THE MAGAZINE FOR PUBLIC SECTOR DECISION-MAKERS

SEPTEMBER 2025

PublicSector MANAGER

Redefining

rural experiences through Agritourism

Neo Morake

leading the charge in transforming Gauteng's public infrastructure

Honouring

a legacy of culture and creativity

G20 SOUTH AFRICA 2025

2030 NDP

PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGER

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SEPTEMBER 2025

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Writer: Tourism Minister Patricia de Lille

Tourism Month 2025: driving inclusive economic growth

Image: Mahlori Maluleke

Tourism Month celebrates so much more than travel. It is about rediscovering our shared story and identity as South Africans. It is about small towns animated by festivals, homestays infused with culture and tradition and journeys that reconnect us to the land and to one another. It is about reminding ourselves that when we explore our own places and spaces, we invest in communities, preserve heritage and breathe life into local economies. Apart from being an economic catalyst, tourism is also about generating goodwill, nation-building, and serves as a powerful social unifier.

Since World Tourism Day is celebrated in September, South Africa designates this month as Tourism Month. Throughout September, a range of activations aligned with the annual theme and national tourism priorities are held across all provinces. This year, particular focus will also be given to the G20 priorities.

Tourism Month aims to raise awareness of domestic tourism initiatives and to inspire South Africans to explore their own country. It promotes the discovery of lesser-known attractions, supports local businesses and encourages a deeper appreciation of the country's rich cultural heritage and shared identity.

The theme for this year,

Image: Annah Mashile

Tourism and Sustainable Transformation, gives expression to the ethos of the National Development Plan (NDP) and the Department of Tourism's mandate to drive inclusive economic growth. Tourism Month is therefore a bold statement. It says that tourism is not a side note to development, but a driver of inclusive growth. It is where small businesses find customers, where young people find opportunities and where women entrepreneurs find recognition. It is where local aspirations meet global possibilities.

> "With the G20 spotlight, Tourism Month 2025 presents an opportunity to showcase South Africa not only as a destination of natural wonders and cultural richness, but also as a global player in shaping the tourism agenda"

With its extensive value chain and labour absorption capacity, tourism is a vital contributor to the South African economy. It is recognised as a tool for economic development, playing a significant role in addressing the country's socio-economic challenges. Tourism is one of the most dynamic sectors of our economy. In 2024, it supported 1.6 million jobs.

Transformation is tangible and a reality we can see and experience. Through the Tourism Transformation Fund, we recently launched the Atrium Boutique Hotel in Limpopo, a fully operational tourism development established by a husband and wife team – Matodzi and Lesetja Mukwevho. The hotel is 100% black-owned and 60% women-owned, underscoring the vital contribution of women entrepreneurs to economic development.

Domestic tourism is the nucleus of the tourism economy and provides a foundation for sustainable tourism growth

and development. South Africa boasts a strong and vibrant domestic tourism portfolio. This also addresses geographic spread and seasonality, as well as over-reliance on long-haul trips. It further ensures revenue resilience by cushioning the industry during global shocks like pandemics, currency fluctuations or international travel bans, as well as local circulation of money.

From January to June 2025, total trips recorded a 14.8% increase compared to the same period last year, driven largely by growth in visiting friends and relatives. Of the total trips, there were 3.8 million holiday trips.

We are currently running our annual Sho't Left Travel Week campaign, which encourages South Africans to book travel at a discount of up to 50% off when booking between 8 and 14 September. Travel can be taken anytime, subject to the terms of the travel provider. Together with our industry partners, we have curated over 450 packages for South Africans to enjoy. This forms part of our effort to stimulate growth in the tourism sector and encourage more citizens to experience and enjoy the beauty of their own country.

Image: Annah Mashile

This year, the celebration is more significant. South Africa is not only opening its doors to its own people, encouraging them to travel local and grow local, but also welcoming the world as host of the G20 Summit. The timing could not be more symbolic: just as Tourism Month reminds South Africans of the treasures within their own borders, the G20 places the country firmly on the global stage.

With the G20 spotlight, Tourism Month 2025 presents an opportunity to showcase South Africa not only as a destination of natural wonders and cultural richness, but also as a global player in shaping the tourism agenda. Delegates from the world's major economies will experience first-hand the warmth of South African hospitality, the vibrancy of its cities, and the depth of its traditions. In 2025, Tourism Month is more than a campaign. It is a stage. And South Africa is ready to perform.

Now, with the eyes of the world upon us, South Africa has the chance to tell that story far beyond its borders. Delegates will not only gather for high-level discussions; they will walk our streets, taste our cuisine, hear our music, and witness the diversity that defines us. Tourism becomes our most powerful form of diplomacy.

This month marks the launch of our inaugural Tourism Investment Summit, a platform that brings together government and private sector stakeholders to invest in viable, high-impact projects – an important step in driving further growth in the tourism sector. Additionally, the Department of Tourism will announce the winning digital solutions from our first-ever Hackathon, where students from 18 higher education institutions are developing innovations to enhance the tourist experience. As we work toward our goal of 15 million tourist arrivals by 2030, as outlined in the NDP, the Department of Home Affairs will begin rolling out Electronic Travel Authorisation this month. This initiative supports our commitment to improving ease of access – one of the five key pillars of the Tourism Growth Partnership Plan.

For South Africans, this is a clarion call. While the world explores our country, we too must become tourists in our own country – discovering places and spaces that tell the story of who we are. Because the same beauty that captivates a tourist can kindle pride in the hearts of those who call this land home. Indeed, we will then be true ambassadors and see ourselves through the prism of the Rainbow Nation. ❖

HERITAGE Month 2025

REIMAGINE OUR HERITAGE INSTITUTIONS FOR A NEW ERA

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

A NATION THAT WORKS FOR ALL

G20 SOUTH AFRICA 2025

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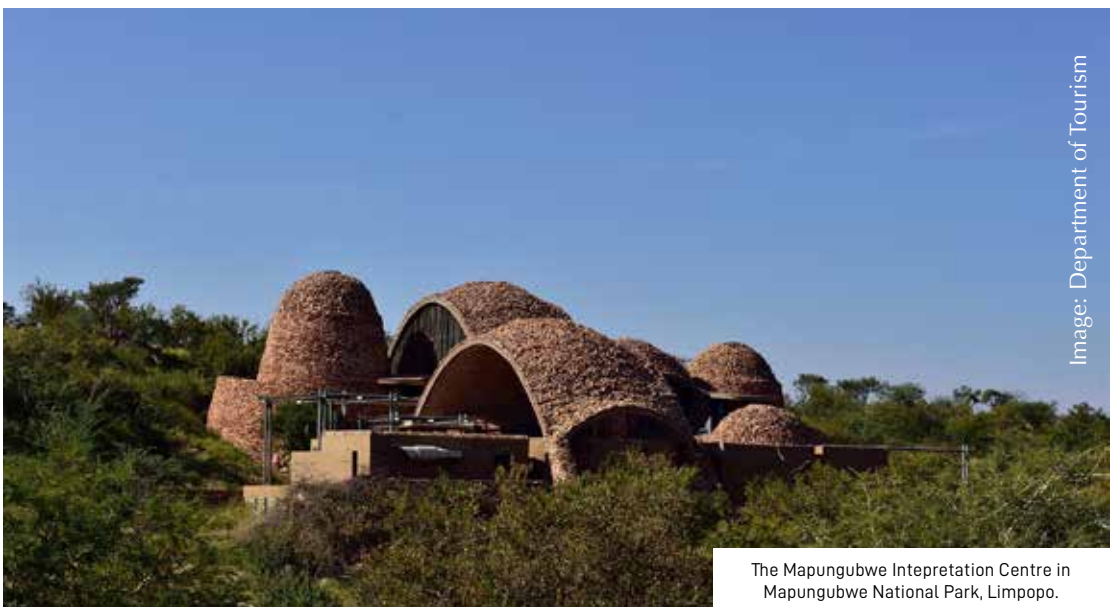
Renewing commitment to service, heritage and sustainable tourism



The Mapungubwe Intepretation Centre in Mapungubwe National Park, Limpopo.

Spring has arrived and, with it, nature awakens – shaking off the dullness of winter as flowers bloom and jacarandas burst into colour, symbolising new beginnings.

This is a reminder that growth begins with reflection and adaptation. For those of us entrusted with serving in government, this season offers a powerful metaphor: just as nature refreshes itself, so too must we, as public servants, take time to recharge, refocus and recommit to the work of building a better South Africa.

Like the changing seasons, our roles require adaptability, fresh thinking and renewed energy. This is how we remain true to government's commitment to serve the people of South Africa.

September brings together three significant observances in our national calendar. This includes heightened implementation of the 2025 to 2026 government-wide Integrated Public Service Month (IPSM) programme to advance professionalism under the theme: "Professionalising the Public Service to Build Trust and Restore Confidence in Government: A Nation that Works for All". In addition, Heritage Month is being commemorated under the theme: "Reimagine our Heritage Institutions for a New Era" and Tourism Month is being held under the theme: "Tourism and Sustainable Transformation". Each of these are deeply embedded in contributing towards the Government of National Unity's five-year programme of Action – the Medium term Development Plan of 2924 – 2029.

