maya has again made history – this time, with her appointment as Deputy Chief Justice.

“Maya will contribute to the ongoing process of transformation in the judiciary and serve as a beacon of hope for scores of young women”, said President Cyril Ramaphosa when he announced her appointment.

“This will make [young women] believe that South Africa is a country of possibilities, regardless of gender, social or economic circumstances,” he added.

## Breaking barriers

Currently the President of the Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA), Justice Maya is no stranger to breaking barriers and making history. She has a

solid track record as a leader in the judiciary.

She was the first woman to hold the positions of Deputy President of the SCA (2015) and President of the SCA (2017); the first female chancellor of the University of Mpumalanga (2021); and wrote the first recorded judgment of a superior court in South Africa in isiXhosa (*AfriForum versus Chairperson of the Council of*

*the University of South Africa*).

Justice Maya was born on 20 March 1964 in Tsolo, Eastern Cape. She holds a BProc from the then University of Transkei (now Walter Sisulu University), a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of KwaZulu-Natal and a Master of Laws degree in labour law from Duke University in the United States.

When she walks into her new office on 1 September, Justice Maya will bring with her over two decades of experience as a distinguished judicial officer.

She worked as an attorney clerk at Dazana Mafungo Inc in 1987, before becoming a court interpreter and prosecutor at Mthatha Magistrate's Court in 1998. She then became a legal policy counsel and lobbyist for the Women's Legal Defense Fund in Washington DC. Justice Maya then held numerous other positions before becoming a judge at Mthatha High Court in 2000. She took on numerous acting judge positions at various courts before becoming a judge at the SCA in 2006.





## Significant contribution to justice

When asked about her most significant contribution to the law and the pursuit of justice, during her interview for the position of Deputy Chief Justice, Justice Maya said she believes her experience as a black woman from a rural background provided the judiciary with a critical diversity of thought and valuable insights into a complex, vulnerable and huge component of society.

"I have, over the years, encouraged a number of women to make themselves available for judicial appointment and simultaneously nagged various heads of court to give women acting judicial appointments. I have also offered support to those colleagues once appointed, as I believe mentorship of new judges is crucial in strengthening the judicial institution," she said.

"I have a deep respect for the rule of law, and I am committed to the values enshrined in our Constitution. For this reason and love for my country, I allowed myself to be persuaded to become a judge at the relatively young age of 35," added Justice Maya.

She also raised concerns about gender transformation in the judiciary during her interview.

"I am the only woman head of court in this country at the moment and this body has an opportunity today to change this dismal picture at least insofar as this one vacancy is concerned," she said.

## Industry welcomes appointment

The Law Society of South Africa (LSSA) has welcomed Justice Maya's appointment.

On behalf of the attorneys' profession, LSSA President Mabaeng Lenyai said the appointment is a historic moment for gender representation.

"In her capacity as President of the SCA, Justice Maya displayed the qualities befitting the position of Deputy Chief Justice. She has displayed these qualities over a number of years," he said.

The Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities described the appointment as a giant and notable step in the fight for gender equality in South Africa.

"Judge Maya is a capable judge who, without a doubt, will advance the interests of justice and of women in the judiciary," said Committee

Chairperson Nonhlanhla Ncube-Ndaba.

## Inspirational award winner

Justice Maya has received numerous awards during her career, including the Duke Law Alumni Association International Award in 2020; LLD (Honoris Causa) Nelson Mandela University in 2018; LLD (Honoris Causa) Walter Sisulu University in 2019 LLD (Honoris Causa) University of Fort Hare in 2020; as the Editorial Advisory Board Member of the *South African*

*Law Journal* in 2020; South African Chapter of the International Association of Women Judges Recognition Award for contribution to gender transformation in the judiciary in 2010 and 2016; and is a recipient of the South African Women Lawyers Association History and Icon Programme in 2012.

She was also the recipient of a Commonwealth Foundation Fellowship in 2002, Fulbright Scholarship from 1989 to 1990 and Georgetown University Law and Gender Fellowship Programme in 1990.

Besides all her admirable career milestones, Justice Maya has also made her mark in numerous other ways, including:

- Judicial Service Commission member.
- South African Judicial Education Institute council member.
- South African Chapter of the International Association of Women Judges: Founding Member (2002), Deputy President (2008 -2010) and President since 2018.
- International Association of Women Judges: Regional Director: West and Southern Africa.
- Duke University (USA) Bolch Judicial Institute Leadership council member.
- University of the Free State Law Faculty board member.
- *Yearbook of South African Law* advisory board member.
- *South African Law Journal* advisory board member.
- National Bar Examinations board member.
- South African Law Reform Commission Chairperson.
- Commonwealth Association of Law Reform Commissions member.
- Lawyers Against Violence patron.
- South African Institute for Advanced Constitutional, Public, Human Rights and International Law trustee.

# Technology drives SIU into new age of excellence

**T**ech-savvy and innovative, Tumelo Zwane is behind the digital transformation of the country's anti-corruption and forensic investigation agency, the Special Investigating Unit (SIU).

With an illustrious career spanning over two decades in the Information Technology (IT) sector, Zwane (46) is the Chief Information Officer (CIO) of the SIU. On her shoulders rests a formidable task – helping to realise President Cyril Ramaphosa's vision of restoring the credibility of the SIU by harnessing the power of the latest technology to fast-track investigations.

Since her appointment in 2018, she has devoted her energy to driving the agency into the digital age – a process that was heightened when COVID-19 hit South Africa's shores and people had to find new ways of doing business. Zwane stepped to the fore, leading digital investigations and helping to accelerate the adoption of technology.



Fortunately, she says much had been achieved before the 2020 lockdown. "During COVID-19, we were already able to access our services offsite, which meant

investigators were able to access files from wherever they were."

Zwane is among only a small percentage of women excelling in the male-dominated IT

sector. Recalling her journey to the top, she says she was passionate about IT from a young age. It is an ever-evolving space, she says, and this excites her.

The Gqeberha-born specialist studied IT at the then Rand Afrikaans University (now the University of Johannesburg). She has worked for various companies in the public sector, including Telkom, where she specialised in desktops, HP servers and managing a data centre. Along the way, Zwane says she attended several training sessions, which sharpened her skills and attracted the interest of headhunters who, she says, were lured by the fact that she was a woman excelling in a man's world.

She was called on to join the State Information Technology Agency – the largest employer and consumer of IT products and services in the country – to run its IT service desk conference server.

Then it was off to the South African Revenue Service, which approached her to manage its high-tech projects, such as account management and server support to ensure service delivery. She was also responsible for improving customer agreement and satisfaction.

Zwane says it was her passion and dedication to her work that made these institutions want her to join their teams. "It humbles me that I have been entrusted with huge responsibilities."

The pace of technological innovation keeps her on her toes at the SIU, she says, because she has to constantly find ways to improve its systems to deliver services more efficiently.

Zwane joined the SIU at a critical time, after President Ramaphosa had announced that the institution needed to be rebuilt to better execute its mandate to eradicate corruption.

The agency investigates serious allegations of corruption, malpractice and maladministration in the administration of State institutions. It also recovers stolen state funds, through civil litigation.

As the CIO, Zwane is responsible for leading transformation, creating a clear strategy, and integrating it with the SIU's information and technology operations. She says her strategy is focused on three key pillars: Stabilisation, optimisation and digitisation to drive new efficiencies, boost performance and keep pace

with the demands of the digital world.

"We had to make sure the infrastructure was stable to improve optimisation," she says, explaining that everything within the institution is digitised, which allows for easy access to information by SIU investigators.

## Combating corruption through technology

Zwane says while the SIU's mandate is to investigate, it constantly looks for other proactive ways to combat corruption through technology.

To this end, data analysis and real-time data availability are being strengthened. "Unlike before, when investigations took longer, we now have forensic labs that we use. We have a platform where we channel data from cellphones and computers to harvest all the information that may be needed by investigators."

This has involved upgrading the wide area network to fibre connectivity with high-speed lines, ensuring business continuity and allowing investigators to work from anywhere at any time. "This critical advancement was fortunately implemented before the outbreak of the COVID-19

pandemic in 2020," she says.

Her plans for the SIU include rolling out artificial intelligence and moving information to the cloud. She says once the SIU is fully automated, it will be easier to detect corruption before it happens.

As the institution celebrates 25 years of existence, Zwane says it is focusing on collaboration and leveraging technology and other sectors. She also benchmarks the SIU's progress against other technologically advanced countries.

## Women in IT

On being among the top women in the IT sector, Zwane says commanding respect through diligence has brought her where she is. She says she constantly researches new technologies to improve her strategies and to keep abreast of trends.

She encourages other women to be confident in their chosen careers – especially when they have to prove their capability.

"I make sure I'm bold and confident because I am up to date with what is happening in the industry. I have mentors, some of who are women. I have a very supportive team, and the



head of the unit is always on my side. There is never a dull moment in the IT department. I'm a vibrant person and thinker by nature. Being in IT allows me to create new things," she adds.

