

PublicSector

M A N A G E R

Minister Gwarube

envisions a brighter future powered by quality education

Youth Month

empowering the next generation for meaningful economic participation

Dr Nwabisa Jama Shai

Pioneering research to prevent GBVF and protect communities



G20 SOUTH AFRICA 2025

Contents: June 2025

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Empowering youth for a changing world

As we mark Youth Month 2025, under the theme: "Skills for a Changing World – Empowering Youth for Meaningful Economic Participation," we are reminded that this is no ordinary month. And Youth Day is not a mere public holiday – it is a time for remembrance, reflection and renewed responsibility.

This is a month for us not only to commemorate, but to draw courage from generations of Oliver Tambo's young lions whose selfless sacrifice brought about this freedom – the freedom for which many paid with their own lives.

We honour the bravery of Hector Pieteron, Tsietsi Mashinini, and Hastings Ndlovu. But let us also remember John Davids from Manenberg, who was shot in the head from behind at just 16 years old. Dennis Dlanza, Abel Gcwabe and Enoch Follie – these young people were part of a national uprising. Their names

must not be forgotten. Their deaths should not be erased from history.

To paraphrase former Nelson President Mandela: when injustice had the upper hand, it was the youth who jolted our nation from its slumber and set South Africa on a path toward freedom. Today's youth are called to complete that journey.

A theme for the times

"Skills for a Changing World" is not a rhetorical flourish. It is a national imperative. Our young people are entering an era of profound technological transformation – and we must prepare them not just to survive it, but to shape it.

President Ramaphosa's Fourth Industrial Revolution Report reminds us that: "Success in the era of the 4IR depends on our ability to unleash the full scientific, industrial, and creative

potential of South African society. To thrive, we must transform how we learn, work, and live – and revolutionise the way we think".

This is about more than coding and robotics. It is about mindset. We must equip our youth with adaptability, imagination and the ability to lead in uncertain times.

Progress since 1994

South Africa has made significant strides in youth develop-

ment. In 1994, the matric pass rate was 58%. Today, it has surpassed 87%. In 1991, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) supported 7 240 students with R33 million. Today, over 1.1 million students are funded with a budget of more than R52 billion.

Black student representation in higher education has grown from 50% in 1994 to over 80% by 2020. Over 60% of graduates are now women. These gains are the

Minister
Sindisiwe
Chikunga.

result of hard-won policies and sustained investment – including the transformation of the NSFAS into a grant-based scheme to reduce student debt.

We are proud of young trailblazers like Mongiwa Ntuli, who completed a degree in Actuarial Science at just 17. She is proof of what our young people can do when given even half a chance.

Despite these gains, the youth unemployment crisis persists. In the first quarter of 2025, unemployment stood at 62.4% among youth aged 15 to 24, and at 40.4% among those aged 25 to 34. An estimated 3.8 million young South Africans are neither in education, employment nor training.

This is not sustainable. It is not acceptable. It demands urgent, innovative and measurable solutions.

Turning plans into opportunities

Government knows that young people do not want promises – they want real opportunities. That is why we have launched a number of bold, practical programmes to help young people find work, start businesses and gain skills that are useful in the real world.

The initiatives include:

◉ **National Youth Service**

Through the new South African National Service Institute, we are helping young people who are not working or studying to build skills in areas like agriculture, health, cybersecurity, coding and robotics. These are skills that can open doors in fast-growing industries – from farming to technology to public services.

◉ **Presidential Youth Employment Intervention**

Since 2020, this programme has helped

over 1.6 million young people get short-term jobs and work experience, especially in schools, government offices and community projects. Young people can register for free on *SAYouth.mobi* and connect with opportunities near them.

◉ **Goat and Sheep Farming Programme**

We are working with training colleges to give 5 000 graduates a chance to become successful small-scale farmers. These young people will get training, land, infrastructure, and livestock – plus help to access markets and sell their products.

◉ **Cybersecurity and Drone Training**

South Africa needs more skilled people to protect our digital systems and explore new industries like drones. That is why we are training young people to become cybersecurity experts and drone operators – with the chance to start businesses or find jobs in areas like farming, logistics and disaster management.

◉ **Young Women in Mining and Energy**

As South Africa explores renewable energy and mines for key minerals, we are making sure young women can take part in this economic shift – not just as workers, but as future industry leaders. This includes training in technology, manufacturing and managing energy projects.

Each of these programmes is built to lead somewhere – to a real job, a small business, or a long-term career. Because for us, empowerment is not just about getting a certificate. It is about helping young people earn a living, support their families, and contribute to our country's growth.

Partnering for impact

No government can transform youth outcomes alone. We call on the private sector, civil society, academia, labour and multilateral partners to co-invest in the ideas and capabilities of our young people. We call on every employer to open doors. Every policymaker to listen. Every institution to act.

A Future of dignity, not despair

As we look forward, we must challenge the myth that young people are apathetic. Across the country, we see youth driving community action, pioneering start-ups, excelling in Science, Technology,

Engineering and Mathematics; leading in politics and speaking truth to power. What they need is not motivation but momentum. Not handouts but a hand up.

Let us recommit – not in words, but in budgets, legislation and institutional reform. Let Youth Month 2025 be remembered not for speeches but for action.

As we honour those who fell in 1976, may we be worthy of their sacrifice by building a society where no young person is left behind – where youth are not only seen but supported; not only heard but hired; not only hopeful but empowered. ❖



Skills for the changing world – Empowering youth for meaningful economic participation.



Nomonde Mnukwa, GCIS Acting Director-General.

Government embraces digital technology to empower youth and improve service delivery

The South African government's embrace of digital technology is crucial for creating a society that is informed, inclusive, efficient, and competitive.

As we celebrate Youth Month, government remains committed to the empowerment of young people and ensuring that they are not left behind in the country's journey towards a digital and inclusive future. The 2025 Youth Month is commemorated under the theme; "Skills for the changing world, empowering youth for meaningful economic participation".

Digital technology is one of the skills needed for a changing world and is vital in ensuring that young people actively participate in the economy. To

support this, government has introduced a range of digital initiatives aimed at equipping youth with the tools and capabilities needed to succeed in the digital age.

Aligned with this vision, the National Digital and Future Skills Strategy of South Africa (2021–2025) acknowledges that young people must be equipped not only with advanced digital skills but also with essential 21st Century competencies, such as scientific, financial and cultural literacy; critical thinking; problem-solving; agility and ethical leadership.

The strategy's implementation guide places particular emphasis on equipping youth with digital skills that lead to meaningful employment. It recognises that young people between the ages 18 and 35 will be the driving force behind empowering the South African

economy and society with the digital expertise needed for a prosperous future.

Another key initiative is the National Pathway Management Network, often described as a 'network of networks'. The platform connects and integrates existing networks that support unemployed youth, creating a unified system that bring together both learning and earning opportunities. The network is facilitated through the SAYouth platform, which can be accessed for free online or via phone, providing a seamless connection to youth empowerment opportunities across the country.

Digital technology has the potential to enhance the delivery of government services, making them more accessible, efficient, and convenient for citizens and is becoming central to operations and service delivery world-wide.

Innovations like the Internet of Things, once seen as futuristic, are now part of our everyday life. Governments are embracing this shift, recognising the importance of connected systems in improving service delivery and breaking down silos.

This, however, does not come without challenges, especially for young democracies like ours and many other developing countries. Our challenges are rooted in a legacy of inequality, stemming from the apartheid era, which oppressed black South Africans and denied them basic human rights, resulting in a huge gap between the rich and the poor. As we move towards a digital world, we should keep in mind that we have a duty to bridge this gap to ensure that new innovations are inclusive and accessible to the previously disadvantaged.

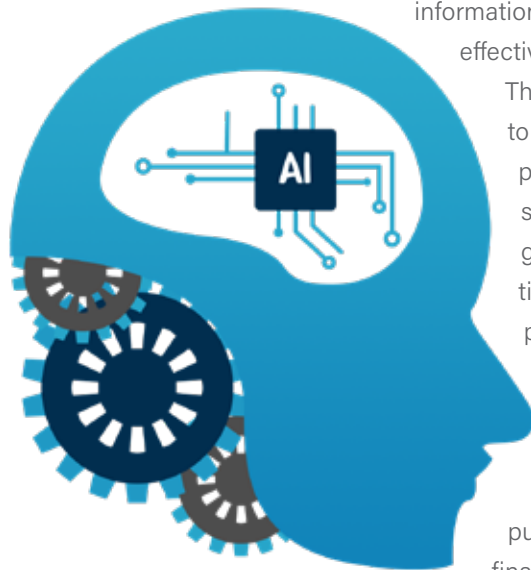
While government has already introduced digital systems in various aspects of service delivery, we acknowledge several challenges that require a coordinated solution. These include limited implementation capacity, fragmented technology systems, outdated legacy infrastructure and the duplication of efforts across initiatives.

To address this, government, as part of the Phase II of Operation Vulindlela (OV), has introduced a new priority, Harnessing Digital Public Infrastructure as a driver of Growth and Inclusion. This initiative is designed to establish a coordinated and focused approach to leveraging technology to deliver services, stimulate economic growth and promote a more inclusive society.

To drive this initiative, Cabinet recently approved the Roadmap for the Digital Transformation of Government, which aims to make government services more accessible, reliable and user-friendly. It builds on the success of existing digital platforms such as the SARS e-Filing, e-Home Affairs, e-Visas and other similar initiatives, enhancing their impact and extending digital access across all levels of public service.

Key components of the roadmap include the introduction of a digital identity system and a digital document wallet. These tools will allow individuals to securely authenticate their identity, digitally store, access and share verified documents such as birth and educational certificates.

The roadmap presents a stra-



tegic plan to accelerate digital transformation, emphasising the development of robust digital public infrastructure, which enhances data interoperability, thereby promoting transparency and accountability in government.

The roadmap will also address the challenge of fragmentation across govern-

ment departments – a barrier that has limited our ability to design and deliver targeted, efficient services. The integrated databases will streamline processes and improve the precision of our social programme targeting. To support this, a real-time data exchange platform will be established, allowing government departments to seamlessly share information and collaborate effectively.

This is expected to accelerate the processing of key services such as grant applications and business permits.