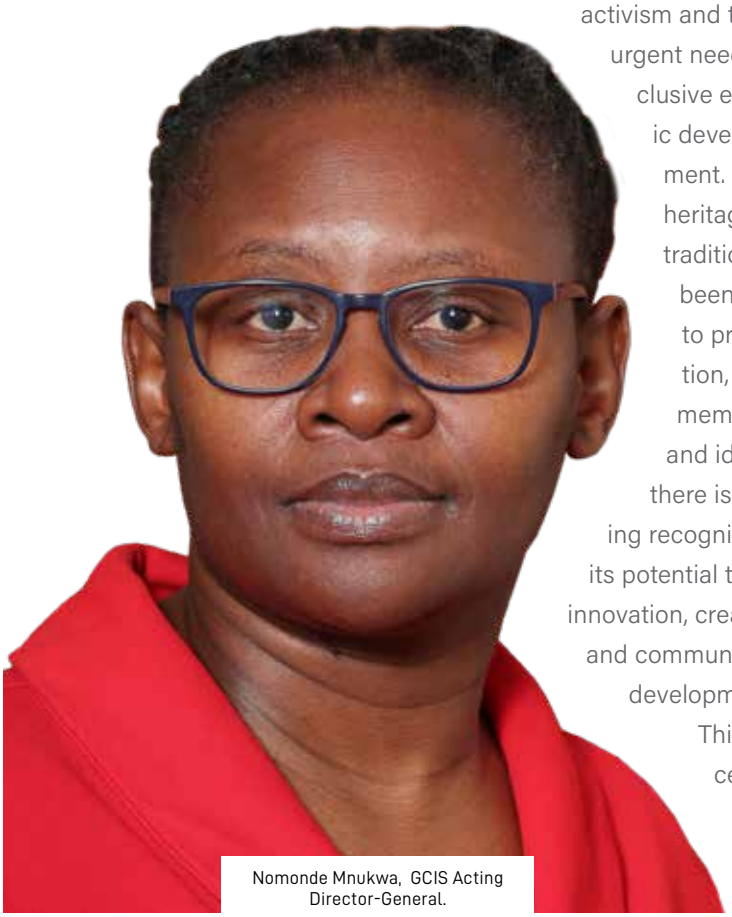
The IPSM is anchored on five strategic pillars that include the visibility of the executive in communities, responsiveness, professionalism and ethical conduct of public servants, trust and citizen participation. Public Service Month is a time to reflect on the values that underpin our democracy: accountability, responsiveness and ethical leadership, in reinforcing government's commitment to deliver effective, people-centred services.

At the heart of this commitment are the Batho Pele principles,

which continue to guide how public services should be delivered. Through initiatives such as frontline service delivery monitoring, citizen engagement programmes and service delivery improvement plans, we should move beyond compliance and embrace innovation. The goal is clear: to build a public service that is professional, capable and trusted by the people it serves.

As decision-makers, we are called to lead by example – fostering a culture of excellence, investing in the growth and development of our teams and ensuring that every interaction with the public reflects the values of dignity, respect and efficiency. Let us turn this month into a catalyst for action by reviewing our organisations' service standards, engaging with communities and identifying areas where transformation is needed the most.

Heritage Month, also celebrated in September, invites us to reflect on our shared history and celebrate the rich cultural diversity that defines our nation. The country's heritage landscape is evolving in response to a changing world shaped by digital transformation, globalisation, youth activism and the urgent need for inclusive economic development. While heritage has traditionally been linked to preservation, commemoration and identity, there is growing recognition of its potential to drive innovation, creativity and community-led development.



Nomonde Mnukwa, GCIS Acting Director-General.

This year's celebration signals a strategic shift – from simply remembering the past to leveraging heritage as a foundation for building a dynamic, socially responsive, technologically innovative and economically inclusive future.

In a country still confronting legacies of division, heritage offers a bridge to understanding and respecting out diversity and our collective purpose of working together to build a better South Africa. Through the preservation and celebration of our cultural assets, we foster pride, belonging and a sense of shared destiny.

Let us support local heritage initiatives, partner with cultural institutions and create platforms for intergenerational dialogue. In this edition, we feature one of South Africa's cultural icons, Dr Ester Mahlangu, whose work is inspired by heritage, in a modern context, that has raised the country's flag in the global village.

Tourism Month highlights the sector's role in driving inclusive economic growth and cultural exchange. It reflects on government's commitment to building a tourism industry that is resilient, inclusive and environmentally responsible.

The Tourism Sector Recovery Plan outlines key interventions to reignite demand, protect supply and promote domestic travel. Central to this strategy is the promotion of lesser-known destinations and community-based tourism initiatives, ensuring that tourism benefits reach rural and previously disadvantaged areas. One of our features in this edition highlights how Agritourism is changing rural experiences and its potential to grow the economy and empower rural communities.

Let us, through our departments, organisations and municipalities, collaborate with local tourism operators, invest in infrastructure that supports tourism and promote South Africa's hidden gems.

As the season shifts, may we, as public servants, take inspiration from nature's agility to adapt and flourish. This is a chance for us to build on what we know and to embrace new possibilities, keeping in mind that transformation is not only necessary but natural.

Whether we are improving service delivery, preserving heritage or promoting sustainable tourism, our leadership must be rooted in compassion, creativity and a deep commitment to the people of South Africa. ❖

Writer: More Matshediso
Photos: SABS

Tyobeka on quest to restore credibility at SABS

Chairperson of the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) Professor Bismark Tyobeka.

After years of turbulence, the newly appointed Chairperson of the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS), Professor Bismark Tyobeka, seeks to restore stability.

The SABS is the country's official standards authority that plays a pivotal role in ensuring the quality, safety, and competitiveness of products and services. It develops, promotes and maintains South African National Standards (SANS), while also providing testing, certification and technical services to both industry and government.

Through its rigorous standardisation and conformity assessment processes, the SABS safeguards consumer interests, supports export readiness and contributes to broader economic growth.

In a recent interview with the *Public Sector Manager* magazine, Tyobeka explained that "from an economic perspective, this work plays a critical role. Products manufactured in South Africa that carry SABS certification enjoy greater credibility and acceptance in international markets. This facilitates smoother export processes and assures trading partners of the products' quality and safety."

Without recognised certification, particularly from an institution like the SABS, local manufacturers would face significant barriers in exporting their goods.

Inclusive economic growth

The SABS also plays a crucial role in verifying local content in major projects, especially those involving international firms operating in South Africa. "In line with preferential procurement legislation, a certain percentage

of such projects, often 30% or more, must be dedicated to local participation," Tyobeka explained.

By auditing and certifying local content, the SABS helps ensure that local suppliers, manufacturers and workers benefit from large-scale developments. This contributes meaningfully to inclusive economic growth and local empowerment.

SABS approval provides consumers with assurance of the quality, safety and reliability of a product or service. Importantly, the SABS stamp helps ensure legal compliance with national manufacturing, safety and quality regulations.

Stabilising leadership

In his new role, Tyobeka has highlighted stabilising the leadership and governance structures of the SABS. His appointment comes after a few years of turbulence at the SABS, particularly over the past five to seven years.

This included the placing of the organisation under administration. During that time, there was no permanent chief executive officer (CEO), and the board was dissolved.

A new board was eventually appointed but could not fulfill its mandate, including the appointment of a CEO, resulting in the organisation operating without consistent executive leadership.

"This, inevitably, has hindered the organisation's ability to function optimally. Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition Parks Tau has fulfilled his role by appointing a full board. Now, it is our responsibility to ensure that a permanent CEO is appointed and that the executive leadership team is fully staffed," said Tyobeka.

Once stable leadership is in place, Tyobeka said the board would step back and allow management space to implement the organisation's strategy while holding it accountable through effective oversight.

Financial sustainability

"Another critical task is approving a new strategy that will include restoring the financial sustainability of the SABS and rebuilding the credibility of the SABS mark. The SABS stamp once carried considerable weight as a symbol of quality in South Africa, but the public's trust has eroded. Regaining that trust is

The SABS headquarters in Pretoria.

a key focus," he explained.

He added that the institution was also dealing with significant internal disharmony between management and labour unions, as well as a great deal of dissatisfaction within the organisation.

Addressing these challenges is important to him because he believes that a demoralised workforce cannot deliver optimal performance. "We must address the root causes of this unhappiness and foster a working environment where unions and management collaborate to help the SABS fulfil its mandate," he said.

The SABS mark is a highly recognisable symbol of credibility and a powerful marketing tool.

Board oversight

Tyobeka's key responsibilities as chairperson include ensuring that the SABS board functions as the governing authority of the organisation.

"We ensure that strategies are properly implemented and that organisational performance aligns with approved objectives. We also approve the Annual Performance Plan, monitor the organisation's progress and evaluate its outcomes," he explained.

Tyobeka's appointment became effective in June 2025, and will run for a five-year term. He brings scientific rigour, international experience and managerial depth to the task of restoring the institution's credibility and strategic direction.

He describes himself as both a scientist and an engineer, holding qualifications in radiation science and nuclear engineering.

Over the course of his career, Tyobeka worked extensively in nuclear design, engineering, safety and power generation. The nuclear sector has shaped most of his professional life. He is also the Principal and Vice Chancellor of the North-West University.

Public service

Tyobeka views public servants as fundamental role-players in the day-to-day functioning of the country.

"While South Africa has a strong private sector, we also rely heavily on the public sector to deliver essential services. Public servants are, in many ways, the engine of our economy," he said.