Zwane acknowledges that she has experienced occasional incidents of intimidation, because the SIU frequently deals with high-profile individuals, including politicians, but explains that internal processes are in place to protect workers. "We understand that our job may be dangerous at times, but we are resilient and always ahead of our game. I'm not afraid to stand tall from the crowd," she says.

"Women are as capable as men. If we are given an opportunity, we will always prove ourselves."



# We must celebrate the achievements of South African women

**O**n 9 August, we commemorated the day, in 1956, when thousands of women marched on the Union Buildings to protest against apartheid pass laws.

We are all familiar with the iconic image of Rahima Moosa, Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph

and Sophie Williams-de Bruyn marching defiantly up the stairs of the amphitheatre of the Union Buildings on that historic day.

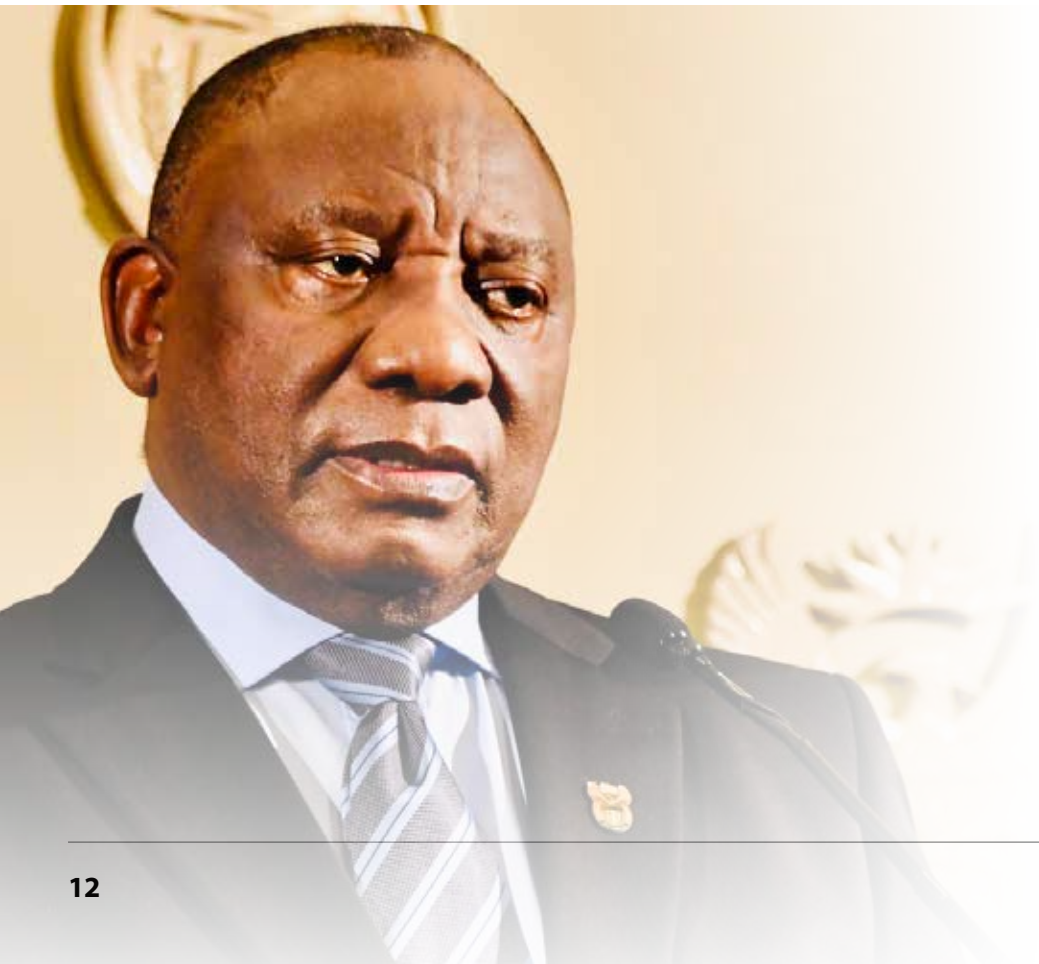
In their hands were thousands of petitions from women across the country to Prime Minister JG Strijdom. The peti-

tion opened with the words: "We are women of every race, we come from the cities and the towns, from the reserves and the villages. We come as women united in our purpose to save the African women from the degradation of passes."

They spoke about the impact these pass laws would have on black women. Families would be broken up and children left uncared for. They spoke of fear of arrest and humiliation and degradation at the hands of policemen. They spoke of losing the fundamental right to move freely from one place to another. They argued that with their movements restricted, they would be unable to earn a decent living, to take up an occupation or to study.

In the South Africa of today, women enjoy the fundamental rights and freedoms that their grandmothers and great-grandmothers were denied.

Today, women can advance in any occupation, study in a place and field of their choice and own businesses. Thanks to employment equity legislation and other policies of the democratic government, women's representation in the



workplace, in government and all of society continues to grow.

According to South Africa's most recent review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, we are on an upward trend towards the achievement of gender equality.

There are several areas where the representation of women has been on the rise. In Parliament, 46% of National Assembly members are women. Currently, 62% of the entire public service is female, and 44% of senior management posts are filled by women.

The current administration has accelerated the agenda for advancing women's representation by appointing the first woman to head the National Prosecuting Authority and the first female Directors-General in the State Security Agency and the Presidency.

Last week we appointed the first female Deputy National Commissioner of the South African Police Service, and last month Justice Mandisa Maya was appointed as South Africa's first female Deputy Chief Justice. Out of 256 judges on the Bench, 114 are female and nearly half of all magistrates are female.

Representation of women matters a great deal.

We come from a painful past

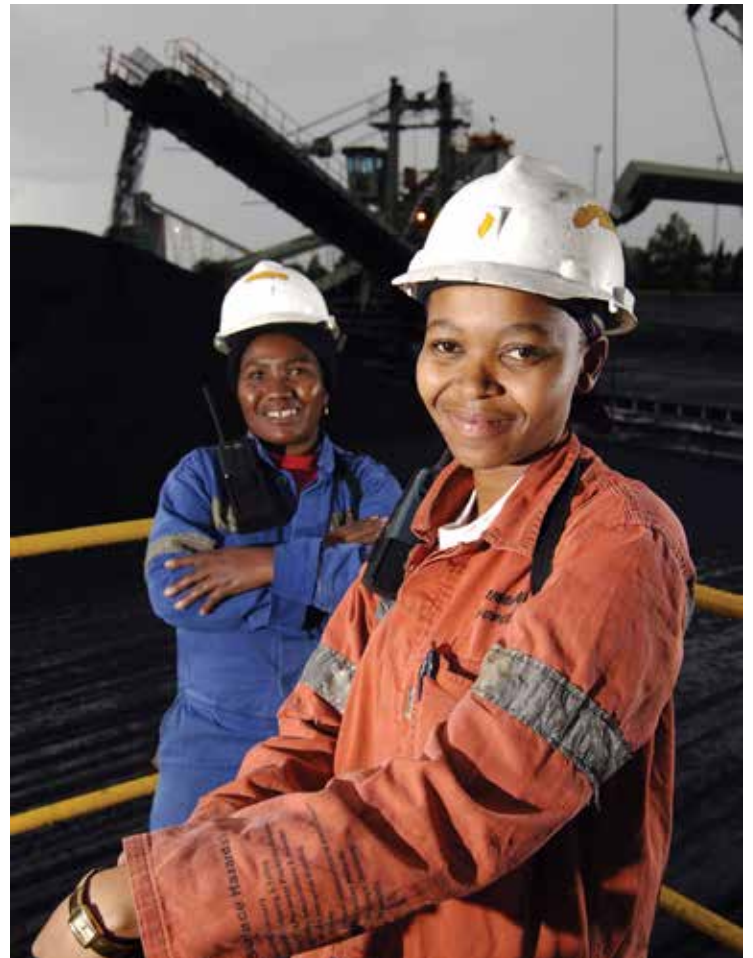
where young black women and girls had limited prospects. Seeing black women occupy the highest echelons of society as Ministers, judges, business leaders, engineers and fighter pilots is an inspiration and an encouragement to the many who hope to follow in their footsteps.

Another area of progress is the right to reproductive health care, which is enshrined in our Constitution. Unlike a number of countries, South African women have access to contraception and safe termination of pregnancy in the public health system.

The democratic state has worked to repeal all laws that discriminate against women, and over the years, our courts have ruled against policies and practices that unfairly discriminate against women on the grounds of motherhood, sexual orientation or other factors.

We have laws that protect women against harassment in the workplace and that address modern forms of victimisation of women. Women in traditional communities have rights to own land, to enter into contracts and to inherit.

The prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) remains one of our biggest obstacles towards achieving full and meaningful gender equality.



Just as the 1956 Women's March sent a signal that equal rights for women was an important goal of national liberation, ending all forms of violence against women and children is vital to our national progress.

This is not a problem of women, but a problem of men. And it is men who are being called upon to be part of the solution, starting with their own attitudes and conduct.