A new standard for efficiency and reliability in public and private financial interaction is underway with the development of a modernised payment system, which will enable real-time, secure and accurate transactions. The system, which is being developed by National Treasury and the South African Reserve Bank, will transform how individuals, organisations and government send and receive money.

Government is also developing a single, world-class digital

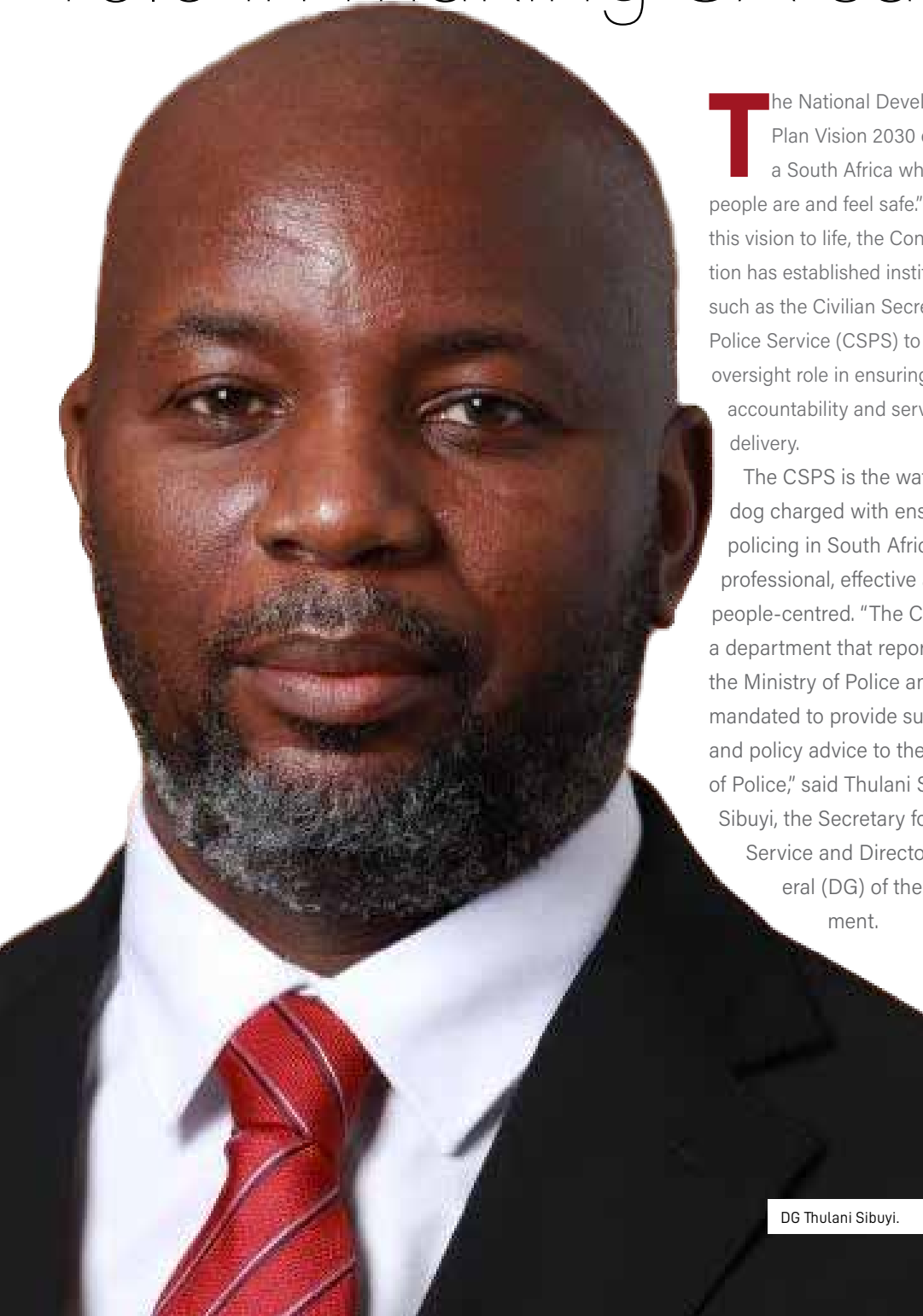
platform that will transform how South Africans access information and services. The unified portal, accessible through .gov.za, will consolidate fragmented government websites and standardise user interfaces, providing a consistent, streamlined experience for all users. The platform will ensure easy access to accurate, up-to-date information and a wide range of e-services, making interactions between citizens and government simpler and faster.

Through the Roadmap for the Digital Transformation of Government, we can strengthen these and many other digital initiatives, ensuring that no one is left behind.

As public servants, it is our responsibility to implement this roadmap effectively. Let us collaborate and work together to make it a success. We should take pride in initiatives designed to improve the lives of South Africans while positioning our public sector among the best in the world. We are capable and can make this happen.

By embracing digital technology, the South African Government can create a more inclusive, efficient, and competitive information society that benefits all citizens. ♦

The Civilian Secretariat's role in making SA safer for all



DG Thulani Sibuyi.

The National Development Plan Vision 2030 envisions a South Africa where “all people are and feel safe.” To bring this vision to life, the Constitution has established institutions such as the Civilian Secretariat for Police Service (CSPS) to play an oversight role in ensuring police accountability and service delivery.

The CSPS is the watchdog charged with ensuring policing in South Africa is professional, effective and people-centred. “The CSPS is a department that reports to the Ministry of Police and is mandated to provide support and policy advice to the Ministry of Police,” said Thulani Sibuyi, the Secretary for Police Service and Director-General (DG) of the department.

In an interview showcasing the work of the Civilian Secretariat, Sibuyi outlined how the institution fulfils its vital constitutional mandate.

“The CSPS monitors and evaluates the performance of SAPS against planned programmes on policing through promoting accountability and transparency in the service.”

He emphasised the department’s holistic approach to crime prevention: “The CSPS mobilises communities on crime prevention by bridging a gap between the police and the communities”.

Partnering with communities

The CSPS’s success relies heavily on strong partnerships with communities. One of its key roles is to support and empower Community Policing Forums (CPFs), which are made up of local community members who work with the police to combat crime and improve safety.

Sibuyi firmly believes that the first line of defence against crime begins with ordinary community members.



Photo: Supplied

“As a community member, you have to take responsibility for your safety and your surroundings. Always be alert [and] report any suspicious activities within your community...Be the eyes and ears in your community. Be intentional about reducing the risk for crime and violence,” he emphasised.

He urged citizens to hold one another accountable for actions that contribute to alcohol and drug abuse, highlighting the need to protect children and young people from psychologically damaging homes and community environments.

Fighting GBVF

South Africa’s battle against gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) and domestic abuse remains a national priority. In this context, the CSPA

plays a pivotal role in ensuring that SAPS members comply with the Domestic Violence Act of 1998.

Sibuyi explained that the CSPA, in collaboration with civil society organisations, provincial secretariats and the SAPS, has held a meeting to address the high rates of domestic and GBVF in the country, focusing on the role of the police in combating these issues.

“We then summarised the Domestic Violence Act [of 1998] and simplified it so that it can be understood by the society and police for the ease of implementation. This document is referred to as the Ministerial Six-Point Plan and it is placed in all police stations throughout the country,” explained the DG. We then summarised the Domestic Violence Act and simplified it so

that it can be understood by the society and police for the ease of implementation. This document is referred to as the Ministerial Six-Point Plan and it is placed in all police stations throughout the country.”

The Six-Point Plan

- All victims should be treated with respect, dignity and interviewed by trained police officials in a victim sensitive matter.
- Victims should be assisted at the Victim Friendly Room or an alternative room where the statement will be taken in private at the police station or other location providing victim support service.
- Victims will be referred or taken for medical examination by the healthcare professional to obtain medical evidence and

complete medical report.

- The investigation should be or a detective with relevant training.
- The families and victims of sexual offences, femicide and infanticide should be referred to the victim support services that are available within the precinct for legal, medical, social and psychological help.
- Victims should be proactively provided with feedback on the progress of their cases on a continuous basis.

Oversight and accountability

Effective oversight is at the core of the CSPA’s work. Sibuyi elaborated that the CSPA monitors the performance of the police service and regularly assesses how effectively it is implementing policies and systems.



A stakeholder engagement with the community in Vhembe District.

This includes monitoring how the police service utilises its budget to ensure compliance with all policy directives and instructions issued by the Minister.

In addition, the CSPS is tasked with producing reports on the compliance of the SAPS with policy directives and provides recommendations for areas that need improvement.

On cooperation with other oversight bodies, Sibuyi said, "IPID is invited to participate in forums that are relevant to its work. However, it should be noted that by law the CSPS does not play any oversight role over the IPID."

In light of increasing crime

rates in urban areas, the CSPS has supported a collaborative approach. "The Ministry of Police has entered into a cooperation agreement with all the metros in the country," said Sibuyi. "These agreements are drafted with the aim of adopting an integrated crime fighting approach which involves police and law enforcement agencies in the Metros."

This strategy involves "the exchange and the sharing of resources in the fight against crime [and includes] special operations by all law enforcement, joint initiatives, plans, interventions and programmes by all spheres of government"

This collaborative approach is already bearing fruits in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

Strong policies

The DG also explained that the CSPS has developed impactful frameworks like the Integrated Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy (ICVPS), which advocates for a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to addressing crime and violence.

This has "ensured that safety is at the centre of planning for economic development and the need to address the triple threat of poverty, inequality

and unemployment."

He added that the framework includes "special operations by all law enforcement, joint initiatives, plans, interventions and programmes by all spheres of government," adding that implementation has already begun in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal.

"Implementation mechanisms of the ICVPS such as community safety forums have also ensured that community members are active participants in realising safer communities for all."

The process begins at policy formulation level. "To ensure transparency and co-design of policy, stakeholders are consulted at various stages, including at the conceptualisation phase and in the review of the draft policy," Sibuyi explained.

Through platforms like *izimbizo*, the department actively engages with the public and values "well-considered written submission in response calls for inputs in the *Government Gazette*".

Sibuyi added that the CSPS views the State capability and collaboration as central to effectively address South Africa's development challenges. ♦



Employment Equity

Amendment Act, No. 4 of 2022

Key Considerations Regarding the Two Sets of Employment Equity Regulations Following the Implementation of the EE Amendment Act, No. 4 of 2022



3. Introduction of Sectoral Numerical Targets

The Minister of Employment and Labour is now empowered to set sector-specific numerical EE targets to ensure equitable representation of the suitably qualified designated groups (such as African, Coloured, Indian individuals, women, and people with disabilities) across all four upper occupational levels. These targets are tailored to each sector and are designed to be achieved over a five-year period.