If each public servant did the minimum of what they are paid for, South Africa would be a happier, better-functioning society".❖

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Writer: Sihle Manda
Photos: Supplied

Neo Morake builds blueprint for equitable development

Image: Supplied

Gauteng Department of Infrastructure Development (GDID) Deputy Director-General, Neo Morake.

In the corridors of the Gauteng Department of Infrastructure Development (GDID), Deputy Director-General Neo Morake is a force of nature. She is a leader committed to turning policy into tangible progress and ensuring that public assets serve as instruments of transformation.

"My role is anchored in three strategic levers of change: redress and inclusion, policy reform and sector-wide change," she explains. "This ensures that state assets not only meet current service delivery needs but also contribute meaningfully to redressing historical inequities."

The GDID is responsible for delivering public infrastructure and managing the province's property assets. It oversees the entire lifecycle of fixed property owned by the Gauteng Provincial Government, from acquisition and maintenance to disposal.

As the sole implementing department for the planning, design, construction and commissioning of SMART public infrastructure, the GDID ensures that projects meet the highest standards of functionality, reliability and compliance through professional facilities management services.

In addition to its infrastructure mandate, the department plays a key role in stimulating economic development and creating jobs by driving targeted, preferential procurement and supporting the growth of small,

medium and micro enterprises. It also coordinates the Expanded Public Works Programme across the province, contributing to both social upliftment and economic inclusion.

Dedicated public service

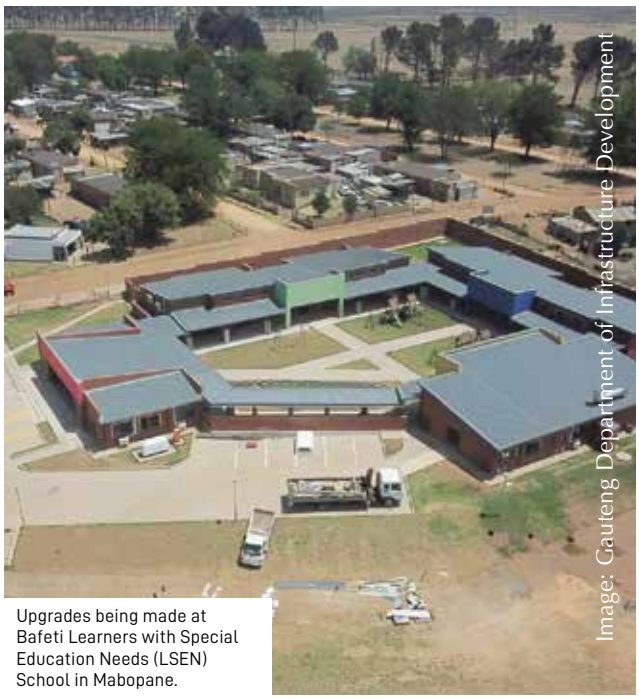
Morake's recent recognition among the South African Institute of Black Property Practitioners' (SAIBPP) Top 100 Public Sector Leaders is, to her, not an individual milestone but a reflection of collective effort.

"This recognition is deeply humbling. On a personal level, it reaffirms the value of perseverance and the power of collaborative work. Professionally, it highlights the importance of public sector leadership in driving equitable development. This is not merely an individual accolade; it is a testament to the commitment of my team members, who have worked tirelessly alongside me to transform policy into tangible progress."

Promoting home ownership

That transformation has taken concrete form through a series of initiatives under her leadership. Among them is the disposal of 53 non-core residential properties to previously disadvantaged individuals, a move she says "directly advanced economic transformation and promoted home ownership," while also reducing state holding costs and contributing to wealth creation.

She also led the development of a property portfolio optimisation framework designed to identify underperforming assets, alleviate fiscal pressure and unlock opportunities for strategic repurposing. "We strengthened internal governance mechanisms and aligned property management policies with GIAMA and industry best practices to ensure compliance and accountability," she adds.



Upgrades being made at Bafeti Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN) School in Mabopane.

Coaching and mentoring

Morake places significant emphasis on building ca-

> "This is not merely an individual accolade; it is a testament to the commitment of my team member, who have worked tirelessly alongside me to transform policy into tangible progress."

pacity from within. "Recognising the need to build institutional capacity, we prioritised coaching and mentorship as key drivers of professional development in property management. In partnership with HR (Human Resources), we established a structured coaching programme, beginning with our management team."

For her, leadership is as much about values as it is about technical skill. "My leadership philosophy is grounded in empathy, recognising that people are at the heart of public service. I prioritise active listening, leverage the unique strengths of my team and offer guidance that empowers individuals to thrive."

Construction underway at Rodney Mokoena Primary School in Soshanguve, Tshwane.

Overcoming challenges

Her journey has not been without obstacles. "Early in my career, I encountered dismissive attitudes and resistance, particularly because I am not an engineer. I was often overlooked in meetings or stereotyped based on my gender. I overcame this by mastering my technical expertise and forging relationships with those who valued merit. Today, I use my platform to amplify women's voices, knowing that representation alone is not enough. We must actively share power and create opportunities."

She believes women bring unique value to the built environment. "Women bring critical perspectives to sustainable design by focusing on community needs, social impact and human-centred planning. As nurturers, we help create environments that foster well-being and social cohesion. When women lead, projects become more inclusive and responsive to the needs of marginalised groups, challenging stereotypes and advancing equality."

Currently, Morake's focus includes revitalising the Johannesburg CBD through partnerships with the City of Johannesburg, the Johannesburg Property Company, the private sector and professional bodies. "We are also implementing cost-saving initiatives to optimise utility use, repurpose underutilised assets, and unlock commercial opportunities."

Advice to young women

She offers clear guidance to young women aspiring to enter the sector: "Master your field. Seek mentors and coaches who can help guide your professional and personal journey. Stay true to yourself – do not shrink to fit in. Your perspective is valuable and necessary. Most importantly, never apologise for your ambition. The sector needs your voice to help redefine what is possible."

Looking ahead, her aspirations extend beyond personal achievement. "I aspire to leave a legacy that blends integrity with meaningful public service. For women, I envision a future where leadership is commonplace; where our daughters can enter the sector with confidence and ambition. My hope is to see a built environment that restores dignity and provides opportunity for every South African." ❖

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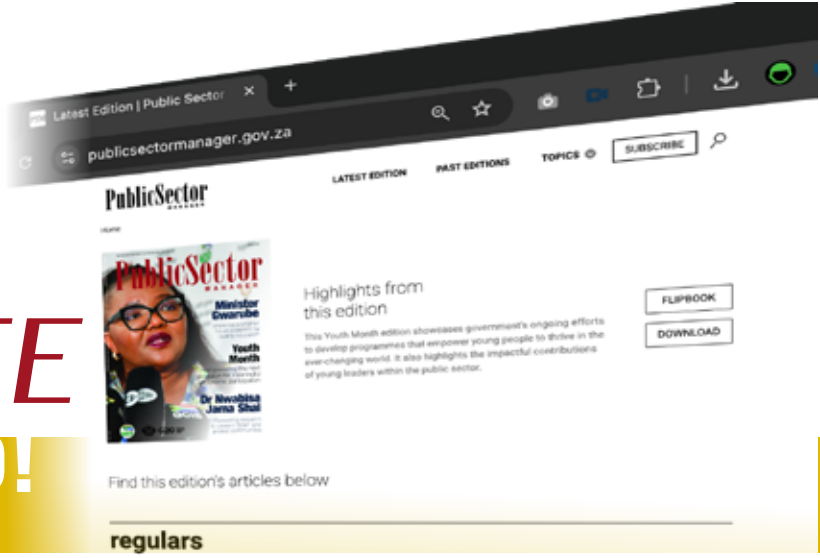

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Writer: Sihle Manda
Photo: Supplied

Dr Bonginkosi Thango's remarkable journey to academic excellence

At just 33 years old, Dr Bonginkosi Allen Thango has carved a reputation as one of South Africa's most promising minds in engineering and academia. From his humble beginnings in Ermelo, Mpumalanga, to his recognition as a nominee in the TW Kambule-NSTF Award: Emerging Researcher category at the 2025 NSTF-South32 Awards, his story is a powerful testament to perseverance, vision and the pursuit of societal impact.

"After high school I went to the Tshwane University of Technology Emalahleni Campus, where I enrolled for a National Diploma in Electrical Engineering," he recalls.

But electrical engineering was not his first choice. "Where I come from, the perception about electrical engineering is that it is about fixing kettles, fridges and microwaves, so I was not really keen on going this route. I wanted to do applied maths and statistics. At first, I hated the course and even planned to change it in the second year. But as soon as I finished my diploma, something just changed and I finally understood what electrical engineering was about, hence I went on to do my BTech [Bachelor of Technology]".

After obtaining his diploma, Thango entered the professional world through an internship at PowerTech Transformers (now SGB-SMIT Power Matla), a Pretoria-based multinational. What began as an entry-level role soon expanded into a rich learning curve.

"I worked for about four years. My first role at the company was as technologist-in-training under the Research and Development Department, which I think shaped my professional trajectory. The following year, I was moved up to engineering and design. I was [also] moved to sales. I got exposed to basically the entire value chain of the business, especially manufacturing".

Moving to academics

Despite thriving in industry, academia called, thanks to persistent encouragement from a colleague. "He insisted every time he saw me. In fact, he gave me a deadline of September that year. He even shared with me the vacancy post and urged me to apply because he thought I would be the perfect fit".