Even as we work as a collective

to rid society of GBV, we should not diminish the progress we have made in building a non-sexist society. We must celebrate the many achievements of women in our country and pay tribute to those who continue to lead the way.

As we work to achieve gender equality in all areas of life, we must acknowledge that we have come a long way. And that we still have much further to go.



# Civil society

## key to national development – President Ramaphosa

**T**he signing of the Social Sector Framework Agreement sets the basis for a strong State-civil society partnership to tackle poverty, inequality and employment. President Cyril Ramaphosa, who described the signing of the agreement as a milestone, said

the agreement will further deepen democratic participation.

The President, along with Social Development Minister Lindiwe Zulu and National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) Community Constituency Convenor Thulani Tshefuta, signed the agreement

on 5 August, following a two-day Presidential Social Sector Summit held at Birchwood Conference Centre in Boksburg, Gauteng.

“We must seize this opportunity to deepen our collaboration as we build a better South Africa that leaves no one behind. I have no doubt that government, civil

society and all social partners will continue to work together meaningfully beyond this summit, as we have done for many years, to improve the lives of our people and build a better country,” the President said.

President Ramaphosa delivered a keynote address at the closing



ceremony of the summit, which was held under the theme: "Fostering Social Cohesion to Enable Socio-economic Participation in Communities".

The President said a strong, vibrant and activist civil society is key to the development of any nation. He emphasised that it is critical that the interface between government and civil society is improved and strengthened.

"We have a common appreciation that we are all heading in the same direction and on the same road towards the realisation of a better South Africa. We know that to reach this goal, we have to be partners and not adversaries," he said.

At the same time, the President said they have an expectation that where either party falters or falls short, they will hold each other to their promises, and that both government and civil sector will require transparency and accountability of each other.

"Since before the dawn of democracy, civil society organisations in South Africa have taken up the causes of the marginalised, the oppressed and the vulnerable.

"From the HIV/Aids pandemic to substance abuse, from poverty to illiteracy, from unemployment to gender-based violence (GBV),

civil society has been crafting constructive strategies and driving collaborative approaches that put the needs of the poor first," the President said.

## **Fighting crime and lawlessness**

Turning to crime and lawlessness in the country, President Ramaphosa said that these incidents are of grave concern and highlight many of the challenges South Africa faces.

The country has recently witnessed scenes of violent protest, damage to public infrastructure and, in some cases, loss of life in areas such as Kagiso in the West Rand and Tembisa in Ekurhuleni.

"As we address these incidents, we need to distinguish between legitimate protest and criminality, addressing the concerns and grievances of communities, while acting to prevent loss of life and destruction of property," he said.

The President said as the country commends the police for apprehending suspected illegal miners and shutting down their operations, they must double their efforts to catch those responsible for the heinous crime of the gang rape of women.

"This horrific crime is a reminder that as government, and as a society, we must do more to tackle GBV. Over the last few years, as a result of cooperation between government and civil society, we have strengthened the response of the criminal justice system to such crimes," the President said.

He encouraged communities to deal with problems by working with law enforcement agencies and not resort to mob justice.

"The Commissioner of Police, together with the Minister [of Police], have set up teams that are going to deal with the issue of illegal mining and deal with those Zama Zamas in the illegal activities they get involved in, particularly terrorising our communities.

"We will put this to an end and we will do it as effectively as possible," he said.

He added that overcoming the challenges of crime, lawlessness, GBV and corruption requires all sectors of society to bring their respective capabilities together and unite behind a common vision.

"Civil society organisations are where our people are, whether as non-governmental organisations, as community, professional and faith-based

organisations, as academia or as worker representative organisations," he said.

The President added that one of the priorities of the administration is to drive people-centred, localised development through the District Development Model (DDM). The DDM seeks to promote an approach to development that takes into account needs, circumstances and priorities on the ground.

"Civil society reaches where business and government often cannot. You have a solid track record of organic interventions and activations that yield results. For this reason, this summit is crucial for us to align our efforts and actions," the President said.

## **Corruption**

The President reiterated that government remains steadfastly committed in its fight against corruption. In the last financial year, for example, he said the Specialised Commercial Crimes Unit finalised 380 cases, with a 90% conviction rate.

He acknowledged that there is much more that needs to be done but the fight against corruption is gaining momentum.

– **SAnews.gov.za**

# District Development Model is key to service delivery



**M**inister in the Presidency, Mondli Gungubele, says the District Development Model (DDM) is critical to the seamless and speedy delivery of services to communities.

Minister Gungubele was speaking at the Sedibeng DDM Presidential Imbizo – led by President Cyril Ramaphosa. He explained that early into his tenure in the highest office, President Ramaphosa recognised the need for all three spheres of

government to work together to ensure seamless delivery of services.

“When there is seamless-ness, when we work together, the projects are delivered in a speedier manner, in a less costly manner [and] in a more accountable manner. The President took a view that all spheres of government [must] come and work together in a seamless way [and] work together with society, business labour and all stakeholders in a seamless way. [That is the]

DDM,” Minister Gungubele said.

The Minister acknowledged that government has identified several service delivery and bulk infrastructure problems in the Sedibeng District that must be addressed urgently.

“There’s a lot of painful things that we have witnessed [in Sedibeng], there are also a lot of good things that we have come across. The President is here so that if there are gaps we go back and

relevant leaders come back to correct those.”

Gauteng Premier David Makhura said the economy of the area needed to be reignited and revealed that plans were under way to ensure that this is achieved.

“We want the President and his cabinet to know that the economy of the Vaal is in serious trouble. We need national government – not just the province – to help us revive and rebuild this economy. The unemployment [rate] in Sed-

ibeng is 64%. This economy of the Vaal needs decisive regeneration and decisive intervention,” said Makhura.

## Service delivery and unemployment

Residents of the Sedibeng District Municipality highlighted housing, sewerage, poor service delivery and unemployment as some of the key areas that government should urgently address to improve their lives.

Responding to questions and challenges raised by the residents, President Ramaphosa said although the district and the country as a whole face challenges, government is determined to resolve them.

“As a country we have many challenges but these challenges are being addressed. The one challenge that really stood out was the sewerage that was just flowing into the Vaal river. I’m glad to hear that this challenge is being addressed on an ongoing basis and Minister [of Water Senzo] Mchunu is addressing this,” he said.

Turning to the high unemployment rate in the district, the President told the gathering that the Vaal Special

Economic Zone (SEZ), is pivotal to the revitalisation of industry and consequently create more employment of people in Sedibeng.

By far, unemployment is the biggest challenge. The Gauteng government has ambitious plans to revitalise Sedibeng by developing agriculture, logistics, tourism and industries. These plans are pivoted around the Vaal SEZ, which we have heard has the potential of creating up to 170 000 jobs over the next few years.

“That is a serious number of jobs that will be created right here in Sedibeng,” he said.

## Revamping hostels

On housing, President Ramaphosa said the Human Settlements Department – which has seven mega projects in the area – will look into complaints heard from people living in hostels.

The President was firm with

his assessment of service delivery not only in the Sedibeng District but in local municipalities throughout the country.

“Our municipalities must pay attention to what needs to be done so that our people live with dignity. We want to see an improvement in the lives of our people from a service delivery point of view from now on. We cannot, in this place which used to be the industrial hub of the country, allow our people to live in squalor; in a dirty place,” President Ramaphosa said.

The President assured the community that their issues will not be put on the back burner at the end of the launch and said the DDM approach assures that these challenges are properly addressed.

“[The DDM] is a break with the past that we have had and here at local level, at district level, it is aimed at making

sure that our communities who have felt neglected in the past are part of the whole process of resolving the challenges as they are properly and fully consulted.

“Ministers keep going back to those areas where there are issues they have to address. This goes to show that we treat these types of engagements with you in this type of Imbizo very seriously and we want to be able to follow up on the issues that you have raised,” President Ramaphosa said.

Cabinet adopted the DDM in August 2019. It is an integrated planning model for cooperative governance, which seeks to be a new integrated, district-based, service delivery approach aimed at fast-tracking service delivery. It also seeks to ensure that municipalities are adequately supported and resourced to carry out their mandate. –

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# How safe are COVID-19 shots? SAHPRA shares the stats

**W**hile most South Africans followed the call to mask up, sanitise and social distance when COVID-19 hit the country in 2020, and rejoiced when the vaccine roll-out commenced in February 2021, questions about vaccine efficacy and safety are still being raised.

The South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) – which was propelled into the deep end when it came to dealing with a plethora of issues regarding COVID-19, from challenging the use of Ivermectin for human use to approving vaccines – has shed some light on how it approves vaccines, monitors their safety and assesses side effects.

SAHPRA is mandated to regulate all health products – including clinical trials, complementary medicines, medical devices and in vitro diagnostics. It also oversees radiation control in South Africa.