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Michelle Phillips

committed to putting Transnet back on track



Photo: Transnet X account

Michelle Phillips, CEO of Transnet.

Michelle Phillips, the Transnet Group Chief Executive, speaks with the calm assurance of someone who knows the high stakes of her job.

Her tenure comes at a time when South Africa's state-owned logistics utility is under intense pressure to reform, recover and regain trust. For her, the post is more than a job. "What we do in Transnet is not a job. It is not an occupation. Our purpose is to move people out of poverty," she said firmly.

The CEO made the reflections during a recent exclusive tour of the parastatal's cutting-edge manufacturing site in Pretoria.

Transnet, once the crown jewel of South Africa's freight logistics network, has weathered a devastating decline in performance since the 2017/18 financial year. By 2022/23, freight rail volumes

had plummeted to just 149 million tons – a shadow of the company's former capacity.

Phillips addressed this reality head-on: "We have been in decline since 2017/18. In 2023, we implemented our recovery plan. Within six months of implementation, we have managed to take this business in a different direction."

While she takes measured pride in her team's accomplishments, Phillips remains grounded in reality. "While we are happy with the turnaround, we do not want to pat ourselves on the back too much yet. Yes, we have finally stopped a five-year decline, but that is just the beginning."

Positive turnaround

By the end of the 2024/25 financial year, Transnet reported an improvement in

rail volumes. "We recently closed our 2024/25 financial year having moved 161 million tons of freight. While we fell short of our 170 million-ton target, we have made it clear to industry stakeholders and customers that this represents a 9 million-ton improvement over last year," she said.

Phillips was unequivocal about the financial and structural difficulties facing the parastatal.

"Transnet is not a bottomless pit for public funds. We do not receive a single cent from National Treasury. Instead, we raise capital in the open market – borrowing money that we then invest directly back into this business".

She emphasises that negative narratives surrounding both Transnet and South Africa have serious financial consequences. "When we talk badly about our country

and about this state enterprise called Transnet, it makes it difficult for me and my team to secure funding," she explained.

For Phillips, supporting Transnet transcends corporate recovery; it's about protecting thousands of livelihoods. "We have almost 51 000 people in Transnet alone. I do not want to see anyone of them losing their job," she stated firmly.

Cultural transformation

A cornerstone of Phillips's mission has been driving cultural transformation throughout the organisation. For an organisation long burdened by mismanagement and inefficiency, she insisted meaningful change was underway – extending far beyond operational improvements. "This is a different Transnet," she declared. "We are busy changing the culture in this organisation. We work with integrity and with the utmost of ethics and truthfulness."

She acknowledged, with refreshing candour, that her leadership credentials have faced questioning in the past. "People will question me because I am not an engineer...But I am very, very firm on this micro solution towards the growth of this country," she said.

One of the gravest challenges Phillips raised was the ongoing sabotage and criminality target-



Photo: Transnet X account

“When we talk badly about our country and about this state enterprise called Transnet, it makes it difficult for me and my team to secure funding.”

ing Transnet's infrastructure.

This represents a national crisis, she argued — one that requires every South African to actively protect public infrastructure and support national development.

What resonated most powerfully in Phillips' impromptu address was her unwavering belief in South Africa, even against a backdrop of widespread cynicism. "This is a good country to be a part of, a good country to build in. I do not want to be a part of building any other country but this country".

She expressed a concern with the national tendency toward negativity. "Too often you have guides in other countries who will take you throughout their

country. They do not talk about the fact that they are living in poverty and in shacks and that they are struggling. They talk about the good things that their country and the government have been doing. I would like us as South Africans to start doing the same thing."

The road to recovery

The road to recovery remains long and fraught with challenges, but Phillips said that the determination to rebuild was already taking root within the organisation – and the country. "We still have a lot of work to do. We have not arrived yet."

Her message serves as both

a rallying call and a clear statement of intent. "We are extremely challenged... but we are working very hard to get Transnet out of the red and into the black...We believe that next year we will be in that position."

She concluded with an unmistakable resolve: "The responsibility of leading Transnet is not something that just fell into my lap. I take this responsibility very seriously."

In May, Transport Minister Barbara Creecy approved a R51 billion guarantee facility for Transnet in support of the entity's capital investment programme. The facility will also enable it to meet its debt obligations ❖

Siviwe Gwarube:

Fostering a brighter future with quality education

At only 35, South Africa's Basic Education Minister Siviwe Gwarube embodies the transformative potential of youthful leadership in the Public Service.

Recently honoured among the World Economic Forum's prestigious Young Global Leaders (YGL) Class of 2025, Gwarube approaches this international recognition with characteristic humility and determination.

"It is great to be recognised as one of young global leaders shaping not only public policy but also governance," she told Public Sector Manager magazine. "This acknowledges the work I have put into my career in public service over the past decade or so".

Gwarube's political journey began at 22, an age when most young professionals are still finding their footing in their careers and life in general. Today, as Basic Education Minister,

Gwarube steers one of South Africa's most critical sectors.

The YGL recognition prompted a moment of deep introspection: "It made me pause and say, 'This is why I choose what I do,'" she acknowledged. "I have a privilege of working for the public and I do not take that privilege lightly."

For Gwarube, this international recognition serves as both validation of her current path and a catalyst for future impact. "Being recognised as somebody who is effective was affirming," she said.

Eager to harness the power of the YGL network, she envisions strategic collaborations that could transform the educational landscape. "I want to breathe life into some of the things we are thinking about regarding education, not only in South Africa but across the African continent. The continent sits on the cusp of a youth dividend.



Minister of Basic Education Siviwe Gwarube.

But that dividend can only be harnessed if we ensure that young people are educated."

Three decades into democracy, Gwarube acknowledges significant educational progress, particularly in expanding access to education across previously marginalised regions. "Looking at the matric pass rate, which is an accepted

barometer of success, provinces like the Eastern Cape, once chronically underperforming, now hit 74%," she noted.

Yet, Gwarube is keenly aware of that for the education sector to be truly transformed it would take meaningful outcomes rather than mere statistical improvements. "It is not enough to simply pass students; we



Basic Education Minister Siviwe Gwarube visits Khwezilesizwe Primary School in KwaNtola, Fort Beaufort.

must ensure a quality pass – a bachelor’s or diploma pass – that opens doors,” she added.

Transformative interventions

The Minister highlighted transformative interventions that address fundamental barriers to learning, such as the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), which provides essential nourishment to millions of students daily.

“No child can learn on an empty stomach,” she stated. “Each year R10 billion is spent to ensure children access at least one meal a day – sometimes it is their only meal!”

She also highlighted poor levels of literacy among learners as another crisis. “Eight out of ten 10-year-olds in Grade 4 cannot read for meaning,” she warns.

She supports the notion that

interventions need to start in early childhood development (ECD), a portfolio recently transferred from Social Development to the Basic Education Department. “This ensures coherence from birth to age 18,” Gwarube explained. “If we strengthen cognitive milestones in the first 1 000 days, we will not need to obsess over Math and Science uptake later.”

She firmly believes that education must, ultimately, lead to economic participation. “Once young people leave school, the workforce must be ready to absorb them so they can contribute to their countries,” the Minister asserts.

An honest appraisal

Gwarube confronts systemic hurdles in basic education with unflinching honesty. Among South Africa’s 24 000 schools,

many remain “unviable, dangerous or undignified”, a reality compounded by significant funding constraints.

“Our budget is large, but needs outstrip resources,” she acknowledged. “Provinces face tough choices – filling teacher posts or paying service providers. These decisions erode gains if unchecked!”

Her vision extends beyond government responsibility to community ownership. “Vandalism and neglect undermine our efforts,” she explains. “We need communities to protect these assets. Schools belong to communities!”

To South Africa’s youth, Gwarube delivered a message of urgency and empowerment: “Get started. Lead as you are. Do not wait for milestones.”

She passionately advocates for civic engagement, whether

through politics or public service. “Politics affects rent, transport, safety – everything,” she said, before calling for greater civic involvement. “Know the councillor in your area and hold leaders accountable. Democracy is not guaranteed – it needs active citizens!”

The Minister envisions a future where young people increasingly shape government’s policy direction. “In five to 10 years, I should not be the youngest Minister,” she stated. “Seniority does not monopolise good ideas!”

While recognising technology’s transformative potential, Gwarube insists that South Africa needs to first take care of the fundamentals. “To leverage the tech wave, we need electricity, connectivity and community buy-in. If foundations are strong, our youth can lead globally,” she explained pragmatically.

She called for strategic partnerships, including initiatives with the South African Reserve Bank, to bridge the gap between classroom learning and workplace demands. Yet she candidly admits: “We need better synergy with higher education to smooth transitions!”

Gwarube’s vision for the future is both immediate and far-reaching: “I wish for youth to engage fiercely in democracy and resolve unemployment through quality education. Every child deserves skills to live with dignity, not become a statistic of hopelessness.” ❖

GBVF: Prevention is better than cure

Dr Nwabisa Jama Shai is a powerful champion against gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) in South Africa.

As Director of Gender and Health Research at the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC), Shai brings a researcher's precision and an advocate's passion to her work, consistently emphasising one crucial message: prevention is paramount.

Her research focuses on developing effective prevention strategies for GBVF. She specialises in researching gender dynamics, expression of femininity, and women's lived experiences with GBVF, particularly in low and middle-income countries (LMICs), where resources for addressing these issues are often limited.

She holds a PhD in Public Health from Wits University,

where she also works as an honorary senior lecturer in the School of Public Health.

In an exclusive interview with *Public Sector Manager* magazine, she said the country could no longer afford to continue with ineffective measures to address the challenge of GBVF.

"We need interventions that fundamentally reshape how we understand gender roles," Shai explained. "Programmes promoting gender equity must



reach both women and men in order for them to be effective. The evidence for what works to prevent violence against women and girls exists. We simply need to implement these proven approaches".

Gender inequality

Shai's research has identified gender inequality as a major driver of GBVF. The findings of her research reveal how men's societal power and privilege

enable patterns of control and domination over women and girls – a system that perpetuates itself by actively suppressing those who might challenge it.