Reluctantly, Thango applied for a lecturer post at University of Johannesburg. To his surprise, he was shortlisted, interviewed, and appointed.

Since then, his academic star has risen quickly. By 2023, he was promoted to Senior Lecturer and in 2024, he earned recognition as a Y2 NRF-rated researcher. Alongside his Doctor of Engineering, he obtained his Master of Business Administration (cum laude) from the Johannesburg Business School in 2025, and is currently pursuing a PhD in Business Science at Wits.

Looking back, he admits academia was always latent within him. "When I was

growing up, I did not think someone could specifically go into academia, but in primary and high school I would help teach my friends. Even though I was a shy child, teachers would ask me to come to the front of the classroom and help explain to my peers how I solved maybe an equation".

Addressing daily challenges through engineering

Thango is of the view that engineering knowledge must be more than technical – it must impact communities. "We spend all this time learning engineering principles and fundamentals, but we need to drive back that knowledge into our communities to solve problems."

This philosophy came alive during the 2023 cholera outbreak in Hammanskraal. "When I saw that on the news, I asked myself how it was possible that water was released for people to consume if it was not properly tested. From what I learnt, they do not have real-time water monitoring tools that report on the

Zuikerbosch Water Treatment Works.

Photo: Department of Water and Sanitation.

Researcher Dr Bonginkosi Thango.

Photo: Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

IoT-enabled precision farming smallholder vegetable farmers.

state of the purified water. They rely on the old method, hence we have these issues".

Ground-breaking solutions

His work on the Internet of things (IoT)-based real-time water quality monitoring systems directly addresses such challenges. The system provides immediate data on water safety, helping authorities prevent contamination crises before they happen. This groundbreaking contribution is at the heart of his NSTF-South32 Awards nomination — a recognition he describes as both humbling and affirming.

"To get recognition for your efforts is truly special. To be considered for nomination in the science Oscars, for me, is a reaffirmation that I have finally taken the right direction into driving societal impact," he reflects.

Inspired by culture

Among his proudest contributions is the Lobola Negotiation Optimization algorithm, a culturally inspired metaheuristic approach to solving engineering problems.

"The inspiration for this algorithm is the process of lobola. Usually, it is a three-step process. The first step is the initiation phase, where the groom's family will send a letter to the bride's family to set up a date. The intelligence part is in the second phase; the negotiators are selected, they deliberate, looking at different cultural aspects until they reach an optimal solution. My algorithm can be used to solve engineering problems to say 'how do you choose the best amount of material to build, for example, a bridge'".

The algorithm has already demonstrated strong results against established methods in benchmark engineering problems, positioning it as a uniquely African contribution to global research.

Modernising Agriculture

Another area where Thango's work intersects with everyday life is agriculture. Together with his colleague, Professor Lawrence Obokoh, he is spearheading the IoT-enabled Precision Farming Smallholder Vegetable Production project for the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development project.

The initiative seeks to design and deploy a low-cost IoT precision farming system to improve productivity, efficiency, and climate resilience for smallholder vegetable farmers. Using ESP32 microcontrollers and open-source sensors, the system collects real-time data on soil and environmental conditions, including moisture, temperature, pH, salinity, light and the weather.

"This data is sent to a Firebase cloud platform, where farmers, extension officers and agronomists can access insights via a mobile or web dashboard to guide irrigation, fertigation and crop management," he explains.

By addressing declining yields, inefficient water use, high input costs and climate variability, the project aims to enhance food security and create jobs in local assembly, deployment and support services.

"Visual dashboards and automated alerts will enable inclusive participation, even for farmers with low literacy levels, while advancing resilient, efficient and competitive vegetable production in Gauteng." ❖

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The G20 Summit to be held on 22-23 November 2025 in South Africa seeks to tackle the world's most pressing issues and shape a better future. Global leaders are looking for new ideas and new ways of doing things.

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Writer: Sihle Manda

Building bridges through tourism

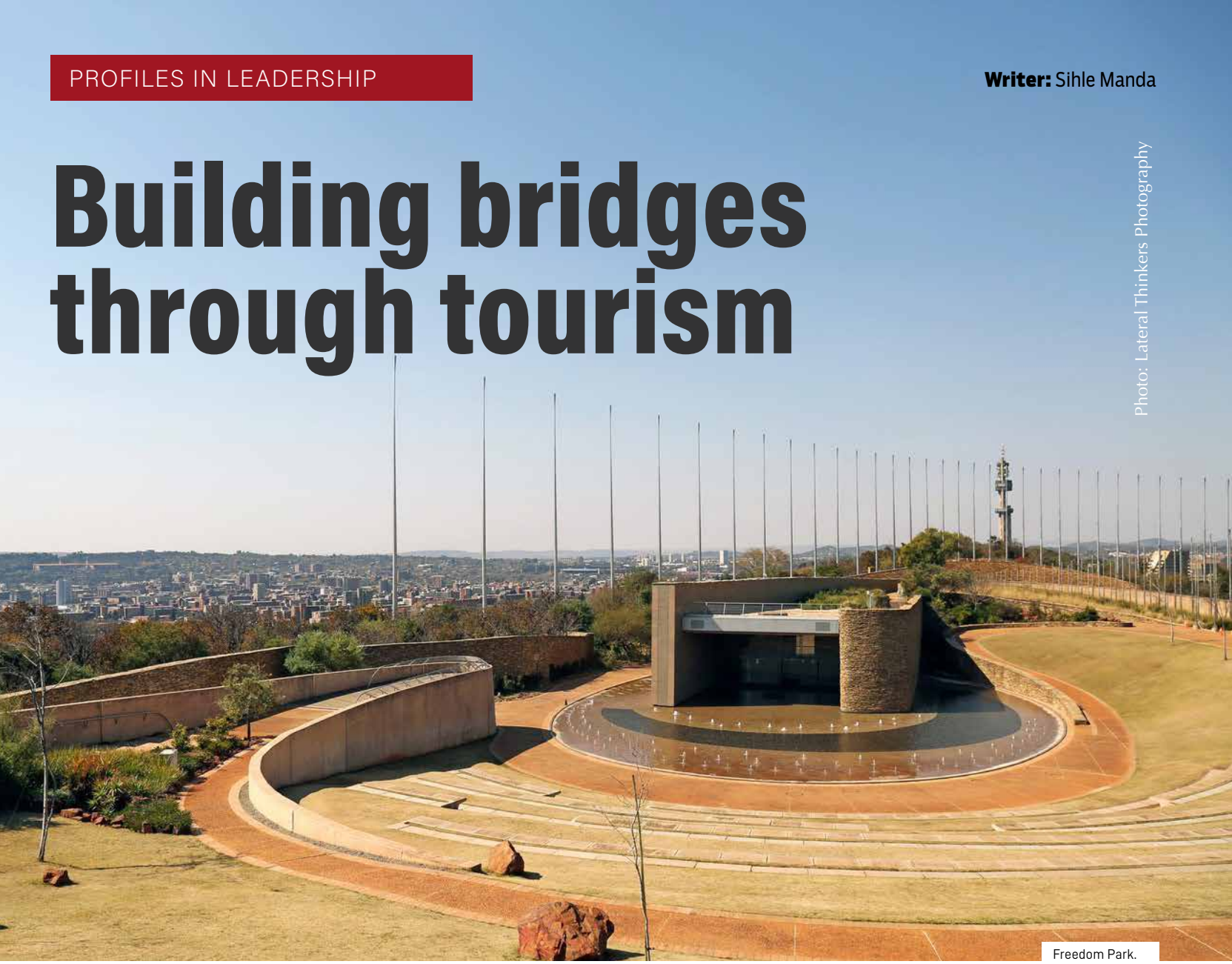

Photo: Lateral Thinkers Photography

Freedom Park.

For Soza Sydney Simango, tourism has always been more than just leisure. Rather, it is about building bridges between cultures, creating opportunities and, and ensuring communities benefit directly from South Africa's rich heritage.

With a career spanning more than two decades, Simango has steadily risen through the ranks of tourism leadership, now serving as Divisional Head: Tshwane Tourism since July 2025.

"I began my career managing a cultural tourism camp in Limpopo, where I created business linkages between tourism operations and local communities," Simango says.

That early start was rooted in a transformative provincial initiative. As part of a group of 60 young men and women recruited from 10 communities across Limpopo, Simango participated in a rural-based eco-tourism cultural and safari programme.

"On 17 October 2000, I was appointed as Camp Manager of the 10-bed Tshivhase Cultural Camp in Mukumbani, Sibasa," he recalls.

His journey from that rural camp would take him across all spheres of government, non-profits and the private sector. He held leadership positions with BirdLife South Africa, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic), the Department of Tourism and the City of Johannesburg. One of his proudest achievements was coordinating the COVID-19 Tourism Relief Fund in 2020.

"We distributed R200 million to support 4 000 small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) nationwide," he recalls.

Leading Tshwane's tourism vision

With two master's degrees in Development Finance, and Tourism Policy and Development, plus extensive training in public administration and leadership, Simango brings strong academic and strategic foundations to his current role. "This rich blend of strategic, operational, and policy-level experience led me to the role of Divisional Head: Tshwane Tourism, where I intend to continue to drive inclusive and sustainable tourism growth."