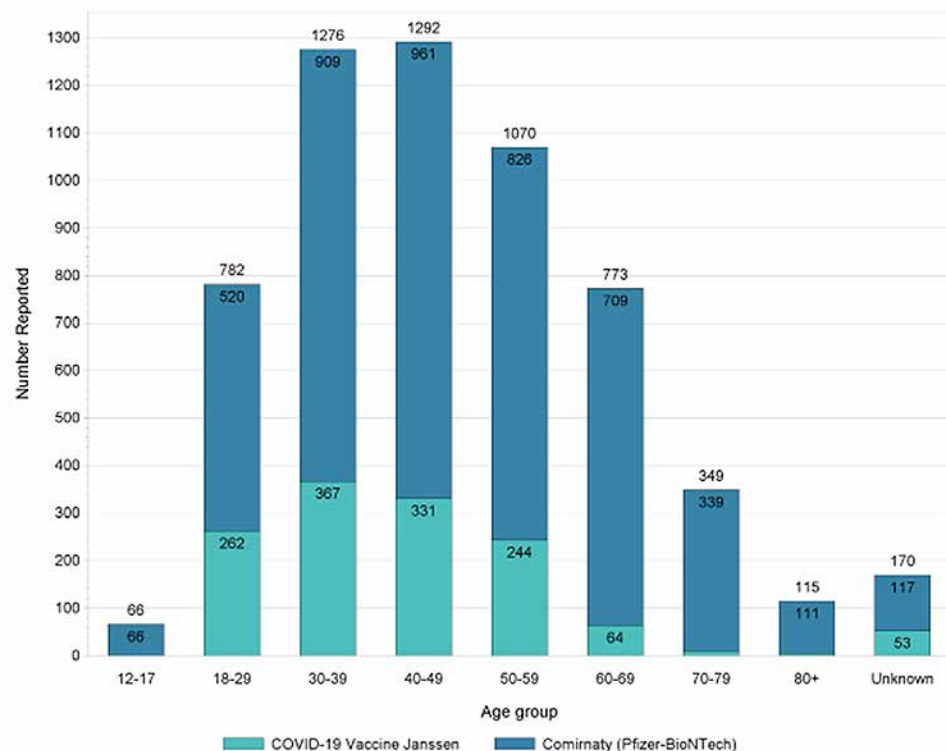
“Our Vigilance Unit collects and analyses data from clinical trials and monitors vaccine and medicine safety. The unit ensures that the risks associated with vaccines and medicines used against COVID-19 are identified, managed properly

and communicated accordingly,” says SAHPRA’s Pharmacovigilance Unit Manager Mafora Matlala.

## Clinical trials and safety surveillance

While clinical trials are re-

search studies performed on people to evaluate a medical, surgical or behavioural intervention; post-marketing surveillance, also known as safety surveillance, monitors the safety of a health product after it has been approved for



use in the general population.

"Often a clinical trial is used to learn if a new treatment is more effective and/or has less harmful side effects than the standard treatment; while post-marketing surveillance is used to confirm or disprove the safety of a medicine – after it is used in the general population, by a large number of people who have a wide variety of medical conditions – by using approaches such as spontaneous adverse drug reaction (ADR) reporting procedures and pregnancy registries," adds Matlala.

Countries across the globe have had to monitor the impact of COVID-19 vaccines due to their unprecedented nature and the record timelines involved in their development.

While approving new medicine usually takes about 20 months, SAHPRA reduced the time taken to authorise COVID-19 vaccines to less than 90 working days.

"While some people may find this questionable, we adhered to strict guidelines, without compromising the vaccines' quality, safety and efficacy, to ensure their prompt availability," says Matlala.

COVID-19 vaccines were introduced in South Africa in February 2021 through the Sisonke study, which aimed to further monitor the effective-

ness and safety of the Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine amongst healthcare professionals. By the time the study ended, three months later, 495 829 people had received the vaccine, of which 479 768 were healthcare professionals.

South Africa began its national vaccine roll-out in May 2021 with the Comirnaty (Pfizer-BioNTech) and Johnson & Johnson vaccines. To date, SAHPRA has registered the Pfizer-BioNTech, Johnson & Johnson, MC Pharma, Corona-Vac and LHC vaccines.

Molnupiravir generic products, Molcovir by Bliss Pharmaceuticals and Molnupiravir 200 DRL by Dr Reddy's Laboratories were granted authorisations in terms of Section 21 (for emergency use) of the Medicines and Related Substances Act, 1965 (Act 101 of 1965 as amended), on 31 May and 6 June 2022, respectively. SAHPRA has also authorised, with conditions, the importation of Molnupiravir 200 mg capsules (Lagevrio).

## Monitoring vaccine impact

One of the tools used to monitor vaccine effects is the Med Safety Application (app), which was designed for the public and healthcare professionals to report suspected ADRs and adverse events following im-

## OVERVIEW OF COVID-19 VACCINE DATA

# WHAT DO THE STATS SAY?

Data period: 17/05/2021 - 30/04/2022

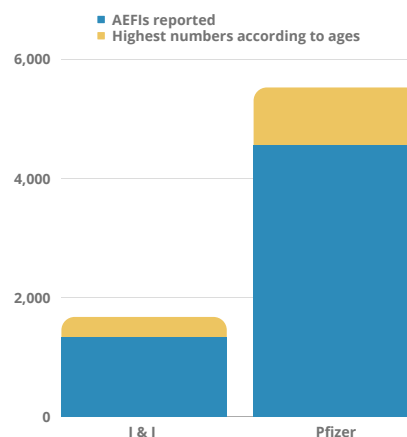
5 893 AEFIs

There was a total of **5 893 Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFIs)** reported, for both the J&J and Pfizer vaccines, from over **34 million** administered doses.



The more data SAHPRA collects, the better they can understand and monitor the impact of the various vaccinations being rolled out in the country.

Data period: 17/05/2021 - 30/04/2022



In terms of the most affected age group, which was between 40 – 49 years, **there were 331 and 961 AEFIs reported** for J&J and Pfizer vaccinations respectively.

**SAHPRA**  
South African  
Health Products  
Regulatory Authority

munisation (AEFIs).

An ADR is a noxious and unintended response to medicine, which can also result from an overdose, misuse or abuse. The reaction may be a known side effect of the medicine, or it may be new and previously unrecognised.

SAHPRA defines an AEFI as any untoward medical occurrence which follows immunisation; it does not necessarily have a causal relationship with the usage of the vaccine; any unfavourable symptom that a vaccine recipient complains about; or an abnormal laboratory finding, sign or disease found by medical staff.

The authority reports that from 17 May 2021 to 30 April 2022, a total of 5 893 AEFIs were reported for the Pfizer-BioNTech and Johnson & Johnson vaccines from over 34 million administered doses.

"This is 0.0172% of reported cases, which is minimal. In terms of the most affected age group, which was between 40 and 49 years, there were 331 (Johnson & Johnson) and 961 (Pfizer-BioNTech) AEFIs reported," says Matlala.

## Vaccine risks recognised

Various post-immunisation AEFIs have been reported, including myocarditis and

pericarditis, Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS), thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS) and menstrual disorders.

Myocarditis and pericarditis are diseases that cause inflammation of the heart that can occur following infections or immune-related diseases. Symptoms can vary but may include shortness of breath, palpitations, irregular heartbeat and chest pain.

"The public is advised to seek medical attention if they experience any of these symptoms following their COVID-19 vaccination," says Matlala.

"We have identified one reported case of myocarditis in SAHPRA safety database but we have not identified any causal relationship between any COVID-19 vaccine and

this adverse event. Investigations are ongoing to determine whether this case is coincidental or related to the vaccine," she adds.

Five GBS cases have been reported via the database. Most people who experienced GBS post-vaccination were aged 41 to 46.

"SAHPRA and the National Department of Health are monitoring and investigating these events to determine the causal link," says Matlala.

Two TTS cases from the Sisonke cohort have fully recovered and the other two are still under investigation. A total of 90 menstrual disorder events were recorded. Considering that by 7 January 2022, 9.85 million vaccinations were carried out in the adult female

population, the event reporting rate is 0.91 per 100 000 vaccinations. This means that nine events followed one million vaccinations. Investigations are also underway to determine the causal link.

## Report AEFIs

Everyone can play a role in monitoring the safety of COVID-19 vaccines by reporting any ADRs and AEFIs they experience through the Med Safety app, which can be downloaded on <https://med-safety.sahpra.org.za/>.

"The more data SAHPRA collects, the better it can understand and monitor the impact of the various vaccinations," says Matlala.

## Benefits of the Mobile App?



Submit reports on adverse reactions even while offline.



View and submit updates to previously submitted reports.

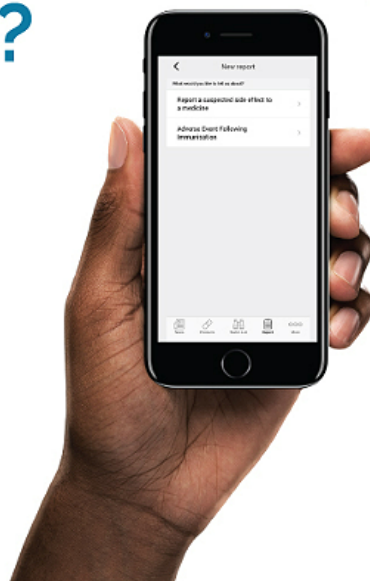


See immediate acceptance of your reports.