"Gender inequality has seeped into every fibre of society. Dismantling these structures requires serious work to help people recognise how their everyday views, beliefs, and decisions regarding women and girls reinforce harmful patterns," she said.

According to Shai, building genuine gender equity demands collective action from all members of society. "We must examine how power and privilege operate, particularly how we unconsciously grant certain advantages to men that ultimately harm and oppress everyone who is not male," she said.

Through extensive household surveys, Shai and her team have identified several critical factors that fuel GBVF. In addition to gender inequality, her team's research shows how limited educational opportunities for women, early-life trauma, and underdeveloped communication and conflict resolution skills create a perfect storm of risk. "These elements do not exist in isolation. They interact and reinforce each other," she explained. "The result is a dangerous reality

where women become increasingly vulnerable to violence from intimate partners”.

Influencing government policies

Shai’s ground-breaking work has directly influenced government policy, helping shape both the National Strategic Plan on GBVF and its critical companion framework, the National Femicide Prevention Strategy.

“When you look at these policy documents, you will see three decades of our work reflected throughout,” she noted with quiet pride. “The Global Health Research Unit’s contributions have been comprehensive – from establishing the true scale of violence against women and girls, to uncovering its deep-rooted causes, to designing prevention approaches that actually work.”

In recent years, her unit was commissioned by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development to develop the Femicide Prevention Strategy. Shai led the team alongside Professor Naeemah Abrahams and Dr Leane Ramsoomar, both now retired.

“We developed it. The government policymakers trusted us to create an evidence-based

policy document articulating how to prevent the violence against women from escalating into femicide,” she explained.

Her team works closely with various government departments, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to promote the scaling up of evidence-based violence prevention interventions through the National Dialogue Forum and other GBV policy activities.

She also serves as a driver group member at the Violence Prevention Forum, a multisectoral platform for dialogue between policymakers, researchers, NGOs, social movements, donors and representatives of the private sector who are all committed to create a South Africa that is violence-free.

“The best part about my work is being able to translate research into meaningful knowledge that is packaged into participatory interventions that we deliver to communities. Connecting our research to individual persons and families is the greatest endeavour all researchers should

embrace,” she said.

Her message to public servants is that GBVF is deeply connected to the unequal gender attitudes that workers also hold as members society.

“Let us support efforts to build

gender equitable workspaces by addressing and preventing sexual harassment and GBVF in order to build a successful, productive and motivated workforce for the advancement of our economy and communities,” she urged. ❖



Dr Nwabisa Jama Shai, Director of Gender and Health Research at the SAMRC.

Over 200 000 young people start work in schools today

Today marks the 'first day at school' for about 200 000 young people at over 20 000 schools nationwide. This time, however, they are not arriving at school as learners, but as working adults. They are participants in the fifth phase of the Basic Education Employment Initiative, the largest youth employment programme in South Africa's history.

After a year's pause, the initiative returns to townships, villages, inner cities, farms and special needs schools, bringing hope, energy and incomes to places where opportunities are too often out of reach.

The initiative is a flagship programme of the Presidential Employment Stimulus, which has, since its inception in 2020, supported the delivery of jobs and livelihood opportunities in our country. The Basic Education Employment Initiative is implemented by the Department of Basic Education and by provincial education departments. It is now funded by the UIF Labour Activation Programme and national government.

This programme is designed to develop the work skills that employers say they need, such as time management, task man-

agement, teamwork, problem solving, IT, admin and much more.

In the process, participants undertake roles aligned to school priorities to ensure these young people add real value, enhancing the learning environment for learners and strengthening learning outcomes.

The Basic Education Employment Initiative offers opportunities for young people at all skills levels. Graduates are prioritised for work in the classroom, where their tasks allow teachers to spend more time on teaching and lesson prepara-

tion. Curriculum Assistants support maths, science and technology. Reading Champions promote literacy and a culture of reading. Lab and Workshop Assistants support technical subjects. Others support IT and school administration.

They also tackle essential maintenance, such as fixing doors, painting peeling walls, maintaining school vegetable gardens and playgrounds. Care and Support Assistants work with School Support Teams to identify and support children at risk. Still others spark life into sports, art and music, activities



that inspire learners, uncover their talents and build pride in communities. Together, these roles provide real work experience to young people and vital support to our education system.

The best possible advice to the young people starting at schools this week comes from a former participant in the programme. In 2023, Sibongile Joni was a Curriculum Assistant at Emsengeni Primary School in the Eastern Cape. She has since been employed in an NGO called Masinyusane.

She has this advice for participants now starting in the programme: "Be reliable: your consistency builds trust. Be willing to learn, ask questions, accept feedback and grow daily. Take initiative: if something needs to be done, do it without waiting to be told. Treat every task as important, no matter how small, because excellence in the small things builds your reputation. Always be professional: your attitude, respect and conduct matter. Build strong relationships with staff and learners. People open doors for those they trust and enjoy working with. Lastly, make the most of the trainings offered, they equip you with the skills you'll need for your next step."

She says this journey has taught her that growth doesn't come overnight. She says:

"Start strong. Stay consistent. You're building your future today."

Every participant has their own hopes and dreams for their future beyond this programme. Whether they pursue a career in education, undertake further studies, search for a job or embrace self-employment, they won't be starting from scratch. From this programme, they will carry invaluable skills and experience.

Yet, in a tough labour market, they will each need to tackle their next chapter with creativity and initiative. As a society, we cannot leave young people to navigate the transition into work alone. Together, we need to step up to assist them.

These young people will leave the school environment having shown up, contributed and made a difference. They will have worked in high-pressure environments with limited resources and will understand deadlines and responsibility.

To employers, we say: give them their next opportunity, mentor their enthusiasm, help take their potential to the next level. We also need to reach those young people who want to be entrepreneurs. We need to find new ways to support those who want to create their own jobs and local value, to connect them to finance, training, markets and networks.



Today we celebrate this cohort of young people beginning meaningful work, many for the first time. But let us also not forget those who applied for these posts but who weren't selected.

Through the Presidential Employment Stimulus, we have demonstrated the government's capacity to address the youth unemployment problem. Through this programme we have been able to give young people work experience and a pathway to formal employment or even further education.

We do believe that this will have a much longer term benefit for the employability of young people. This is but one initiative that seeks to address the youth unemployment challenge. We still have much more to do to address the plight of young people.

These young people are showing us what they are capable of. It is up to all of us in society to give them the opportunities they need to thrive. ❖

***This message was first published on 2 June 2025**

Driving youth empowerment to unlock economic opportunities



As South Africa commemorates 2025 Youth Month, the country finds itself at a critical economic juncture. In the face of evolving global trends and persistently high youth unemployment rates, government is intensifying efforts to equip young people with the skills, resources and opportunities needed for meaningful participation in the economy.

In a statement, the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) announced that this year's Youth Month commemorations will focus on industries that are essential to advancing youth empowerment and driving economic transformation. These include the transport, aerospace, and aviation sectors, which are well-positioned to unlock opportunities in education, skills development and employment.

The creative economy will

also take centre stage, offering young people avenues for innovation, entrepreneurship and self-expression. The agency also highlighted enhanced support for youth-led small, medium, and micro enterprises in the mining sector through both financial and non-financial interventions.

The agency added that focus will also be placed on initiatives aimed at improving physical and mental health, while reducing risky behaviours among young people.

The 2025 Youth Month will be commemorated under the theme: "Skills for the Changing World – Empowering Youth for Meaningful Economic Participation".

"The theme reflects a shared national commitment to building a future-ready generation through education, skills training, entrepreneurship, and

meaningful economic inclusion," stated the agency.

"Through robust partnerships across public and private sectors, as well as programmes such as the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention (PYEI) and the Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, thousands of young South Africans are gaining access to training, employment, internships and business opportunities".

Youth empowerment

Presenting a recent update on the PYEI, Deputy Minister in The Presidency, Nonceba Mhlauli, revealed that over 4.78 million young people are now registered on the National Pathway Management Network, with more than 1.67 million earning opportunities secured to date through the initiative.

She highlighted the initiative's

success in coordinating partners and creating pathways that boost youth economic participation.

In the 2024/25 fourth-quarter report (January to March 2025), Mhlauli noted that over R70 million was disbursed to 11 implementing partners, including R30 million in the latest quarter.

"We are particularly proud of the continued momentum of the Jobs Boost Outcomes Fund, which uses an innovative pay-for-performance model to incentivise the placement of young people into sustained, quality jobs, has made steady progress in its pilot phase".

Mhlauli said by the end of March 2025, over 5 400 young people had been enrolled reaching 65% of the programme's enrolment target.

"More than 3 000 young people had been placed into quality

“Through robust partnerships across public and private sectors, as well as programmes such as the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention (PYEI) and the Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, thousands of young South Africans are gaining access to training, employment, internships and business opportunities”.

jobs and over R70 million had been disbursed to 11 implementing partners, including R30 million in this quarter alone. These jobs are not just temporary placements.

“They are quality jobs, defined by duration, income level, and growth potential. We are already seeing shifts in employer practices as a result to better accommodate excluded young people,” Mhlauli said.

Connected ecosystem

The Deputy Minister said government remains committed to building a connected, demand-led ecosystem that not only creates opportunities but also drives systems change in the labour market.

“As always, the success of this initiative is due to the ongoing collaboration between government, private sector, development partners, and the young

people themselves.

“We will continue sharing our progress through these quarterly reports. As always, detailed data and insights are available on the PYEI dashboard at www.stateofthenation.gov.za.

“We also invite our youth to register on *SAYouth.Mobi* which is a zero-rated site where they will access information about the PYEI as well as all youth empowerment related matters,” she explained.

Launched in 2020 by President Cyril Ramaphosa, the PYEI is a direct response to the challenge that too many young people are not transitioning from learning to earning.

The initiative is focused on four pillars – implementation of the Pathway Management Network, implementation of demand-led training through a ‘pay for performance’ model, rollout of the revitalised National Youth Service and Implementation of



interventions to stimulate local economies through the establishment of the Local Ecosystem Enablement Fund.

“As we approach 16 June, a date of profound historical importance, we are reminded of the pivotal role played by the youth of 1976, who stood courageously against the injustices of the apartheid regime.