In this role, he oversees the strategic planning, development and promotion of tourism in the City of Tshwane. His role involves coordinating tourism infrastructure projects, facilitating enterprise development, leading marketing initiatives and building public-private partnerships.

Tshwane's competitive edge lies in its history, diversity and diplomatic prominence. "Tshwane is leveraging its rich historical legacy, cultural diversity, and strategic capital city status to position itself both locally and globally," Simango explains.

A key growth driver is the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) sector. "Tshwane's robust government infrastructure and academic institutions make it an ideal MICE hub," he says. "MICE tourism supports local businesses across transport, accommodation, catering, and creative industries."

Divisional Head of Tshwane Tourism, Soza Sydney Simango.

Photo: Supplied

Township tourism at the centre

For Simango, township tourism is central to his inclusive development agenda. "Township tourism is a major focus, and we are actively fostering inclusive tourism development by supporting SMMEs through enterprise development programmes, skills training, and incubation," he says.

Projects in Mamelodi and Atteridgeville, coupled with partnerships with funding organisations such as the Small Enterprise Development Agency, are opening up new markets for township-based tourism operators.

Through targeted training and funding, the goal is to fully integrate township entrepreneurs into the formal tourism economy. "We aim to encourage authentic local experiences while empowering local communities," Simango adds.

Destination branding

Among his proudest current projects is strengthening destination branding. "I am especially proud of the work we have started with the city and industry part-

ners on the Tshwane tourism destination brand identity and promotion and the Liberation Heritage Route — both of which integrate tourism with cultural preservation and community empowerment," he says.

The city's marketing strategy is as diverse as its audience. "We adopt a storytelling-based and segmented approach, which tailors messages to different market segments – cultural tourists, youth travellers, business visitors – while emphasising Tshwane's unique identity as South Africa's capital," he explains. Campaigns spotlight attractions such as the Union Buildings, Freedom Park, and township experiences.

Public-private partnership

Public-private collaboration, Simango says, is "central to Tshwane's tourism success." The city is deepening partnerships with the Gauteng Tourism Authority, national government, private sector players, academic institutions, and development agencies to deliver co-funded business incubators, event sponsorships, and shared destination branding.

This philosophy draws from his earlier work in business incubation and grassroots development. "My experience in business incubation has allowed me to develop scalable support models for tourism SMMEs, focusing on skills development, market access, and innovation. I integrate community-based tourism into strategic planning to ensure that tourism growth leads to real socio-economic upliftment."

His commitment extends beyond his official role. Through Grassroots Concepts, a non-profit organisation he established in 2014 in his home village of Nkomo, in Giyani, Simango promotes youth and women-led tourism projects in under-resourced communities.

Looking ahead, Simango's ambitions for Tshwane are bold. "My long-term vision is for Tshwane to be recognised as Africa's capital of heritage, diplomacy, and innovation-driven tourism," he says. "I envision a city where tourism is inclusive, empowering SMMEs in townships, celebrating diverse cultures and delivering lasting economic value."❖

Union Building gardens.

Photo: Tshwane Economic Development Agency

INFORMATION GUIDE ON UIF CLAIMS AND BENEFITS
QUALIFYING CONDITIONS AND CRITERIA

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

• South African ID • Completed UI19 form • Salary schedule, Completed UI2-8 (obtainable from www.labour.gov.za) • UI 2.10 Completed work-seeker form (also available on www.labour.gov.za) • Foreign beneficiaries should bring a valid passport/ID card/Asylum seeker/refugee document • UI 2.7 (Reduced Working Time application) • UI 2.11 (Voluntary Severance Package)

MATERNITY/ (SURROGATE MOTHER) BENEFITS

• South African ID/ Foreign beneficiaries should bring a valid passport/ID card/Asylum seeker /refugee document • Completed UI19 form/ Optional if employer declared the employee fully • Salary schedule • Completed UI2-8 (obtainable from www.labour.gov.za) • UI 2.3 (Medical Certificate completed by the medial practitioner) • UI 2.7 If still employed.
Once the claim is approved, beneficiaries will be required to complete and submit the UI-4 form each month for continuation of benefits.

PARENTAL BENEFIT

• South African ID/ Foreign beneficiaries should bring a valid passport/ID card/Asylum seeker /refugee document • Completed UI19 form/ Optional if employer declared the employee fully • Salary schedule • Completed UI2-8 (obtainable from www.labour.gov.za) • UI 2.9 • UI 2.7 If still employed • Full birth certificate (Father name must appear on this document)
Once the claim is approved, beneficiaries will be required to complete and submit the UI-5 form each month for continuation of benefits.

ADOPTION BENEFITS

• South African ID/ Foreign beneficiaries should bring a valid passport/ID card/Asylum seeker /refugee document • Completed UI19 form/ Optional if employer declared the employee fully • Salary schedule • Completed UI2-8 (obtainable from www.labour.gov.za) • UI 2.4 • UI 2.7 If still employed • Certified copy of Adoption order/ certified copy of placement order • Full birth certificate of child.
Once the claim is approved, beneficiaries will be required to complete and submit the UI-5 form each month for continuation of benefits.

COMMISSIONING PARENT BENEFIT

• South African ID/ Foreign beneficiaries should bring a valid passport/ID card/Asylum seeker /refugee document • Completed UI19 form/ Optional if employer declared the employee fully • Salary schedule • Completed UI2-8 (obtainable from www.labour.gov.za) • UI 2.4 • UI 2.7 If still employed • Proof of surrogate motherhood-agreement • Full birth certificate
Once the claim is approved, beneficiaries will be required to complete and submit the UI-5 form each month for continuation of benefits.

ILLNESS BENEFITS

• South African ID/ Foreign beneficiaries should bring a valid passport/ID card/Asylum seeker /refugee document • Completed UI19 form/ Optional if employer declared the employee fully • Salary schedule • Completed UI2-8 (obtainable from www.labour.gov.za) • UI 2.2 (Medical Certificate completed by the medial practitioner) • UI 2.7 If still employed.
Once the claim is approved, beneficiaries will be required to complete and submit the UI-3 form each month for continuation of benefits.

DEATH BENEFIT

Spouse/ Life partner/guardian/independent child/ Nominated beneficiary • South African ID/ Foreign beneficiaries should bring a valid passport/ ID card/Asylum seeker /refugee document • Completed UI19 form/ Optional if employer declared the employee fully • Salary schedule • Completed UI2-8 (obtainable from www.labour.gov.za) • UI 2.5, UI 2.6 • UI 53 (Not applicable for Spouse) • Copy of Death certificate • Marriage certificate from DHA (Civil/Customary) • Proof of life partnership • Supplementary documents proving the relations of child to deceased • Proof that a child is a learner from the respective institution prior to date of death • Nomination document/form

CONTINUATION OF BENEFITS

Once your claim is approved, you will be required to complete and submit a UI-6A form each month for continuation of benefits.

Beneficiaries are also urged to check with their employers if they are registered with the UIF and their declarations are up to date before applying at their local labour centre.

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Image: GCIS

A foreign policy that always faces forward

Last week our country participated in the ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in Japan. This is an important forum for strengthening bilateral trade and investment between Japan and African countries.

Japan is an important trading partner for South Africa in sectors such as construction, manufacturing, technology and agriculture. At the business forum held on the sidelines of TICAD9, business representatives from South Africa and Japan discussed potential areas of collaboration in clean and renewable energy, automotive components and hydrogen production.

One of the promising discussions was around the continental expansion plans by the Japanese automaker Isuzu Motors. Isuzu's South African plant has trialled the manufacture of commercial trucks and truck bodies locally, and is engaging with Isuzu Motors Japan on its plans to become a manufacturing hub for the African market.

At a time of global trade disruptions and mounting tariff pressures, participating in forums like TICAD is key to our economic diplomacy efforts.

Economic diplomacy is an important part of our country's foreign policy, and has become all the more critical at a time of economic headwinds and global power shifts.

South Africa's National Interest Framework Policy Document, published in 2022, is clear that it is in the country's national interest to forge strategic alliances that support economic partnerships and trading arrangements that favour, advance and safeguard our national interest.

In the spirit of Kwame Nkrumah's famous words "We face neither East nor West, we face forward", South Africa will continue to engage with partners in both the Global North and Global South. Our approach is neither partisan nor beholden, but strategic.

Our economic diplomacy is centred on securing market ac-

cess, attracting investment and promoting sustainable development.

At a time when our country faces potentially high tariffs imposed by the US administration, we are continuing to put in place measures that reduce our dependence on historical markets.

South Africa continues to advocate for an international trade regime that is fair, equitable and rules-based. We are seeking a trade regime that does not render developing economies vulnerable to unilateral measures or protectionist pressures.

Likewise, our foreign policy is anchored in multilateralism, respect for sovereignty and the pursuit of alliances that advance peace, justice and our national interest.

South Africa's foreign policy outlook is not determined by pressure exerted by outside forces, but by principle.

It is on principle that we continue to stand with the Palestinian people in their quest for statehood, recognising as we do the pain of dispossession, land theft and state-sanctioned brutality.

Even when a number of countries criticised us for doing so, and before the full extent of the brutality in Gaza was laid bare, our commitment to peace, justice and the rule of law informed our decision to take Israel to the International Court of Justice.

We continue to stand in principled solidarity with the peoples of Western Sahara in their struggle for self-determination, even when this has found us at odds with other countries, including on the African continent.