Create a watchlist of medications, to receive personalised news and alerts.

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# WHAT WILL PEOPLE SAY?



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Childline: 0800 055 555

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**Violence and abuse are poison to society. Let's make it stop.**



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# Government, private sector called to coordinate transformation programmes

**A**s the country observes Women's Month, the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities has called on government and the private sector to coordinate their transformation programmes to achieve the desired outcomes.

Committee Chairperson Nonhlanhla Ncube-Ndaba emphasised that implementing policies to achieve gender transformation is of paramount importance.

"Women's empowerment talk and policy reviews have not helped the situation. These programmes must translate into sustainable development and impact on the lives of women and the girl child," Ncube-Ndaba said.

She also called on South Africans to replicate the revolutionary behaviour of women who marched to the Union Buildings in 1956, and their vision for a better life for all South Africans.

"These gallant women were



united and spoke in one voice in their struggle for the empowerment and emancipation of women," she said.

Ncube-Ndaba welcomed Women's Month on a sad note amid several violent crimes committed every day against women and girls in the country.

She said that South Africa has become an unsafe place for women and girls.

"It is unacceptable that every day acts of violence are committed against children

as young as two. Our country has become a haven for thugs, men who behave as reliable fathers during the day, who speak against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and all forms of abuse and promote human rights for women and children, but who abuse women and girl children in their homes.

"Something drastic needs to happen and those who are responsible for perpetuating crimes against women and children must face severe

consequences. Work places, schools, institutions of higher learning, government institutions and political parties are all affected by this demon," Ncube-Ndaba said.

She added that while the government and civil society search for the root causes of GBV and other crimes against women and children, "the perpetrators of these crimes should be dealt with harshly".

Ncube-Ndaba further urged organisations involved in activities that fight against GBV to also conduct their programmes in prisons and rural areas.

This year's Women Month is celebrated under the theme "Women's Socio-Economic Rights and Empowerment: Building Back Better for Women's Improved Resilience".

The concept of Generation Equality is a global campaign and links South Africa to global efforts to achieve gender equality by 2030. – **SAnews.gov.za**

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**Special Investigating Unit**





# Maluleke's passion sets the bar for public servants

Once you understand that a true public servant works not only for money but for the public, you will be able to go a step further and find solutions to problems that affect the majority of South Africans.

This vital message to public servants comes from the Director-General (DG) of the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD), Advocate Mikateko Joyce Maluleke.

"As a public servant, your service goes beyond serving the public because it also puts South Africa in a competitive position globally. The debate about a failed or failing State is dependent on public servants," she says.

When the public loses trust and faith in the public service, they perceive the State as failing.

"In order for government to regain public trust, public servants need to

start responding to issues that affect citizens. All officials from the three spheres of government need to start using State resources efficiently for us to go back to where we were after 1994," says Maluleke.

Born in Alexandra, Maluleke holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of the Witwatersrand, and a Master of Laws (Tax) from the University of Pretoria, which she obtained in 2011.

She is an advocate of the High Court of South Africa and former member of the Johannesburg Society of Advocates.

Her area of practice was predominantly civil law litigation, including Constitutional law and administrative justice; land and labour law.

Maluleke boasts a wealth of experience in the Public Service, having joined the Department of Justice and Constitutional

Development in 1998 as a deputy director, before becoming a director in 1999. Ten years later, she was appointed as a State legal advisor. In 2011, she resigned from the department, but was called back as a special adviser to the then DWYPD Minister Lulu Xingwana, who tasked her with drafting the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill.

She was also a special adviser to another former DWYPD Minister Susan Shabangu, but again resigned from the department – this time to join the Bar.

When she returned in 2020 – fittingly during Women's Month, she was appointed as the DG of the department.

Her key responsibilities include controlling the resources of the department in terms of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999), as the accounting officer, guiding the department's strategy and its implementation and guiding



policy development.

"It is also my responsibility to motivate officials of the department to deliver, otherwise I will not achieve the objectives of the department for the benefit of South Africans," she says.

## New mandate

Maluleke has her job cut out for her. When she joined the DWYPD in 2020, the mandate of the department was 'to lead on socio-economic transformation and implementation of the empowerment and participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities through mainstreaming, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation.'

She had a problem with the mandate because she felt that it spoke to the coordination of things that already existed, and she found that to be limiting.

"Two months into my job as DG, there was a workshop for the department and I used that platform to change the mandate of the department," she says.

The new mandate is: "To regulate the socio-economic transformation and implementation of the empowerment and participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities. Critical in this regard is the role of the DWYPD as a centre of government, located in The

Presidency."

DG Maluleke's extensive knowledge and understanding of the justice system and its cluster stem from working as a senior manager in the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development for 13 years.

One of the things that she is proud of, is the development of the Framework on Gender-responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing.

"This is a guide on how government can mainstream gender in the planning, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation and auditing process. This framework gives us the power as the department to instruct other government departments on what they need to do in order to implement a gender-responsive government budget," she says.

## Preferential procurement

According to Maluleke, the department conducted a rapid evaluation of the implementation of government's preferential public procurement policy for businesses owned by women, youth and persons with disabilities. The results found:

- About 25% of national and

provincial departments surveyed were able to meet the 40% procurement targets set for women-owned businesses.

- There is a lack of set-aside budgets for capacity-building initiatives in government departments to effectively implement the 40% procurement.
- Government departments are failing to report adequately on funds benefiting women-owned businesses, because the system used does not cater for the disaggregation of data.
- There is a lack of specific legislation supporting the 40% Presidential pronouncement, thus impacting implementation. Maluleke says a rapid evaluation of the preferential procurement data obtained from National Treasury was also done. It revealed that:
- In 2020, R28 billion (16%) of the R184 billion total procurement spent by government departments went towards black women-owned businesses, R34 billion (18.32%) went to businesses not owned by women and over R121 billion (65%) was unspecified.
- In 2021, R31 billion (16%) of R194 billion total procure-

ment spent went towards black women-owned businesses, R37 billion (19.3%) went to businesses not owned by women and R126 billion (64.74) was unspecified.

"During the 2020/21 financial year, only 13.5% of the 40% target for women-owned businesses was met, 5.6% of the 30% target for youth-owned businesses was met, and only 0.2% of the 7% target for businesses owned by persons with disabilities was met by national government departments," she says.

To achieve the empowerment of these vulnerable groups, all spheres of government must do their part, she says.

Maluleke believes that throughout her career, her path has been aligned with issues that are associated with gender.

She is a true reflection of many South Africans because her childhood home in Alexandra represents abject poverty, but across the highway, lies opulent Sandton.

Maluleke says she did not allow her background to limit her dreams. She wants people living in disadvantaged communities to know that with the right attitude, they can be whatever they want to be.

# GBV support centres must do more than heal

**S**urvivors of domestic violence who flee their homes with not much more than the clothes on their backs need not only to heal from their trauma, but to be able to stand on their own feet.

Government understands that when women are financially dependent on their abusers, they often find it impossible to leave and start afresh.

However, empowering women to enable them to earn an income takes resources and money that the civil society organisations (CSOs) that run women's shelters and centres often do not have.

In addressing this, government decided in 2020, to direct R100 million from the Criminal Assets Recovery Account (CARA) to bolster the work done by CSOs operating in the gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) space.

The National Development Agency (NDA) – which was formed in 1999 to help eradicate poverty – was given the

responsibility to distribute and administer the funds that were distributed to selected CSOs around the country.

One of its focus areas is ensuring that the organisations use some of the funds they receive to implement programmes that will teach gender-based violence (GBV) survivors the skills they need to earn a living.

"We need to create sustainability programmes around these centres, so that they do not become just places of healing, but that they become places of production. If we want to bring hope to these places, let us create economic activities," says NDA Acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Bongani Magongo.

The allocation of the funds is part of the measures to implement Pillar 4 of the National Strategic Plan on GBVF. One of its outcomes is strengthened existing response, care and support services by the State and civil society in ways

that are victim-centred and survivor-focused to facilitate recovery and healing.

"When we were appointed to the CARA programme, it was to strengthen organisations that communities can use to deal with GBV and ensure that people have easy access to these kinds of services and support," says Magongo.

However, he says that if that is all the NDA does, it would simply be treating a symptom. "The real cause of this thing lies squarely in the economic environment within which this country finds itself."

A researcher by trade, Magongo joined the agency in 2012. Referring to the task at hand, Magongo says there is nothing in this world that is not doable.

## Power inequality

Magongo says the NDA is busy implementing a turnaround strategy.

"We say in our strategy that where you put in place a centre

for GBV [victims], next to it put an economic activity that will teach people new skills and allow them to earn an income."

He says by doing this, women will no longer be at the mercy of GBV and will not be over-reliant on their household's breadwinner.

"Sometimes, those who earn an income have a propensity to abuse those who do not have an income," he says.