“Their bravery ignited South Africa's journey towards democracy, and their legacy continues to inspire generations. Youth Month is a time for remembrance, reflection, and a renewed commitment to the empowerment and development of young individuals in South Africa”, noted the NYDA. ❖

Investing in our future

through Integrated School Health Programmes

In a rapidly changing world, the concept of renewal must serve as the currency of our collective commitment to set our country on a higher trajectory of sustainable growth and development. As we navigate the complexities of uncertain and fluid political landscapes, persistent economic challenges that deepen social inequalities, and aggravate environmental concerns, it is essential that we embrace renewal not just as a concept but as a fundamental principle guiding our actions and policies.

As we look towards a healthier future for our children, it is imperative that we recognise the pivotal role of the Integrated School Health Programme (ISHP) in shaping not only their health but also their educational outcomes. This joint initiative between the departments of Basic Education, Health, and Social Development aims to create an environment where children can

thrive academically and physically. However, to realise the full potential of the ISHP, we must invest more resources and implement stringent measures for monitoring and evaluation.

The ISHP is designed with clear goals, to improve children's health, reduce health barriers to learning, and ensure that learners can stay in school and perform to the best of their abilities. It also provides essential sexual and reproductive health services for older learners. These objectives are not merely aspirational; they are critical for our children's development and our nation's future.

A supportive and conducive learning atmosphere

The programme encompasses vital components such as education on healthy lifestyles, drug and substance abuse, sexual and reproductive health. It includes



Mondli Mvambi,
spokesperson for the Free
State Department of Health.

Photo: Free State Department of Health

health screenings for vision, hearing, oral health, and tuberculosis, as well as onsite services like deworming and immunisation. By addressing these health issues directly within the school environment, we create a more supportive and conducive learning atmosphere.

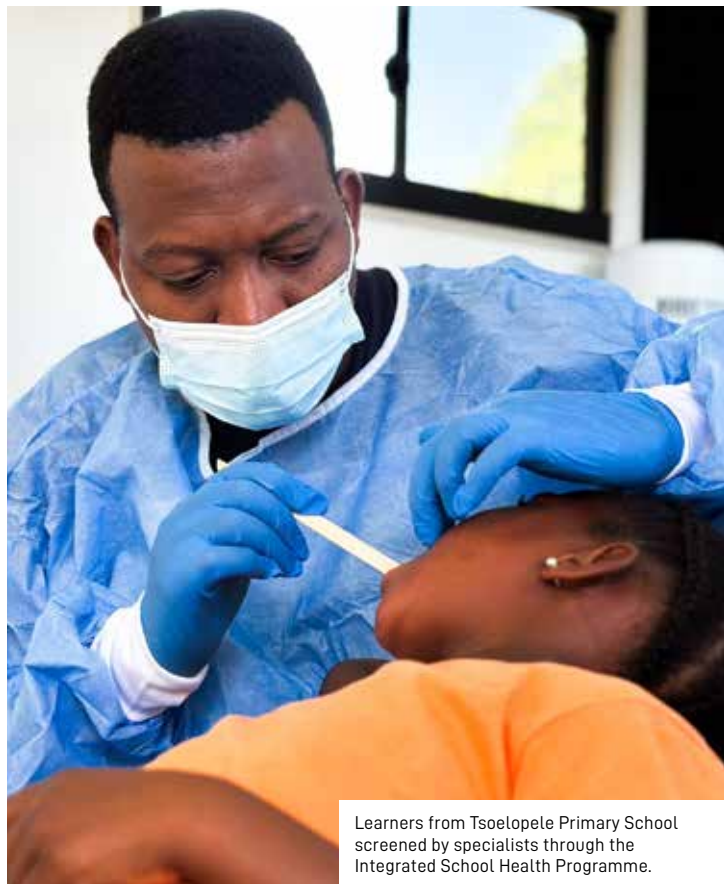
However, despite the programme's stated noble intentions, we face significant challenges in its implementation. Poor communication, lack of collaboration among stakeholders and inadequate resources hinder government's ability to deliver these essential services effectively. To overcome these obstacles, we must prioritise investment in the ISHP. This includes not only financial resources but also capable human capital – training health workers, educators and community volunteers to work collaboratively and effectively.

Monitoring and evaluation

Moreover, stringent monitoring and evaluation measures are crucial to ensure that the ISHP is meeting its goals. We need to establish clear metrics for success and regularly assess the programme's impact on children's health and educational



A learner from Lulama Higher Primary School in Soweto is screened by an Integrated School Health nurse.



Learners from Tsoelopele Primary School screened by specialists through the Integrated School Health Programme.

outcomes. This data will not only help us understand what is working and what is not, but

it will also provide transparency and accountability to stakeholders and advocacy groups,

including parents and communities.

Supporting the ISHP helps secure a better future for our children. By improving their health, we are directly enhancing their ability to learn and succeed in school. Healthy children are more likely to attend school regularly, engage in learning, and achieve better academic results. In turn, this contributes to a more educated and capable workforce, which is essential for our country's development.

The Programme holds immense potential to transform the lives of our children. Government must take bold steps to lead a purposeful social compact, bringing together schools and communities – to ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive in both health and education. Our children deserve nothing less. ❖



Young talent an answer to unfilled ICT jobs in SA

South Africa's digital economy is growing fast, but not fast enough to keep up with the country's pressing need for jobs. New research by Collective X shows that while employers need digital skills, too many junior roles are going unfilled.

This highlights a critical opportunity to address both youth unemployment and the digital talent gap, if the right support systems are put in place.

"There's a mismatch between the skills young people have and the kind of experience employers expect. But with targeted training and real workplace experience, thousands of young South Africans could fill these roles," says Rob Urquhart, Executive for evaluation impact and learning at Collective X.

The digital jobs snapshot: big demand, bigger opportunity

Drawing on data from major online job boards, including Pnet, as well as statistics from Media, Information and Communication Technologies Sector Education and Training Authority and Statistics South Africa's Quarterly Labour Force Survey, the research found:

- 30 000+ ICT jobs currently advertised, making up 26% of all job listings.
- Close to 320 000 people were working in digital jobs in the past year.
- 118 000 digital roles unfilled, a 37% vacancy rate.
- 41,000 of those roles are junior-level, ideal for youth.

These numbers point to one thing: South Africa's digital economy has space to grow, and youth could be the engine that drives it forward.

Zones of opportunity

Just 20 job types make up 78% of all digital vacancies. The top three being software developers at 13%, web developers at 10% and information technology support technicians (8.4%)

However, the real hiring momentum for junior roles appears to be in areas like data science, analysis, and Microsoft development, roles where demand has outpaced mid- and senior-level supply, forcing employers to look for cost-effective, trainable junior digital talent.

Collective X's research identifies these areas as "zones of opportunity".

"While the most common vacancies might seem like natural entry points for junior talent, they are not always the ones hiring young people," says Urquhart.

"We are seeing roles like data analysts, data scientists, and Microsoft developers showing a growing share of junior opportunities, a clear signal that demand is shifting and employers are becoming more open to nurturing young talent in high-demand areas."

In contrast, jobs in desktop support are oversaturated, making it harder for young people to get a foot in the door.

Beyond skilling: why work experience matters

While South Africa has seen a rise in digital skills training programmes, Collective X notes that the missing piece is demand-led skilling for the jobs employers need to fill, supported by access to meaningful workplace exposure, or work-integrated learning (WIL). Without structured and guided workplace experience as part of their learning, young people struggle to apply what they have learned and build confidence in a real-world environment.

"Business has a major role to play in solving this challenge," says Urquhart. "There are many young people ready to work, and as many roles waiting to be filled. But we need more employers to open the door."

Through its Digital Skills Impact Fund

Co-payment Programme, Collective X is partnering with employers to co-pay for junior WIL placements. The programme provides a smart hiring solution that lowers risk for businesses while building a sustainable pipeline of junior digital talent.

The initial research findings can be found on: <https://www.thecollectivex.org/revealed-the-digital-jobs-south-africa-needs-most-right-now/>. The full research report will be released at the end of July 2025.

** Collective X is a not-for-profit coordinating intermediary driving South Africa's national digital skills strategy. Through a highly collaborative approach involving both public and private sector partners, the organisation focuses on developing entry-level digital skills to address the country's critical digital talent shortage. By aligning digitally-skilled youth with employer demand and leveraging outcomes-based funding models, Collective X works to rapidly scale inclusive, high-impact solutions. Our immediate objective is to build a strong, future-fit digital talent pipeline, positioning South Africa as a global competitor. Our 10-year goal is to create 500,000 new digital jobs in the country. Collective X actively partners with key government departments to support scalable, systems-level change and unlock meaningful digital employment opportunities for young South Africans.*



SA and USA to continue with engagement following fruitful discussions

President Cyril Ramaphosa has described his bilateral meeting with United States (US) President Donald Trump as “robust and fruitful”, signalling a new chapter of engagement between South Africa and the US, particularly in trade and investment.

Speaking to South African media upon the conclusion of his Working Visit to the US capital, Washington, DC, President Ramaphosa said the two leaders had an “in-depth and positive exchange”, not only on lighter matters such as golf, but critically on economic cooperation and mutual concerns.

“We had a really good bilateral, although a number of issues came up, which you will all have observed, and we were able to have a robust engagement with



President Cyril Ramaphosa with President Donald Trump in the Oval Office during South Africa's bilateral meeting with the US.

Mr Trump in your presence.

“Following that engagement, which you all witnessed, we retired to the Cabinet Room for lunch. We were then able to have really good in depth exchanges with President Trump and his other officials,” said the President.

A major outcome of the meet-

ing was a renewed commitment to sustained engagement between the two nations, especially at the trade and industry level.

President Ramaphosa stressed that discussions will continue on several key matters, including investment flows, tariff structures, and access to the US market through frameworks such as the

African Growth and Opportunity Act.

“I want to confirm that there will continue to be engagement between South Africa and the United States officials, particularly at the trade and industry level, to deal with the package of issues that we had tabled that have to do with trade and investment.

“I was rather pleased that there is a firm agreement and undertaking that we are going to continue engaging, so there is no disengagement. For us, that was one of the key outcomes that we had wanted.

“Our objective in coming here was to reset relations between the two countries and to reposition our relations, which had become contaminated by some of the issues that had been

raised during the engagement,” the President said.