On the eve of the democratic transition in 1994, President Mandela described South Africa as being 'situated at a particular confluence of world affairs', and uniquely positioned to play an important role as a bridge-builder between the Global South and the developed North.

For these and other reasons, our approach to diplomacy will continue to be guided by respect for sovereignty, the pursuit of a just and equitable world order, and a firm belief that negotiation and dialogue have a key role to play in the mediation and resolution of conflict.

As a country we have lent our support to peace efforts across the continent and beyond.

These efforts include the peacebuilding process in Lesotho, contributing to the Arusha Peace Accords in Burundi and the wider Great Lakes region, and to the Revitalised Agreement to Resolve the Conflict in South Sudan. In 2022, South Africa was instrumental in the signing of the Pretoria Agreement to end the conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region.

South Africa is the 15th largest contributor to UN peacekeeping among all UN member states, having deployed peacekeepers to some of the continent's most troubled regions, including Burundi, Sudan's Darfur region and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

South Africa has also sought to play a constructive role in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, a role that has been welcomed by both sides. In 2023, we joined a group of African leaders as part of a Ukraine-Russia peace mission. We continue to engage with Russia and Ukraine in pursuit of peace, and this past weekend I had calls with several European leaders on the latest peace effort.

These engagements all reflect our commitment to advancing a foreign policy that advances our national interest and reflects the aspirations of our constitution, the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the UN Charter.

Respect for multilateralism and the pursuit of peace will continue to define our outlook, as will the advancement of social justice and human rights.

South Africa's national interest will forever remain independent, not beholden to external influence. It will reflect our constitutional values and national priorities. As we continue to engage constructively with the international community, we have been consistent that this should always be on the basis of mutual respect. ❖

***This message was first published on 25 August 2025**

Writer: Minister for the Public Service and Administration, Inkosi Mzamo Buthelezi

Photo: Supplied.

DPSA Minister Inkosi Mzamo Buthelezi .

Photo: Freepik

Building a covenant for professionalisation, ethics

and trust in South Africa's public service

On 2 September, I launched the Integrated Public Service Month (IPSM) 2025. The launch is more than a calendar event; it is a significant and deliberate shift in our approach to governance. For far too long, public service initiatives have been ad hoc and reactive. Today, we turn a new page by launching our 2025 – 2028 Multiyear Programme, a purposeful and strategic commitment to institutional reform that aims to fundamentally change how government interacts with its citizens.

The launch is our solemn pledge to move beyond temporary measures and establish a sustainable, year-round system that aims to fundamentally change how government interacts with its citizens. This is the beginning of a new covenant – a renewed promise to deliver services that are not just available, but are efficient, dignified and accountable.

At the heart of this new strategy is a clear and candid understanding of our challenges. We know that a pervasive erosion of public trust has occurred due to inconsistent service delivery, a lack of accountability and a culture of malfeasance. My primary objective is not merely to improve services but to meticulously rebuild public trust.

Every action we take, from this national launch to our grassroots mobilisation efforts, is a step towards restoring the social contract between the State and its citizens. We will measure our success with tangible outcomes, including improved citizen satisfaction scores and a reduction in reported corruption, moving away from aspirational rhetoric to measurable results.

Professionalising the public sector

The decision to elevate professionalisation as the central pillar of this multi-year effort is deliberate and critical. We must address the root cause of service delivery failures by focusing on ethics training, performance benchmarks and fostering a culture of excellence within the Public Service. This

> “We are not just filling positions; we are investing in the human capital of our nation to ensure that the public service becomes a dynamic engine for progress, worthy of the trust and capable of delivering the future our citizens so rightly deserve”.

is the bedrock upon which our other pillars – the Batho Pele Revitalisation and the alignment of Khaedu to the District Development Model (DDM) – must stand. Without a professional, ethical and competent workforce, our promise of "People First" is hollow, and our localised solutions will fail.

A new generation of Public Servants

Our stance is clear and unwavering: we are taking a bold and unapologetic stand to build a new generation of public servants. This is not just about selecting individuals who are committed to the public good but about cultivating a workforce that is truly capable of delivering on that commitment. It means equipping public servants with the skills, ethical fortitude and professional discipline necessary to navigate complex challenges, innovate solutions and consistently perform at the highest level.

We are not just filling positions; we are investing in the human capital of our nation to ensure that the Public Service becomes a dynamic engine for progress, worthy of the trust and capable of delivering the future our citizens so rightly deserve.

This initiative is also a testament to our commitment to a broader continental vision. In framing the IPSM as an "intentional and focused offshoot" of the 10th African Public Service Day (APSD), we are both benchmarking ourselves against continental best practices and showcasing a locally tailored response. This links our national service delivery goals to the ambitious vision of Agenda 2063.

Action plan

Our action plan for September is robust and multifaceted. We are launching an Executive Service Delivery Blitz, with outcomes reported publicly, to demonstrate accountability at the highest level. The Public Service Charter dialogues, where citizens and officials will co-design service standards, will empower the public and institutionalise a culture of responsiveness. These initiatives are designed not just to fix what is broken, but to fundamentally change how we operate.

Strengthening democracy

In a political landscape often dominated by short-term solutions, the IPSM 2025 stands out as a long-term strategic vision. We recognise that building a capable, ethical and developmental state is a multi-year journey. The success of this programme will depend on the sustained commitment of political and administrative leadership, effective coordination across all spheres of government and the continued active participation of every citizen. When implemented with the urgency and resolve we have pitched for, the IPSM 2025 will be the foundation of a new covenant – one that rebuilds trust and strengthens the very fabric of South Africa's democracy.

The launch featured messages of support from critical institutions: the National School of Government, the Centre for Public Service Innovation and the Public Service Commission. Their voices echoed a shared resolve to professionalise the Public Service, a pillar central to our strategy.

I need to reiterate that the IPSM 2025 – 2028 Programme is a covenant with the people. It aligns with the APSD's vision of agile, resilient institutions, while grounding our efforts in local realities like the Batho Pele Revival and DDM. From the Executive Service Delivery Blitz to Public Service Charter dialogues, every initiative is designed to institutionalise accountability and co-create solutions with citizens, ensuring that we have a public service “That Works for All”. ❖

Writer: Mataywa Busieka (PhD), Research Analytics: APRM: DPSA
Photos: DPSA

APSD: the quest for agile and resilient governance

Dr Mataywa Busieka.

The 10th Africa Public Service Day (APSD), held in June under the theme; "Enhancing the Agility and Resilience of Public Institutions to Achieve Equitable Governance and Rapidly Address Historical Service Delivery Gaps," served as a pivotal platform for advancing Africa's public sector transformation agenda.

The event, which was held at the African Union (AU) Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including Ministers, civil society representatives, academics and the private sector, to reaffirm their commitment to public service excellence and address stubborn service delivery challenges.

The Addis Ababa Declaration

The Addis Ababa Declaration, drafted on 23 June 2025, underscores the central role of the APSD in driving a new wave of reforms rooted in justice, inclusivity and accountability. The declaration calls for public institutions to actively redress the destructive legacies of colonialism and systemic inequities by transforming legal, digital and administrative foundations. This aligns with the AU's 2025 theme, "Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparations," placing reparative justice at the core of institutional transformation.

The APSD discourse focused on several key thematic areas, each culminating in a clear set of commitments outlined in the declaration. Participants committed to reviewing and replacing outdated colonial-era public service laws with progressive, context-relevant legislation.

The declaration emphasises institutionalising merit-based recruitment, affirmative action and career progression systems to promote diversity, professionalism and equity within the Public Service. Furthermore, outcome statement calls for strengthening the autonomy and resources of crucial oversight institutions, such as anti-corruption commissions and audit authorities, to uphold integrity and accountability in governance.

Embracing digital technology

Participants at the event acknowledged the transformative potential of digital tools in fostering institutional agility, responsiveness and transparency, particularly in underserved

Delegates attend Africa Public Service Day in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

areas. A key commitment is to expand investment in inclusive and affordable digital infrastructure to bridge the digital divide across gender, age and geography.

Member states were encouraged to develop multilingual, disability friendly and mobile responsive platforms to ensure equitable access to public services and information.

Way forward

A strong emphasis was placed on the indispensable role of civil society, academia, youth networks and the private sector in driving innovation and co-creation of public services. Member states committed to institutionalising inclusive dialogue platforms and collaborative governance mechanisms that incorporate diverse voices, especially those of vulnerable and underrepresented groups.

Delegates further called for the creation and protection of an enabling civic environment with legal safeguards for public participation and freedom of expression.

While the APSD declaration advocates for stronger oversight institutions and participatory governance, its high-minded aspirations stand in stark contrast to the persistent challenges impeding public service reform across Africa. There is a palpable risk that the declaration could amount to little more than well-intentioned political discourse, long on ideals but short on practical implementation. Without concrete action plans and robust accountability mechanisms, its commitments are unlikely to translate into tangible progress.

Whilst the APSD Declaration correctly emphasises peer learning and the exchange of best practices, its broader success hinges on addressing two critical dimensions: institutional reform and the integrity of public discourse. For these commitments to translate into tangible progress, member states must now confront the challenge of implementation, turning continental frameworks into localised action that delivers equitable governance and restores public trust.