He refers to this as a form of power inequality, which does not spare members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual+ community.

"It is a thing of, 'I've got money and you don't, [therefore] I'm going to abuse you.' We must find a way of equalising power," he says.

According to Magongo, the biggest problem facing the country is the inherent poverty "which we seem not to find the right solution to deal with". It is contributing to a cocktail of social ills, including GBV, he



believes.

He also flags the country's high unemployment rate as a pressing challenge, despite it having declined to 34.5% in the first quarter of 2022, from the record 35.3% recorded in the fourth quarter of 2021.

He adds that the strategy on GBVF provides a mechanism that ensures that government and all its entities, the private sector and civil society can come together to tackle the scourge. He says that by reducing unemployment, the gap between the haves and have-nots will be narrowed.

"It is not the fiscal constraints that make us not achieve that, it is the absence of a mechanism to actually deal with poverty and inequality.

"We have to have a mechanism and strategies that give us that opportunity and pipeline to get all stakeholders focusing on one thing. If you say you are capacitating somebody, it must be for a job or earning an income," says Magongo.

## **Mentorship, funds spent**

Of the R100 million allocated to organisations that support GBV survivors, R95 million was set aside for the direct financial

support of organisations, while R5 million was to be used for the mentoring and coaching of emerging CSOs.

To date, R74 million has been spent, with money being made available to CSOs in two tranches. The money has been distributed to 297 organisations across the country, with all of them undergoing a year-long mentorship programme.

"We are putting all of them under mentorship. We want them to exist as an outlet for the current pressure and at the same time, create an ecosystem that makes [survivors] get out with a skill that they learnt at the centre and that can earn them money."

The CSOs that were selected to receive funds had to meet several criteria set by the NDA, including location, skills set, the availability of social workers and governance structure.

Among the organisations that received funds were the Hennenman Victim Empowerment Forum and the Theunissen Boitelo Victim Empowerment centres in the Free State; the Cofimvaba White Door Centre of Hope, Al-Fidaa Foundation White Door Centre and the Man and Boys Foundation in the Eastern Cape; the Thusanang Trauma Centre and

Community Advice Offices South Africa in the North West; the Victim Support Centre Modimolle in Limpopo; and the Porter House for Women in Mpumalanga.

## **Investment**

"The [CARA] funding is once-off but the problems [of GBVF] continue. When the funds are no longer there, it creates uncertainty about whether centres will be able to continue," he says.

For that reason, Magongo says it is essential that CSOs create income-generating activities that will enable them to become self-sustaining.

He points out that more money needs to be invested in the civil society sector.

Magongo welcomed the recently held Presidential Social Sector Summit, which unfolded against the backdrop of the 2018 Presidential call for the social sector to convene a comprehensive social compact.

Speaking at the summit, President Cyril Ramaphosa said both government and the civil sector will require transparency and accountability of each other.

"Since before the dawn of democracy, civil society organisations in South Africa have



taken up the causes of the marginalised, the oppressed and the vulnerable," noted the President.

## **Strengthening the fight against social ills**

On whether government is doing enough to address GBVF, Magongo says government is committed to bringing about real change in the lives of women and views the combatting of the scourge as a core responsibility.

"GBVF is killing society and the nature of this problem, unfortunately, starts at home," he says, adding that a change in the mindset of the largely patriarchal society is needed to tackle the problem.

# Major Louw's sky-high accomplishments

Psychologist Major Liz Louw is one of the first women in South Africa to qualify as a military free-fall parachutist.

**M**ajor Liz Louw (35) from the South African Military Health Service (SAMHS) is one of only two women to qualify as a free-faller in the history of the 7 Medical Battalion Group.

This elite unit is the specialist airborne medical battalion of the SAMHS. The battalion's main task is to render medical support to the South African Special and Airborne Forces.

Louw is an industrial and organisational psychologist at the unit, based in Centurion, Gauteng.

She first qualified as a basic static line paratrooper in 2016 and worked her way up the ranks to qualify as a basic free-faller in July 2022.

"Free-falling refers to a discipline whereby a member will exit the aircraft from an altitude of up to 13 000 feet (about 3 962.4 metres). From the time the free-faller exits, up until the opening altitude, the member will be falling through the

sky with no attachments connecting them to the aircraft," she explains.

Louw explains that there are various types of parachuting disciplines in the military, which progress from one to four. These are basic static line, advanced static line, basic free-fall and advanced free-fall (high-altitude low opening).

"My next goal is to qualify for the advanced operations," she shares.

Louw says parachuting skills are needed when medical units support the special force during operations.

## More than just war and operations

Louw, who holds a master's degree in Industrial and Organisational Psychology from the University of Johannesburg, says it was never her intention to be part of the military.

"As part of our master's programme in 2010, our lecturers invited several companies to give a brief overview of the internship programmes that they offered.



"When a member of the Military Psychological Institute (MPI) presented to us, one of my professors encouraged me to apply," she says.

Louw's lecturer told her that the MPI internship was one of the best such programmes in the country. "It had just received the award for the best programme in 2010 by the Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology South Africa," she says.

This was all the encouragement Louw needed to set her sights on doing her internship with the MPI in the SAMHS.

In 2011, she joined the army as a Public Service Act personnel member and later became a uniformed member in 2012.

"Initially, my intention was only to complete my internship programme and then to work in corporate, consulting or the mining industry. However, I realised quite soon that the military offered a myriad of opportunities within the field of industrial and organisational psychology. Besides the experience, I was also developing an immense passion for working in the environment. This prompted me to apply for a permanent post as a uniformed member."

Although Louw did not get the post she originally applied for, she was later offered a spot at 7

Medical Battalion Group.

A short while later, Louw was encouraged to apply to become a paratrooper. While qualifying required much mental and physical preparation, Louw believed she was ready. "Fortunately, I had always remained active and at the time I decided to commit to training for the selection, I was already participating in half marathons on weekends and doing CrossFit.

"Although being a paratrooper piqued my interest, I initially doubted whether I would be able to complete the selection."

Louw says she started training for the components of the selection in November 2015. In January 2016, she joined the 7 Medical Para Prep Group. "We were training about six to eight hours a day," she remembers.

In February 2016, Louw failed her first attempt at selection, but says she identified her weaknesses and decided to increase her effort during training. Failing pushed me to do better, she says.

"We spent a month doing intensive training at the Special Forces School in Murrayhill in Tshwane, where we committed to uninterrupted training for the entire month. In May 2016, I successfully passed the selection and completed the basic static line course in July 2016. I was

promoted to the rank of Major in December 2016."

She says training and preparing for the free-faller test this year proved to be a bit easier as she was in great physical form and was mentally strong.

"Fortunately, I did not have to do the advanced static line course as it is not a prerequisite for qualifying as a basic free-faller. Undergoing this year's free-faller training gave me empathy and an understanding of the unique challenges faced by our clients, albeit on a much smaller scale. This also helped in my role as a psychologist," she says.

## Military mental wellness

As an industrial and organisational psychologist, Louw says she is the first point of contact for members who experience mental health or wellness issues. "At present, my role entails selecting and developing personnel, training and optimising performance, leadership development and referring members to receive appropriate treatment when required.

"In the SAMHS, one can expect anxiety-related disorders to be the most prominent due to the social, emotional and psychological demands placed on members. The COVID-19 pandemic brought

with it a fair share of anxiety-related disorders, so we create programmes for our members to help them work through these."

## More diversity needed

Louw says that given the turbulence experienced around the world, a nation's military must be prepared for increased calls for humanitarian interventions. To successfully execute peace-keeping and other humanitarian operations, diverse military units are needed, she says.

"To be more adaptive to future demands, it is necessary to be well represented and diversified in our skills, knowledge and personnel. By diversifying our forces by including women and people of colour, we will increase our odds of being able to provide a capable force when the need arises."

Louw takes immense pride in working in the public sector as part of the military. "Our motto at 7 Medical Battalion is Audacissimos Servamus, which means serving the brave. I cannot encapsulate it any better. It is an honour to be able to engage with and understand our clients and the sacrifices they make. It inspires me to be bolder."

# How focused messaging helped curb the **COVID-19 pandemic**

**T**he lifting, in April this year, of the National State of Disaster, which was declared in March 2020 in terms of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act 57 of 2002) to contain the spread of COVID-19, brought much-needed socio-economic relief to South Africa.

The recent announcement by Health Minister, Dr Joe Phaahla, that the Department of Health will no longer publish daily COVID-19 statistics was another milestone – given that the decision was prompted by the reduced severity and transmissibility of the disease. These statistics previously provided a transparent and necessary picture of the surging daily infections and deaths nationally.

It is an indisputable fact that South Africa has been navigating uncharted territory over the past two years. With limited knowledge of the deadly virus that the World Health Organisation declared a global pandemic, most countries, including South Africa, had to resort to drastic measures. These included risk-adjusted



levels of restrictions and the more severe national lockdown that brought almost everything in the country to a standstill.