Addressing misconceptions

The President said the bilateral dialogue was an opportunity to clarify concerns and address misconceptions.

“It turned out that President Trump’s concern is about the safety of the people of South Africa. Much as he zeroed it down to white farmers, we kept saying there is a security problem and we are not running away from that. There is criminality.

“We even sought to deal with it from its genesis... When the economy is not growing, when there is poverty and when there is unemployment, one of the social ills that we get as a derivative is criminality that spreads itself around the country. It is not only in farms – it is in rural and even urban areas. He [President Trump] expressed his views on that, and I was rather pleased that a number of our compatriots were able to deal with that,” added the President.

During the engagement at the Oval Office, Zingiswa Losi, President of the Congress of South African Trade Unions – the country’s largest trade union – told President Trump that South Africa has a violence and crime issue rather than a race issue.

“If you go into the rural areas,



South African officials joined President Cyril Ramaphosa at the bilateral meeting with US President Donald Trump at the White House, from left: Minister of Agriculture John Steenhuisen, Trade, Industry and Competition Minister Parks Tau, Minister in The Presidency Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, International Relations Minister Ronald Lamola, US Vice-President JD Vance.

where the black majority are, [there is gender-based violence against] women and the elderly... The problem in South Africa is not necessarily about race, but it is about crime and we are here to [look at] how both nations can work together to reset trade relations and investment, and also help us [to] have the technology that is needed to address the level of crime we have in our country,” Losi said.

Trade and investment

On the economic front, President Ramaphosa reiterated South Africa’s call for increased foreign direct investment from the US, noting that US companies already play a vital role in the South African economy. He cited

a recent American investment in a local lithium company as an encouraging sign of continued interest.

“In the discussions over lunch, we did not dwell on that issue. However, he did ask what help we need as a country.

“The main thing we said, in terms of assistance, is investments... We require more investments from the US, and we require a more positive disposition from the US because once the US government and the President emits a very positive disposition towards South Africa, it unlocks a lot of investments, and investors would then be willing to come and invest their money.

“We want foreign direct investment. We want to keep the jobs

that we have that have been created by US companies, and we want more and more US companies to come and invest,” he said.

G20 Summit

President Ramaphosa also touched on global multilateral cooperation, confirming that the G20 was among the topics of discussion.

President Ramaphosa, who currently chairs the G20, said he urged President Trump to attend the upcoming summit in South Africa, saying he hoped to hand over the Presidency “to a full chair, not an empty one”.

“We also discussed the G20 and we stressed that the G20, having been formed by the US, of course, together with other



“When the economy is not growing, when there is poverty and when there is unemployment, one of the social ills that we get as a derivative is criminality that spreads itself around the country”.

countries, it is important that the US should continue playing a key role... I want to hand over the Presidency of the G20 to President Trump in November, and I said he needs to be there.

“I do not want to hand over the Presidency of the G20 to an empty chair (sic). I want to hand it over to him, sitting in that chair in November, and he is going to give serious consideration to it. In fact, I expect him to come to South Africa,” added the President.

In a light-hearted moment, President Ramaphosa shared that he and President Trump exchanged books as gifts – a golf book from South Africa and a publication from President Trump, which he said symbolised the goodwill of the meeting.

Reflecting on the overall visit, President Ramaphosa described

the meeting as a “great success,” saying it had fulfilled South Africa’s key objectives.

“I do believe that our visit here has been a great success. We have been able to achieve what we set out to achieve: re-engagement with the US, to put the issues of investment and trade on the table, and to ensure that we continue engaging through the various other formations. All in all, I am rather pleased I go back [home] having a sense that we have done well,” he said.

Back home, President Ramaphosa was widely praised for maintaining his composure during what many South Africans had anticipated might be a tense encounter.

“I know that many South Africans were filled with a great deal of concern... but that did not ensue,” the President said,

referencing public expectations of confrontation.

“I know that the media wanted to see drama and something really big happening, and I am sorry we disappointed you somewhat in that regard,” he said with a smile.

The meeting at the Oval House was attended by senior US and South African officials. The South African delegation to Washington, DC consisted of several Cabinet Ministers, notable business figures, and prominent South Africans.

President Ramaphosa was flanked by International Relations and Cooperation Minister Ronald Lamola, Minister in The Presidency, Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, Trade, Industry and Competition Minister Parks Tau and Agriculture Minister John Steenhuisen.

In addition, the President was

accompanied by Johann Rupert, the Founder of Richemont and Chairman of Remgro. Vice President of Business Unity South Africa, Adrian Gore, and COSATU President Zingiswa Losi also formed part of the delegation.

South African pro golfers Ernie Els and Retief Goosen were also in attendance.

President Trump was flanked by several key officials, including Vice President JD Vance, Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau, Chief of Staff Susie Wiles, Special Government Employee Elon Musk, and Dr Massad Boulos, who serves as a Senior Advisor for Africa, as well as on Arab and Middle Eastern Affairs.❖

– **SAnews.gov.za.**



Visit the Nelson Mandela Museum in Qunu, the birthplace of the iconic leader, for an enriching journey through his life and legacy.

The museum spans three significant locations: Bhunga in Mthatha, where Mandela's story is shared through his own words from *The Long Walk to Freedom*; Mvezo, the open-air museum marking his birthplace; and the Nelson Mandela Heritage and Youth Centre in Qunu, where he spent his childhood. This unique heritage trail offers an intimate look at Madiba's journey, providing visitors with a deep connection to his life and the values he stood for.



#G20SouthAfrica #ReKaofela | www.g20.org



Minister Nzimande

South Africa leads key G20 meeting to drive Africa's science and innovation agenda

The University of Mpumalanga (UMP) recently hosted the second G20 Research and Innovation Working Group (RIWG) meeting, in partnership with the Department of Science and Innovation. Featuring key sessions from the G20 Bioeconomy Initiative and Oceans20, the event underscored South Africa's growing role in shaping global science, technology and innovation policy.

Held at UMP's Mbombela Campus, this landmark event, aligned with South Africa's

G20 Presidency, highlighted the vital role that African institutions can play in advancing the global knowledge economy. Framed by the theme; "Harnessing Global Solidarity for the Implementation of STISA 2034, the meeting echoed the broader national G20 message of Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability.

A focus on Africa

The RWIG meeting coincided with the Africa Day celebrations, adding symbolic weight

to a gathering focused on progress and partnership. Delegates from across the globe marked a fundamental moment in Africa's pursuit of self-reliance and innovation-driven development. In his address, Minister of Science and Innovation, Prof Blade Nzimande, emphasised that Africa's ongoing challenges of poverty, inequality and underdevelopment remain deeply rooted in its history of colonial exploitation.

Minister Nzimande underscored the impor-



Delegates at the G20 RIWG meeting.

tance of the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA), describing it as a vital framework for achieving the continent's development goals. It was adopted during the 23rd Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government Summit.

"The strategy is underpinned by science, technology and innovation as multi-function tools and enablers for achieving continental development goals. The realisation of this strategic objective requires the AU to implement the STISA with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA).

"The AFCFTA can play a vital role in promoting innovation-driven trade in biotech, pharmaceuticals, and green technology. To fulfil this commitment, South Africa is developing world-class research platforms to translate strategy into action through flagship initiatives such as the Southern Africa Network for Biosciences and the African Institute

for Mathematical Sciences," said the Minister.

He emphasised that South Africa and the rest of the continent have a unique opportunity to position themselves in the international science diplomacy and innovation-led development by fostering a robust bioeconomy. According to the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation, the bioeconomy aims to leverage bioinnovation to drive economic growth and promote social development. This approach prioritises key sectors such as health, agricultural, industrial and environmental, and indigenous knowledge, guided by the National Bioeconomy Strategy and underpinned by cutting-edge science and traditional knowledge systems.

The Minister noted that while Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents both opportunities and complex challenges, South Africa and African, as a whole, can harness the power of AI to transform both the bioeconomy

and the digital economy. By embracing AI, youth-led small, medium and micro enterprises across the continent can greatly enhance operational efficiency, make informed, data-driven decisions, and develop innovative products and services that distinguish them in both local and global markets.

The RWIG serves as a valuable platform for South Africa to demonstrate its leadership in advancing science, technology and innovation initiatives aimed at addressing complex challenges across the continent. The Minister called on G20 member states to recognise South Africa as a central hub for research and innovation in Africa, and to support its efforts through targeted investments that drive the transformative change both the continent and the global community seek to achieve.

Global collaboration

The RIWG is a vital component of the G20's science diplomacy. It brought together representatives from the world's leading and emerging economies, including several African nations and focused on addressing urgent global challenges through innovation-driven approaches. Discussions centred on critical issues such as the just energy transition, food security, biodiversity and the ethical and responsible use of artificial intelligence.

"As the world economy moves

into a new era defined by innovation, sustainability and digital transformation, South Africa is taking decisive steps to contribute to the emerging future. The country is on a mission to champion a science, technology and innovation path that is not only ethically imperative but essential to advance the domestic and global economic development agenda," added the Minister.

Statistics show that the continent accounts for only 1.3% of global research spending and generates only 0.1% of the world's patents. Despite this, the continent holds vast reserves of minerals and rich indigenous knowledge systems. The resources underscore the urgent need for bold, innovative policies and institutional frameworks aligned with science, research and innovation. Increased investment in this sector is essential to drive inclusive growth, eradicate poverty and enable Africa to unlock its full potential.

In addition, this has a potential to help reposition Africa as a strategic global player, shifting the narrative away from the view that the continent depends and relies on foreign dominance.

The outcomes of these discussions are expected to play a key role in shaping the G20 Research and Innovation Ministerial Declaration and aligning with the broader priorities of South Africa's G20 Presidency. ❖

Call to close financial inclusion gap for women

Deputy Minister of Finance, Dr David Masondo, has emphasised the importance of closing the financial inclusion gap for women and ensuring that they can leverage financial services to smooth their incomes, invest in opportunities and protect themselves against shocks.

"Usage remains low, and significant gaps persist, particularly for women, youth, informal workers and rural entrepreneurs," said the Deputy Minister during his address at the second Plenary Meeting of the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPFI) held in Skukuza, Mpumalanga recently.

He added that empowering women is not just a matter of fairness or social equity; it is smart economics.