The ASPD serves as a strategic platform to recognise and celebrate the dedication of public servants – many of whom operate in challenging environments with limited resources – while reflecting on the transformative evolution of Africa's public administration. In honouring their contributions and resilience, the APSD underscores the critical role of public service in driving equitable governance, innovation and sustainable development across the continent.

Transformative public administration

Aligned with Agenda 2063's vision of "The Africa we Want," the APSD underscores the imperative of transformative public administration to foster inclusive growth, social justice and sustainable development.

In the quest to promote accountability, digital innovation and multi-stakeholder collaboration, the APSD directly contributes to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), advancing Africa's aspirations for integrated, prosperous, and people-centred governance systems. This initiative reinforces the AU's commitment to reparative justice and institutional excellence, in the result that public services remain adaptive to contemporary challenges and grounded in equitable service delivery for all citizens.

Africa's key governance frameworks

The APSD ranks among the continent's key governance frameworks, including the African Charter on Values and Principles of Public Administration and the All-Africa Public Sector Innovations Awards, all pioneered under South Africa's leadership. The APSD's pre-eminence led to its global recognition, with the United Nations formally adopting 23rd June as the UN Public Service Day, a testament to its global impact.❖

Writer: Phakama Mbonambi
Photos: Agritourism Africa.

Why your next holiday should support rural South Africa

Photo: Supplied

Papkuilsfontein in the Northern Cape.

Agritourism South Africa founder Jacqui Taylor.

While tourists flock to traditional wildlife reserves and coastal destinations, a quiet revolution is happening in South Africa's rural heartland. Agritourism is creating new economic opportunities for communities that have long been overlooked – and offering visitors authentic experiences that go far deeper than typical farm stays.

Jacqui Taylor is the driving force behind this stunning growth. Having previously worked in the wine industry, she experienced an epiphany in 2016 at the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists Conference. When a Danish journalist asked her to recommend authentic agritourism farms for his extended South African stay, she found herself stumped.

"I wanted to give him an authentic farm experience, not a contrived theme-park one," recalls Taylor, who would go on to found Agritourism South Africa and later Agritourism Africa. "So I started researching agritourism in South Africa and found we did not have a coordinated approach to marketing it".

As travellers increasingly seek meaningful experiences and connections with nature and local food sources, the sector has experienced phenomenal growth. Global agritourism markets were valued at $9.01 billion in 2024 and expected to grow 11.9% annually through 2030. South Africa, with its diverse farming landscape, is particularly well-positioned to capitalise on this boom that could revolutionise rural economic development whilst preserving local culture.

Redefining rural experiences

Agritourism in South Africa extends far beyond the wine farms that dominate tourism marketing. Rural experiences include wildlife farming operations replenishing animal populations affected by poaching and

climate change, alongside craft and art enterprises in peri-urban areas. "Agritourism is not just farm stays," Taylor explains. "It can include accommodation, but it is more focused on experiences, services and activities".

The most immediate benefit for rural areas is the creation of sustainable rural development opportunities for those who live close to agricultural areas, mostly women and the youth.

The goal is to "persuade people to venture out of cities to experience other ways of living and facilitate meaningful interaction with those who work and live in different environments". In championing community development, successful agritourism operations addresses five key areas: food and livelihood security, agrobiodiversity, local and traditional knowledge legacy protection, cultural value system guardianship and landscape conservation.

In an era of curated social media experiences, agritourism offers something increasingly rare: authenticity. "Agritourism farms do organise events, but organising events in rural areas is very different from urban areas," Taylor notes. "There are constraints, like infrastructure, which ensure authenticity remains central to the experience".

This authenticity serves a deeper purpose beyond tourist satisfaction. "Agritourism offers farmers the opportunity to preserve rural lifestyle, rural heritage and practices while focusing primarily on food production," Taylor explains.

Challenges and opportunities

Despite its potential, agritourism faces significant obstacles. Access to finance and entrepreneurial training top the list of challenges facing rural communities wanting to enter the sector. The tourism industry's fragmented structure compounds these challenges, yet the economic argument for agritourism extends far beyond individual farm income.

As South Africa's cities strain under infrastructure pressures and unemployment, rural development becomes crucial. "We must create opportunities to keep South Africans meaningfully and sustainably employed in rural and peri-urban regions," she says.

For rural communities considering agritourism ventures, Taylor offers practical guidance.

"It is important to understand the tourism market, so use someone who has worked in the industry," she advises.

"Referral systems and contact networks are key to avoiding excessive start-up marketing costs".

Her approach emphasises starting small: "Find out what works and where challenges can be overcome by tweaking the business model. Once you decide to open an agritourism business, full-time commitment is required, and family and community participation is imperative". ❖

Agritourism offers visitors a peek into South Africa's rural heartland.

Some agritourism establishments to visit:

- Reverend Alfred Mahapa Foundation, Tshwane, Gauteng. Contact: 076 369 3990 or 067 280 8746
- Copperleigh Trout Cottages and Fishing, Dargle, KwaZulu-Natal: *www.copperleightroutcottages.co.za*
- Papkuilsfontein, Niewoudtville, Northern Cape. *www.papkuilsfontein.com*
- Flintbeck Farm Lodge, North West: *www.flintbecklodge.co.za*
- Meloti Valley Lodge, Farm Nooitgedacht, Mpumalanga: *www.melotivalley.co.za*
- !Khwa ttu Nature Farm, Yzerfontein, West Coast: *www.khwattu.org*
- Trails End Bike Hotel: *https://trailsend.bike*

Writer: Sy Makaringe
Photos: Clint Strydom/The Melrose Gallery

Artistic world honours SA's cultural icon Dr Mahlangu

Dr Esther Mahlangu, one of South Africa's most celebrated cultural ambassadors and renowned visual artist, will turn 90 in November and the global artistic fraternity is preparing to honour her extraordinary talent and creative legacy.

In celebration of Heritage Month, *Public Sector Manager* (PSM) magazine is shining a spotlight on this cultural icon and her internationally acclaimed artwork. Although Mahlangu is advanced in years, she is not showing any signs of creative fatigue or pullback. Instead, the selfless octogenarian has opened herself up to arts connoisseurs, scholars and up-and-coming visual artists all over the world to continue drawing from her well of wisdom and savour her phenomenal talent.

As she inches closer to earning the nonagenarian status, the world's arts and culture spotlight has been firmly trained on her. This Heritage Month, Mahlangu will be honoured through a variety of innovative projects both locally and internationally.

These include the publishing of the *Ester Mahlangu Handbook,* edited by Ghanaian-American curator and art critic Larry Ossei-Mensah to be released under the No Rulers label, and the unveiling of an Esther Mahlangu online Retrospective by Google Arts and Culture.

Renowned South African curator Nontobeko Ntombela, who has for many years collaborated with the highly acclaimed international cultural icon, is currently working on an Esther Mahlangu monograph that will also feature essays from experts in the visual arts sector.

Mahlangu's studio in her home province of Mpumalanga is about to begin work on a mural for Fonds Yavarhoussen in Madagascar as part of the latter's efforts to forge partnerships with globally acclaimed institutions to promote that country's rich artistic and cultural heritage.

Honouring the legend

Melrose Art Gallery Director, Craig Mark says as part of celebrating Mahlangu, Nigerian art curator and National Geographic explorer at large Azu Nwagbogu will, in November, present a Mahlangu solo exhibition, curated by Nkhensani Mkhari, a South African multidisciplinary artist and curator, in Lagos, Nigeria. This will be followed by another Mahlangu solo, curated by Ossei-Mensah, across several US museums in conjunction with the American Federation of Arts from early 2026.

These are an indication of how the artistic world is enriched by Mahlangu's incredible artistic contribution. In October 2024, London's Serpentine contemporary art gallery unveiled her monumental mural titled *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (I am because you are), her first public mural in the United Kingdom.

The historic year-long exhibition was supposed to run until the end of September 2025, but due to popular demand, the gallery's curators have asked to extend the hosting of the artwork to well into 2026.

Mahlangu's bold, geometric artwork is inspired by her Ndebele roots.

Mahlangu's art was honoured at the BMW Lounge at Frieze London 2024.

In 2019, the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture published a book titled *Esther Mahlangu: Indigenous Lines*, to tell her extraordinary story. The book forms part of the department's project to indentify and document "South Africa's living human treasures".

In an interview with *PSM,* Sport, Arts and Culture Minister Gayton McKenzie described Mahlangu as "a living embodiment of artistic excellence and heritage preservation".

"South Africa is fortunate to count among its citizens many who are extraordinarily gifted in the realm of social and cultural traditions".

Despite her outstanding work being steeped in the rich Ndebele cultural heritage, Mahlangu has been a unifying personality in this culturally diverse country.

Unifying force

Mahlangu, who has had no formal education, was taught Ndebele painting by both her mother and grandmother from a young age.

Paying homage to her, curator Nontobeko Ntombela told *PSM* that the international icon's artistic genius is in her ability to take her culturally rich geometric patterns and apply them to new and non-traditional mediums such as canvases, cars and other everyday objects.

"This adaptation not only preserves her cultural heritage

but also challenges the perception of African art, positioning it within the contemporary art world. Her work is celebrated for its intricate designs, mathematical precision and vibrant colours," Ntombela said.

"For many years, I have had the immense privilege of working closely with Dr Mahlangu. It is a relationship built on years of research and a deep admiration for her as both an artist and a person," added Ntombela.