South Africa started dealing with COVID-19 in early 2020, when it had to repatriate South African students who were studying in Wuhan, China, where the virus was first detected. This was followed, on March 5 2020, by the detection of the first case in South Africa.

The swift response by government helped the country succeed in weathering the COVID-19 storm. Despite the relative calm, it must be noted

that while we managed to weaken COVID-19, it has not yet been completely eradicated in the country and worldwide. The virus is still virulent and, therefore, should still be closely monitored and properly managed.

## Hard-hitting response

That said, we have reached the point where we can look back with pride and appreciation at the science-based interventions made by government, led by President Cyril Ramaphosa. Govern-

ment's primary objective was to save lives and livelihoods and despite many people being sceptical about our ability as a country to respond adequately, given the high number of daily infections, we did not fail.

The National Coronavirus Command Council (NCCC), which was chaired by the President, acknowledged that in addition to scientists advising and guiding the country's response to the pandemic, we also required a strong communication and mass mobilisation work stream. This work stream was expected to report weekly to the technical National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure and, ultimately, to the NCCC.

The Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) was tasked with leading this work stream. It achieved this by setting up a communication partnership with business, labour, civil society organisations, traditional leaders, churches and media partners.

The key content nerve centre depended on the Department



of Health, with its scientists and the research support staff guiding how the messaging was packaged.

Various products and platforms were used to, among other things, communicate the preventative health measures of wearing a mask, regularly washing hands with soap or using a 70% alcohol-based hand sanitiser and maintaining social distancing.

The GCIS used some of the budget allocated for its COVID-19 campaign for research and, in some cases, partnered with the Solidarity Fund. The findings provided guidance on which platforms to use and how to package the content in an engaging manner that made it accessible to the targeted recipients.

Since COVID-19 was an unprecedented phenomenon, government needed to use a nuanced approach in some instances and also deal with the fake news that was circulating on social media and causing untold panic.

Research findings enabled government to understand the social and public health implications of the pandemic, which allowed it to better respond to the information needs of the public. Our scientists and medical practitioners provided useful guidance on how to communicate impactful messages.

## **Report gauges COVID-19 messaging**

In mid-August, the close-out report from research done by Ask Africa, a Pretoria-based research company, was presented in a GCIS webinar. The key findings of this research confirmed the impact communication and mass mobilisation had on how citizens responded to COVID-19.

It further confirmed that citizens were empowered with information that enabled them to take responsibility in the fight against the pandemic. The results showed that almost three-quarters of the respondents had a positive perception of government's management of the pandemic, vaccination programme and the provision of social relief packages.

This positive response is also attributed to effective government communication on the pandemic and the free vaccination programme.

In testing government's public COVID-19 messaging, the findings showed that over 90% of respondents recalled the messages about protecting themselves through social distancing, isolation and staying safe, among others. The recall rates for the mask and hand sanitiser messaging were 84% and 72%, respectively.

The results emphasised the success of the GCIS campaign

to get the people of South Africa to play their part in minimising the spread of new infections.

While emphasising the importance of vaccination to

**“The findings showed that over 90% of respondents recalled the messages about protecting themselves through social distancing, isolation and staying safe, among others. The recall rates for the mask and hand sanitiser messaging were 84% and 72%, respectively”.**

prevent severe illness, hospitalisation and even death, government had to outline the voluntary aspect of the vaccination campaign. Research findings revealed that the awareness of the vaccination programme improved from 55% in 2021 to 87% in 2022.

Public perception about government's role in administering

vaccines increased from 66% in 2021 to 85% in 2022. This is linked to government securing enough vaccines and making them easily accessible to all who want to be vaccinated.

Taking into account that vaccination is a necessary but voluntary option, it must be recognised that those people who are not vaccinated made a personal choice not to be jabbed. In other words, their unvaccinated status is not the result of a lack of knowledge or awareness of the vaccination programme.

The research insights confirmed the decision of the NCCC that all people in South Africa need to embrace the ongoing battle against COVID-19. This call was heeded by South Africans and the resulting partnerships with communities undoubtedly enabled the GCIS and its partners to achieve the intended goal – providing communities with information that guided their decisions.

Research is a valuable tool for shaping future communication strategies and the close-out research report will guide future GCIS public awareness campaigns by highlighting what was done right and providing valuable recommendations to sharpen communication beyond COVID-19.

# Spring into action *this season*

**A**s we prepare to welcome warmer weather, it's time to spruce up your wardrobe with cool, casual silhouettes and semi-floral wear that is both bold and bright yet relaxed and comfortable. Say goodbye to dreary winter and say hello to spring with some of these amazing options.



1



2



3



4

## *For her*

1. Could anything be happier than this Smiley Collection from H&M? We doubt it, pair this vest with a skirt or jeans, H&M, **R399**.
2. Online shopping for global brands has never been easier, so why not spoil yourself with this sheet beach top by Louisa Ballou, [24S.com](#), **R2 911**.
3. This adorable dress by Brazilian designer from Rio can be worn with both formal heels or casual sneakers, [24S.com](#), **R2 529**.
4. There are very few flats as comfy as a Birkenstock, grab this cute style available in 11 different shades, Birkenstock, **R999**.

\* Prices correct at the time of publishing.





*For him*

5. American DJ and talk show host Kerwin Frost collaborated with Adidas on a range that is bright, bold and beautiful. We like this incredible intergalactic space-themed hoodie, Adidas, **R3 999**.
6. It's all about positive vibes and good energy with the smiley collection at H&M, grab this green shirt for just **R359**.
7. We love the bright blue shade and soft French terry cloth of these unisex cargo shorts from Ivy Park x Adidas, **R1 699**.
8. Pioneers of the poolside style, Orlebar Brown promises effortlessly cool, casual wear perfect for outdoor weather, [orlebarbrown.com](http://orlebarbrown.com), **R1 846**.

\* Prices correct at the time of publishing.

# A GRAND TIME in GRASKOP



One afternoon in April 2022, with the car loaded to the roof, we said goodbye to Mbombela and hit the road in a north-western direction. The destination? Graskop.

Nestled in the shadow of Mount Sheba on the one side, and towering out above the Lowveld on the other side, Graskop is never truly on anyone's bucket list. I think the name itself is

deceiving. Graskop literally means "grassy hill" but, in actual fact, the town is much more than that. It is perched 1 400 meters (m) above sea level, is magnificently green and lush and on a crisp clear

day, might even allow you to see all the way to Mozambique.

By the sounds of the locals, Graskop is mostly considered a convenient overnight stop for international tourists who are itching to go and spot their first elephant in the Kruger National Park. But when they get there and discover the beauty that surrounds their one-night-only Bed & Breakfast, they are all too often dismayed. Their package holiday didn't make mention of this place...What a pity.

We checked in at Autumn Breeze guesthouse – the only guesthouse in town with an indoor pool – and with this little Plain Jane town as our hub for a couple of days, the



Panorama Route was our oyster. Limited time meant we could not do everything, so we prioritised accordingly. Some might be able to do much more than we did in a short time. We do not like to be rushed. We pack snacks and we always search for a perfect spot to set up our small gas burner, brew a coffee, and soak up the views. This meant that we, unfortunately, could not fit in the entire Panorama Route, but opted for an adapted, off-beat version of it instead.

But first, an important stop. Simply because pancakes are my weakness, we had to pop in at good ol' Harries Pancakes. Every time I visit, I vow to never do it again. Alas. Famous last words.

An off-beat Panorama Route From Graskop, the classic Panorama Route is roughly 130 kilometres long and takes you past nine distinct, breathtaking natural sites. Our version of the route took us past a few of these sites, including God's Window, Wonder View, Bourke's Luck Potholes, Three Rondavels and the Blyde River Canyon. The latter being the one thing that has been on my bucket list since I can remember. It was only an hour's drive from our

guesthouse (stops included) and it did not disappoint.

The canyon is believed to be the biggest "green canyon", thanks to its dense subtropical foliage and steep cliffs.

It is also the third-largest canyon in the world, after the Grand Canyon in the United States and the Fish River Canyon in Namibia. With over 1 600 recorded plant species in the Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve, hiking here is also worthwhile.

Graskop: the land of mountains, rivers and gold

We discovered that adrenaline junkies need not fear – Graskop is not only pancakes, views and hikes. The Graskop Gorge Lift company has multiple activities that will

get your heart racing. From a viewing lift that takes you 51 m down the face of the gorge into the indigenous forest below, to a high-wire zipline and a big swing. The Big Swing is one of the world's highest cable gorge swings and launches off the top of a waterfall.

We packed the car on our last morning and continued our off-beat route towards the old mining town of Pilgrim's Rest, which is another highlight in this part of the world. A left turn into the hamlet made me wonder if we had taken a wrong turn into the 1800s, or perhaps onto a movie set. There is not a single piece of litter in sight, the quaint buildings are all intact, neatly

restored with seemingly fresh licks of paint. For many years, it has allowed visitors a peek into a window of the past – a bygone era of hope-filled people on a quest to find gold. Upon further research, we discovered that mining is not completely something of the past for these folk. In fact, in August 2023, the World Gold Panning Championships are scheduled to take place in Pilgrim's Rest as part of the town's 150th birthday celebrations.