"When women gain access to financial tools and earnings, they invest in their families and communities to an impressive degree. Studies show that



Deputy Minister of Finance, Dr David Masondo at the G20 Infrastructure Investors Dialogue.

women typically reinvest up to 90% of their income back into their households, compared to around 30 to 40% for men.

"We have seen that financially

empowering a woman creates a ripple effect; children stay in school longer, family nutrition improves and local economies become more resilient. Con-

versely, when women remain on the margins of finance, we all lose out on growth and innovation.

"Let us remember that closing the financial inclusion gap for women is not a sidebar, it is central to our agenda. Giving women access to and the ability to use affordable payments, credit, and insurance will boost development broadly," he said.

Prioritising women's economic empowerment

The Deputy Minister reiterated that South Africa has prioritised women's economic empowerment in its national strategies, and encouraging progress is being made.

"But there is much farther to go to ensure that the creative entrepreneur I described, and millions like her can prosper. She does not want charity; she wants the playing field: levelled reliable digital payments, safe savings, and fair credit so her enterprise can grow.

"Turning this vision into reality will require concerted action on multiple fronts: public policy, private innovation and grassroots capacity-building. South Africa is committed to doing its part.

"Through our Financial Sector Development Reform Pro-



Dr David Masondo addresses the G20 Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion meeting via video.

gramme, supported by partners like the World Bank and the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, we invest in the infrastructure and reforms that move inclusion from access to usage," Masondo said.

Inclusive innovation

The Reserve Bank has launched the Inclusive Payments Digitalisation Programme that aims to bring practical digital payment solutions to the informal sector.

"We have piloted it in two communities, Thembisa and Hammanskraal, to develop digital ecosystems right where people live and work.

"This pilot is a testament to what is possible when we blend policy intent with on-the-ground innovation. We plan to expand such efforts, informed



by data and community feedback, so that no entrepreneur is left behind by the digital finance revolution.

"Our commitment goes further. We are streamlining regulations to encourage low-cost fintech solutions through the Inter-governmental Fintech Working Group, strengthening consumer protection to build trust in digital

finance through the Conduct of Financial Institutions Bill, and improving connectivity in rural areas through the SA Connect programme," he said.

In essence, efforts are being made to create an environment where using financial services is easy, affordable, and safe so that inclusion translates into actual economic participation.

"But South Africa cannot do it alone. The beauty of the GPFI is that it allows us to learn from each other and to tackle common challenges together. Every country in this room has experiences, successful policies, clever tech applications, and even instructive failures that can inform the way forward for all of us," Masondo said.

The GPFI is an inclusive platform for G20 countries, non-G20 countries and relevant stakeholders for peer learning, knowledge sharing, policy advocacy and coordination.

It is the primary implementing mechanism of the G20 Financial Inclusion Action Plan.

South Africa assumed the G20 Presidency on 1 December 2024, under the theme; "Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability."❖

Skills for democracy:

Boosting South Africa's legislative sector for constitutional stability

As South Africa tackles complex challenges including social injustice, economic transformation, unemployment and environmental sustainability, the Legislative sector remains vital to safeguarding our constitutional democracy. This sector, comprising Parliament and nine provincial legislatures, plays a critical role in democratic governance, policy-making, and legal frameworks through several key functions: enacting laws, representing the public, providing oversight, managing budgets, protecting constitutional principles, and facilitating policy discourse.

Equipping the legislature's administrative function with



“The legislative sector has implemented various professionalisation initiatives with varying consistency”.

appropriate skills directly affects legislators' ability to fulfill their mandate. A recent skills analysis of the sector's administrative function reveals important findings about skills drivers, gaps, and development needs.

This opinion draws from research conducted by the University of Free State, commissioned by the Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority (PSETA) in partnership with key legislative institutions. Unlike other public service areas governed by the Public Service Act of 1994, the legislative sector operates under distinct frameworks and requires tailored approaches to skills development. The PSETA, one of 21 sector education and training authorities, facilitates skills planning and learning interventions across government institutions, with this

study providing a foundation for aligning skills development with the legislative sector's specific mandates.

Key skills change drivers

Several factors are driving changes in skills requirements across South Africa's legislative sector. These include digital literacy needs, legal and regulatory changes, evolving customer service expectations, diversity and inclusion demands, professionalisation requirements, talent management challenges, austerity measures, demographic shifts, globalisation and workplace trends.

Major drivers affecting future skills needs include the political landscape, budgetary constraints, legislative changes, technological advancements, organisational transformation and

global changes. These drivers create significant skills implications: digital literacy, policy analysis capabilities, customer-centric service design, cultural competence, leadership development, workforce planning, financial efficiency, global trends analysis and innovative problem-solving. Integrating these diverse drivers into a cohesive skills development agenda is essential for achieving broader objectives of socio-economic growth and enhanced public service delivery.

Skills gaps

The legislative sector faces several key skills gaps that hinder its effectiveness. These include political acumen, strategic leadership, analytical and decision-making skills, communication and oversight engagement, change management,

and global awareness.

Technical and policy development skills shortages are also prevalent, including legislative drafting, information communication technology, financial modelling, and technological awareness. These gaps limit the legislatures' ability to develop effective laws and policies.

Measuring these gaps remains challenging due to insufficient skills audits, leading to poor standardisation of job profiles and fragmented development efforts. Critical skills shortages make filling essential positions difficult, especially in information technology, specialised knowledge areas and legal committees. Consequently, the sector struggles to balance the demand for and supply of necessary skills. ❖



Skills development and professionalisation efforts

The legislative sector has implemented various professionalisation initiatives with varying consistency. These include internal training plans, bursary opportunities, induction programmes and initiatives focused on ethics and conduct standards. Ethical conduct receives particular emphasis through seminars, webinars

and e-learning platforms. The sector also utilises experiential learning, leadership sessions, graduate programmes, and succession planning for professional development.

While the 7th Parliament demonstrates a clear drive toward professionalisation, the sector's relationship with the broader public service professionalisation framework presents challenges. Despite operating outside the Public Service Act, the sector aligns with certain

framework principles such as onboarding and performance management systems.

Strategic recommendations

To address these challenges, we recommend the following strategic initiatives:

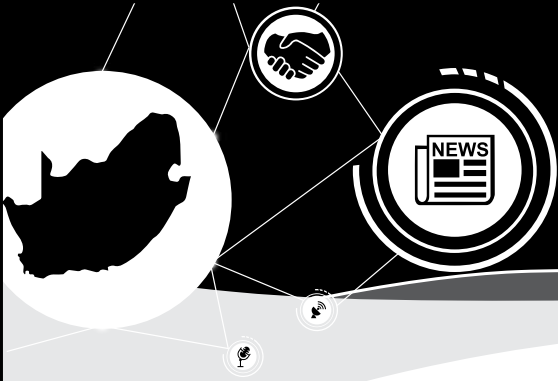
- Conduct a comprehensive skills audit across the sector.
- Develop targeted training programmes for administrative and support staff.
- Increase investment in

reskilling employees for virtual committee work and technological changes.

- Implement robust monitoring to assess the impact of sector-specific qualifications and development initiatives.
- Prioritise development of sector-specific scarce skills and transversal skills.
- Develop a standardised competency framework across all legislatures.
- Establish a joint forum for coordinating skills development with stakeholders, including PSETA, legislatures and higher education institutions.
- Strengthen collaboration between the sector and PSETA through formalised partnerships.
- Develop legislative sector-specific qualifications with higher education institutions.

This article is based on research conducted by the University of the Free State on the Legislative Sector Skills Needs Analysis for the PSETA. The authors write in their personal capacity, and the views expressed are theirs, not those of the PSETA or the university. ❖





GCIS VACANCIES

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APPLICATIONS: The DG of GCIS, Private Bag X 745, Pretoria 0001, hand deliver to Tshedimosetso House, 1035 cnr Francis Baard & Festival streets, Hatfield, Pretoria, or emailed to recruitment@gcis.gov.za

FOR ATTENTION: Ms P Kgopyane

CLOSING DATE: 20 June 2025

DIRECTOR: SECURITY AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT - REF NO: 3/1/5/1-25/10

CHIEF DIRECTORATE: Human Capital and Corporate Support

SALARY: R1 216 824 per annum (Level 13), (all-inclusive salary package) of which 30% may be structured according to the individual's needs

CENTRE: Pretoria

ENQUIRIES: Ms Linda Kaseke, Tel: 012 473 0128

DIRECTOR: EDITORIAL AND LANGUAGE SERVICES - REF NO: 3/1/5/1-25/11

CHIEF DIRECTORATE: Products and Platforms

SALARY: R1 216 824 per annum (Level 13), (all-inclusive salary package) of which 30% may be structured according to the individual's needs.

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



G20 SOUTH
AFRICA
2025



Invest in future classics with a twist

While it is ideal for consumers in South Africa and many parts of the world to spend less money in the currently challenging economic times, Thula Sindi, Director and Chief Curator of AfricaRise, advises shoppers to invest in timeless pieces with a modern twist this winter. "I feel [like] customers want future classics.

That is why I focused on a classic tweed suit but in a cropped cheeky style and a black dress that is perfect for many occasions but still makes an impression with the dramatic sleeve detail," he told *Public Sector Manager* in a brief interview. Sindi recommends the following two key looks for winter 2025:

* Prices correct at the time of publishing.

- ◉ Thula Sindi Tweed suit
Jacket: R4 999 Skirt: R3 999
- ◉ Thula Sindi Black neoprene dress: R6 999

Both classics are available at AfricaRise store: Shop U63, Sandton City, Johannesburg and online at www.ThulaSindi.com.

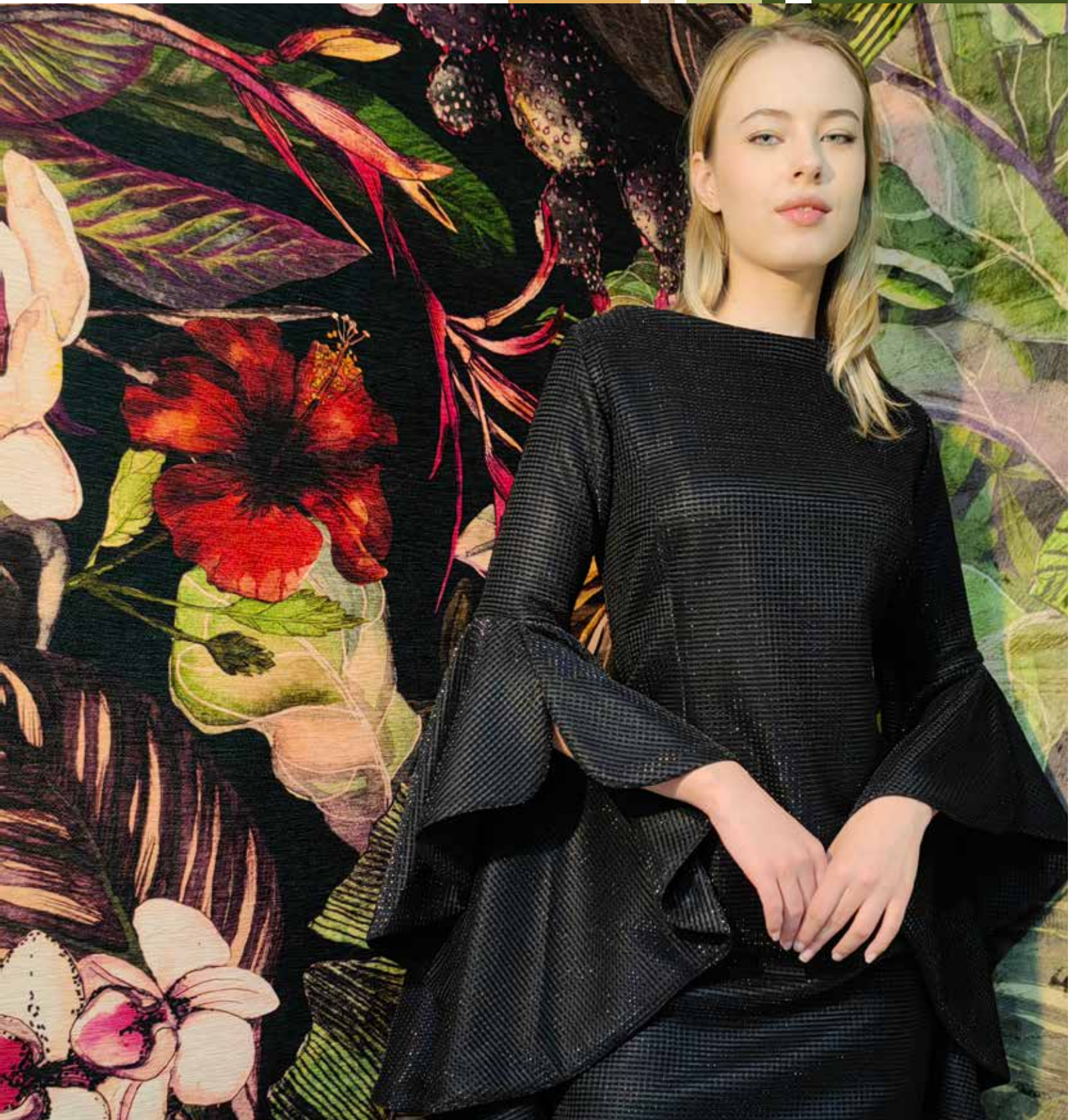
For more information, visit www.ThulaSindi.com

About AfricaRise

AfricaRise Online is a premier destination for an immersive experience in the vibrant world of African fashion. It is dedicated to breaking barriers, championing diversity, and promoting a rich tapestry of styles that reflect the dynamic essence of the African continent.

The company believes in the power of diversity, and its platform is a testament to the kaleidoscope of cultures, traditions and artistic expressions found across Africa.

Essentially, AfricaRise Online serves as a bridge, connecting talented designers with discerning customers who appreciate the uniqueness of African fashion. More than 30 African designers have their work featured on the platform. ❖



Grilled Kingklip with *Beurre Blanc*

Kingklip seems to be chefs' favourite in the colder months. This month we feature Chef Thulane Kekana's Grilled Kingklip with Beurre Blanc. Rich in flavour and effortlessly elegant, it is the kind of dish that brings both warmth and comfort to the table.



Beurre Blanc

Ingredients:

- 100 ml dry white wine (such as sauvignon Blanc).
- 50 ml white wine vinegar.
- 1 small shallot finely chopped.
- 200 g cold unsalted butter cut into cubes.

Method:

- Pour the wine, vinegar and shallots into a saucepan set over a medium-high heat. Bring to a simmer and cook.
- Pour the wine, vinegar and shallots into a saucepan set over a medium-high heat. Bring to a simmer and cook until the liquid has reduced to about 1 to 2 table-spoon. Strain the mixture into a jug and discard the shallots. Pour 1 tablespoon back into the saucepan.
- Put the pan over a low heat and vigorously whisk in the butter, a cube at a time, only adding another cube after the previous addition has melted into the sauce

and emulsified. Keep a close eye on the heat – if the sauce starts to look greasy or you can see obvious streaks of butter, remove from the heat and continue whisking, but do not add any more butter until it looks cohesive again.

- Once at least half of the butter has been added, start whisking in two cubes of butter at a time. The sauce should start to look thick and glossy and will take on the consistency of double cream. The process will take about 20 to 25 minutes. Season to taste with another splash of the initial reduction, and salt and pepper.

Kingklip and vegetables

Ingredients:

- Good quality Fresh Kingklip Fillets (skin off, bone out).
- Butter.
- Crushed Garlic.
- Seasoning of choice (I used Robertson Fish Spice).

- Salt and pepper.
- Asparagus.
- Potatoes.
- Asparagus sauce.

Method:

- Line a tray with tinfoil.
- Place Kingklip fillets and asparagus on lined tray.
- Season with salt and pepper and spice of choice.
- Spread a generous amount of crushed garlic on top.
- Place a few knobs of butter on each fillet.
- Turn oven onto Grill function (high heat).
- Place tray on top shelf under grill and grill for 8 to 10 minutes.
- Boil diced potatoes till soft then strain and mash adding olive oil salt and white pepper.

Tip: Serve immediately. This meal can be paired with a Chenin Blanc.

About the chef

Chef Thulane Kekana's vibrant culinary career spans nearly a decade marked by his experience in overseeing the smooth running of hospitality establishments, crafting innovative menus and mentoring emerging talent in the kitchen. Specialising in main course, pastry and deli, he excels in menu development and costings, chef training, stock management and delivering exceptional food and service with every dish.

For more information, email Chef Kekana:

thulanekekanan@gmail.com

Or connect with him on Facebook @Thulane Kekana



Explore South Africa's premier *game reserve*



The reserve boasts a number of lodges, such as Mosekwa Lodge and Impodimo Game Lodge.

Situated on the border with Botswana close to the Kalahari Desert, Madikwe Game Reserve is the fifth-largest game reserve in South Africa. As one of the lesser-known reserves, this hidden gem is regarded as one of the best conservation areas in Africa and offers visitors a Big 5 safari experience over 750 km.

Roughly a four-and-a-half hours' drive from Johannesburg and Pretoria, Madikwe offers a number of luxurious lodges as well as community lodges in a malaria-free zone.

The reserve is home to approximately 66 large mammal and roughly 300 bird species.

You will find all this flora and fauna in an area comprising vast open plains of grasslands, woodlands, rocky outcrops and mountains.



Madikwe Game Reserve is home to several mammals and bird species.



The reserve is home to highly-endangered African wild dogs.

The Big 5 are represented in the reserve and you are likely to spot lions, leopards, elephants, rhinos or buffalos. During your visit you will also have the rare privilege of possibly seeing highly endangered African wild dogs.

In 1994, a small group of six wild dogs were introduced into Madikwe. This founding group has seen a challenging time with rabies outbreaks, territorial clashes and encounters with lions.

Despite the odds, Madikwe

now has a thriving wild dog population with three hunting packs roaming the area. They are somewhat accustomed to safari vehicles, offering spectacular photographic opportunities. Madikwe Game Reserve's conservation efforts to protect the 'painted dog' are in place to help conserve this majestic species.

Community-based conservation

The reserve is one-of-a-kind and is known for its involvement with the local communities. Commu-

nity lodges are owned and run by the local people, creating a healthy economic environment.

The roads to Madikwe

Madikwe Game Reserve has a combination of gravel and tar roads. Final access to all the lodges in the park are via gravel roads.

Conditions of these roads vary depending on the season and the weather. Most (2x4) smaller vehicles will be able to make their way around the reserve but we advise against the use of sports cars and vehicles with low ground clearance.

You may be required to drive 10 to 30 km on gravel roads before you enter the park depending on which gates you enter through. Always drive slowly in the park.

Its history

Before Madikwe was an of-

ficial game reserve, work had already begun to remove many of the derelict farm buildings, non-indigenous plants and the hundreds of kilometres of old fencing.

Many of these old buildings have been spared and turned into workshops and park offices. Some of the outposts have also been left and are being used to house reserve staff and game scouts.

The area where Madikwe Game Reserve stands today was previously farming land, used for farming cattle and arable agriculture.

The farming culture in the area was largely a failure, due to bad farming practices and mismanagement, and the vegetation had degraded to unusable levels.

This land has been opened up to a few select private farms. The farm owners are required to abide by Parks Board rules as



there are still restrictions as to where private vehicles can drive.

Other developments include community lodges that are run by local villages. The profits from these community lodges are then used to uplift local communities.

The area

Madikwe Game Reserve consists of vast open plains of woodlands and grasslands. The reserve is bisected by the rugged Rant van Tweedepoort and is bordered in the south by

the Dwarsberg Mountains. It has been enclosed in a 150 km perimeter electric fence to protect larger animals.

The famous Mafikeng Road runs through the area and was a historical route long before the reserve was established. Its path was used by traders, missionaries and explorers.

King Mzilikazi of the Matabele tribe passed through the Madikwe area many years ago on his way to expanding the Matabele kingdom.

The lodge is one of the few

game reserves in the world that has been established on the grounds of being the most sustainable and suitable land use in the area.

No day visitors are allowed in Madikwe, maintaining exclusivity and allowing for uncrowded game-viewing opportunities. This malaria-free reserve is a perfect family destination, and most lodges provide activities specifically tailored for children, allowing parents to relax and unwind. ❖

Madikwe Game Reserve is one of South Africa's best conservation areas.



For more information, visit www.madikwegamereserve.co.za