From Pilgrim's Rest we continued on around Mount Sheba towards Lydenburg and Dullstroom, where a good cup of coffee and another of Harrie's packers awaited...!



# Our heritage on a plate

**A**s a nation we are known for Struggle heroes, beautiful landscapes, award-winning entertainers but one of our best exports are our delicious dishes. This month we pay homage to some of the dishes enjoyed by every South African and tourist alike.

## Bobotie

### Ingredients:

1kg beef mince  
1 large onion (chopped)  
1 ripe tomato peeled and chopped  
1 apple (coarsely grated)  
1 tablespoon finely grated lemon rind  
Handful almonds  
1/2 cup seedless raisins  
2 slices white bread  
1/2 cup milk (125 ml)  
2 tablespoons apricot jam  
1 egg  
3/4 cup milk  
Oil (for frying)  
4 teaspoons curry powder  
1 tablespoon breyani spices

1/2 teaspoon turmeric  
1/2 teaspoon sugar  
2 teaspoons salt

### Custard:

1 Egg  
1/2 cup milk  
1/3 teaspoon turmeric

### Directions

- Preheat oven at 180 °C.
- Break bread in a bowl and pour in milk and set aside.
- In a large pot, add 3 table-spoons oil and sauté onions.
- Add the turmeric, curry powder and breyani spices to the onions and let the spices fry with the onions for a few

minutes. Add a few drops of water to prevent it from sticking.

- Drop in the apple, tomato, lemon rind, apricot jam and sugar to the pot and stir. Fry for a minute, then add the meat.
- Add in the minced meat and salt in the pot. Tip. Use a whisk to stir minced meat, it will break up bigger clumps of meat in pot.
- When the meat is halfway cooked through, remove pot from the stove and let cool
- Add the bread mixture to the pot and fold in.
- In a bowl whisk 1 egg and

add the milk, pour mixture into the pot.

- Pour into a greased oven dish and top with almonds.
- Bake for 40 minutes in pre-heated oven.
- Whisk the last egg with turmeric and milk to make a nice yellow colour.
- Take the oven dish out of the oven and pour over the custard.
- Bake for an additional 15 minutes or until the egg custard has set.

## Malva pudding

### Ingredients:

1 cup cake flour



2 cups sugar  
 2 teaspoons baking powder  
 2 teaspoons baking soda  
 2 eggs  
 2 teaspoons lemon juice  
 2 tablespoon apricot jam  
 2 tablespoons unsalted butter,  
 melted  
 2 cups milk

#### The sauce:

1 cup sugar  
 1 cup low fat milk  
 1/2 cup unsalted butter  
 1/2 cup boiling water

#### Directions:

- Preheat oven at 180 °C.
- In a bowl combine eggs, sugar and butter.

- Mix in baking soda, baking powder, apricot jam and lemon juice to butter mixture.
- Pour in milk and follow with gradually adding flour, stirring to prevent lumps from forming.
- Decanter mixture into a baking dish.
- Bake for 20 minutes or until golden brown.

#### The sauce:

- Combine all the sauce ingredients in a microwave safe bowl and heat for 2 minutes in the microwave.
- Stir sauce once removed from microwave to ensure all the sugar has dissolved.
- Prick the malva pudding with

a toothpick, then drizzle the sauce over evenly.

- Place dish back in oven for three minutes to caramelize. Serve with custard or ice cream

### Peppermint tart

#### Ingredients:

2 packets tennis biscuits  
 500ml fresh cream  
 1 slab of mint chocolate (grated)  
 1 can caramel treat

#### Directions:

- Grease a rectangle dish and cover the bottom of the dish with biscuits
- Add cream into a bowl and

whisk by hand or with an electric mixer until soft peaks are formed

- Drop in caramel and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the grated chocolate and beat at a lower tensivity until all ingredients are mixed
- Spoon in a generous amount of the caramel cream mixture over the biscuits and spread evenly
- Add another layer of biscuits followed by caramel cream mixture and continue this process until your dish is full
- Sprinkle the remaining chocolate over the top to decorate and place in the fridge over night to set perfectly





## Amagwinya with mince

### Ingredients:

1kg cake flour  
1 tablespoon salt  
10g instant yeast  
4 tablespoons sugar  
60g margarine  
2 ½ cups lukewarm water  
Oil for frying

### Curried-mince filling:

1kg beef mince  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
2 onions (chopped)  
Handful coriander  
3 cloves garlic (chopped)  
4 teaspoons curry powder  
2 teaspoons ground coriander  
2 teaspoons ground turmeric

2 teaspoons ground cumin  
1 packet (50g) tomato paste

### Directions:

#### *For the amagwinya:*

- Mix the dry ingredients together and rub the margarine into the dry ingredients with your fingertips.
- Pour in the water to the mixture to form a soft dough. Knead the dough until a smooth elastic texture is formed. Add a little more water, if necessary. Cover with a cloth and let it rest for 10 minutes.
- Empty dough onto a flat dry surface, roll out and cut into 24 equal pieces.
- Roll each piece into a ball

and place onto a well-greased tray.

- Cover with a dry cloth and allow to rise in a warm place for 20 minutes.
- Pour oil into a large saucepan and heat.
- Test the heat of the oil by placing a small piece of dough into the oil. If there are small bubbles around the dough, it is good to proceed with frying.
- Place dough balls, risen side up into the warm oil.
- Fry on each side for 5 minutes or until golden brown.
- Remove from pan and let the excess oil from amagwinya drain on a paper towel.

For °C

### curried mince:

- In a pan, heat oil on medium heat, then throw in onions and garlic until they turn a translucent colour.
- Add spices to pan and let it cook for a minute. Add a bit of water to the pan for spices to form a paste.
- Drop in mince and stir until all the mince is covered with spices.
- Stir in tomato paste and add a few drops of water to prevent mince from sticking to the pan
- Let mince simmer for 15 minutes.
- Remove pan from stove and throw in coriander.



[illegible]

**FIGHTING CORRUPTION  
IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS**



Department:  
Government Communication and Information Systems  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**



# Howto

# Report Crime Tip-Offs

1

Download MySAPS or  
Dial \*134\*10111#  
and follow prompts

2

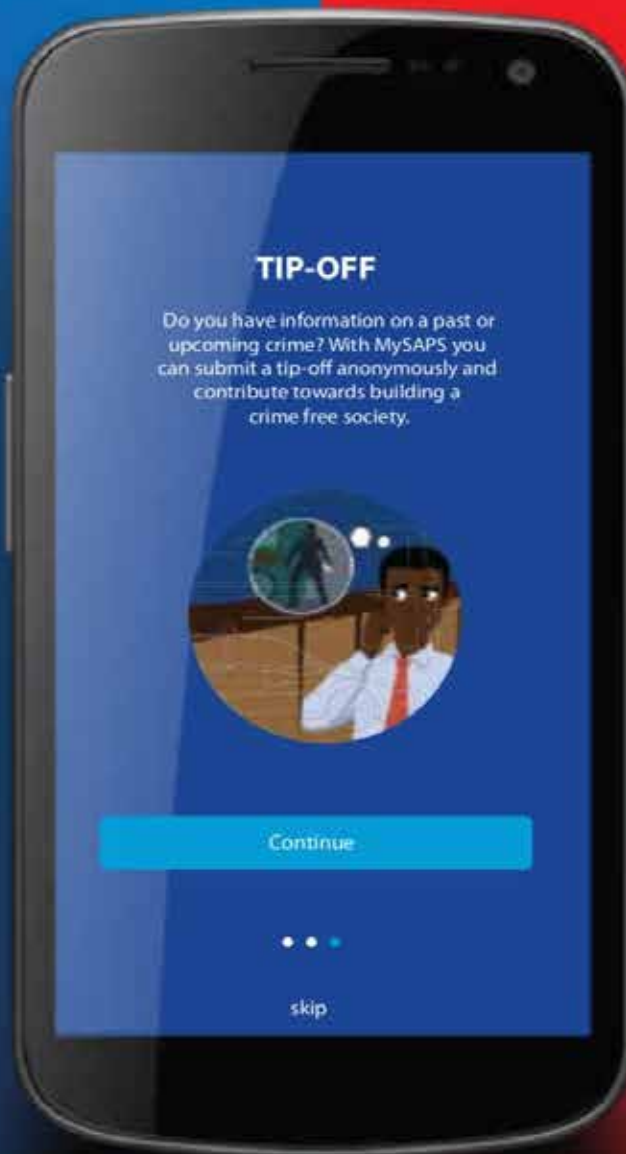
Select the Submit Tip-Off icon

3

Select the type of incident  
you're reporting

4

SAPS will contact you ASAP  
with further details



**MySAPS App**  
Enabled by Vodacom

Available on the  
**App Store**

GET IT ON  
**Google Play**

\*134\*10111#

USSD

T's & C's apply.



The future is exciting.  
Ready?



**vodacom**  
business