Former Cabinet Minister, Dr Naledi Pandor, a big fan of Mahlangu, described Her as "a pioneering creative artist who has brought innovation and imaginative expression to South African art".

"Through her incredible integration and synthesis of indigenous art and modern expression, she has created unforgettable images of Ndebele artforms and opened these to the world. Her most significant contribution is the development of young artists in South Africa," said Pandor.

International collaboration

Mahlangu's career-defining moment came in 1989 at the *Magiciens de la terre* exhibition in Paris, France, which led to her becoming the first-ever woman and the first non-Western artist to create a BMW art car in 1991.

This collaboration, among others with major brands, elevated her status to a global icon. She has received numerous awards and three honorary doctorates for her contributions and commitment to cultural preservation.

For three decades, she effectively turned the world into her own back yard canvas. Armed with chickens' feathers, she visited major capitals on invitation to create colourful, eye-catching and memorable artistic images for the world to marvel at.

Passionate about imparting her skills to the next generation of local artists, Mahlangu established an informal art school in the backyard of her home. An art studio in honour of her work was later opened in the province.

Asked about what should be done to preserve culture and pass it on to the new generation, Mahlangu said she has always wished "to see a quality school being built in Mpumalanga with a focus on arts and sciences. This school would continue teaching Ndebele arts and culture to ensure that our culture lives on for future generations and to provide them with work and entrepreneurial opportunities".❖

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Writer: Sy Makaringe

Heritage Day still resonates – 30 years on

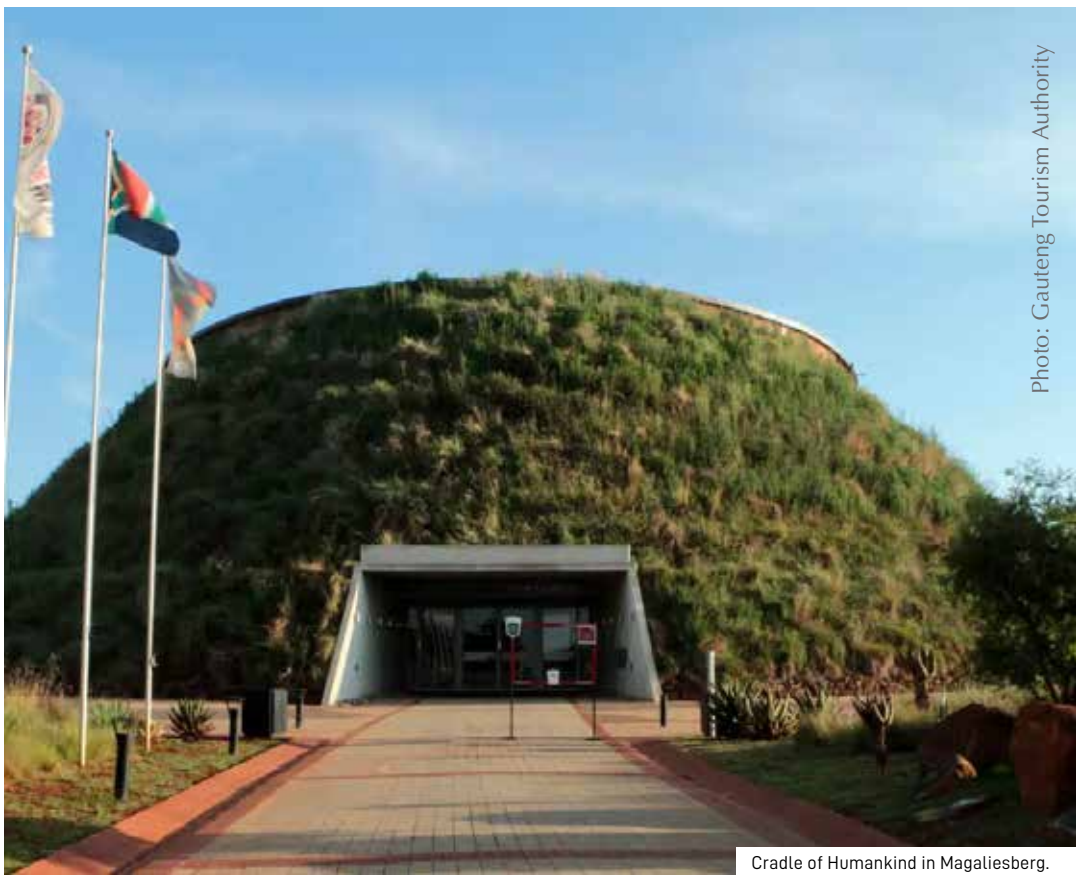

Photo: Gauteng Tourism Authority

Cradle of Humankind in Magaliesberg.

Photo: Robben Island Museum

Robben Island Museum.

Heritage Day is not just a public holiday, and Heritage Month is more than just a cultural exhibition, says Sport, Arts and Culture Minister Gayton McKenzie as South Africa marks three decades since September 24 officially became part of the national calendar.

The Minister's remarks come amid growing concerns among citizens that the day has lost its appeal and sense of purpose.

McKenzie maintains, however, that Heritage Month remains a significant period in South Africa's calendar dedicated to celebrating the country's rich cultural tapestry and diverse heritage, both tangible and intangible.

"It is a pivotal moment for our varied cultural, linguistic, religious and other heritage expressions to affirm our shared and collective sense of belonging as South Africans," he says in response to questions posed by *Public Sector Manager* magazine.

"This celebration contributes

Photo: Freepik

Photo: Freepik

to building a socially cohesive nation founded on the democratic principles of human rights, human dignity, equality and respect for the rule of law".

During the pre-democratic era, September 24 was commemorated mainly in KwaZulu-Natal in an unofficial capacity to mark the day in 1828 when Shaka Zulu, the great Southern African leader who brought together the various Nguni clans to form one strong Zulu nation, died.

Embracing diversity

Heritage Day recognises and celebrates the cultural wealth of our nation. South Africans celebrate the day by remembering the cultural heritage of the many cultures that make up the population of South Africa..

In declaring the public holiday, former President Nelson Mandela, said: "our rich and varied cultural heritage has a profound power to help build our new nation".

Reflecting on the 30 years since September 24 was declared Heritage Day, McKenzie says much ground has been covered towards achieving this goal, despite South Africa being a complex multicultural, multi-ethnic and multiracial society.

He says this is because South Africa is a constitutional democracy where diversity is recognised not as a weakness but as a strength that must be harnessed.

"Yes, we are a multicultural, multi-ethnic and multiracial society. This composition provides our country with a unique opportunity to serve as a microcosm of the world, where diversity is not a division but a source of strength. It shapes our distinctive character and identity within the family of nations," says the Minister.

He cites several milestones that have played a key role in fostering a united nation. These include:

- The designation of Robben Island as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- The return and reburial of the remains of freedom fighters, artists and leaders who died in exile, restoring their dignity, healing wounds and reinforcing a shared national identity.
- The staging of annual events such as the National Arts Festival in Makhanda in the Eastern Cape, Marula Festival in Limpopo and the Cape Town Carnival.
- The Living Human Treasure Programme, which

Photo: DSAC

Sport, Arts and Culture Minister Gayton McKenzie with Deputy President Paul Mashatile at the Heritage Day celebrations in the Free State last year.

documents and honours custodians of indigenous knowledge systems.

- The establishment and upgrading of heritage museums, interpretation centres and monuments, such as Freedom Park and Steve Biko Centre to provide spaces for dialogue and education on South Africa's shared history.
- Promotion of indigenous language.
- Intangible community-led heritage projects.McKenzie maintains that Heritage Day has played a notable role in promoting social cohesion in the country but admits that building a cohesive society "requires the collective effort of all".

He says rather than trivialising or diluting Heritage Day, National Braai Day, which is held on the same day, forms part of bringing South Africans together to share their common humanity.

"Although there is neither empirical evidence nor peer-reviewed research or government reports directly addressing its impact, it remains evident that on September 24 many South Africans engage in communal barbecues to enhance shared experiences as part of Heritage Day celebrations".

Job creation

The Minister noted that during low economic growth and at a time when unemployment continues to rise, it is important that South Africa's cultural heritage is leveraged to create jobs and economic opportunities.

He says cultural tourism has led to the creation of jobs in local crafts production, transportation, hospitality and guide services, whereas the creative industries have assisted in the globalisation of traditional talents.

In 2024/25, the National Heritage Council was allocated R25 million to fund 36 community heritage projects under the Presidential Economic Stimulus. ❖

2025 | INTEGRATED PUBLIC SERVICE MONTH

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2030 NDP

Writer: Minister in The Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Maropene Ramokgopa
Photos: Supplied

Skukuza meeting a springboard for collective advancement of development

The recent G20 Ministerial Meeting on Development, which took place at the Kruger National Park in Skukuza, Mpumalanga, underscored the promise of collective action to address global challenges and implement measures to accelerate development. It was fitting that Development Ministers of G20 member states, invited states, Heads and representatives of multilateral organisations, the private sector, civil society and other partners met in Mpumalanga, the 'Place of the Rising Sun', to usher a new dawn in multilateral cooperation on the advancement of development.

Minister in The Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Maropene Ramokgopa opens the G20 Ministerial Meeting on Development.

South Africa's G20 Presidency is taking place at a crucial time in regional and global governance. The advancement of multilateralism, collaboration and partnership in addressing global challenges and accelerating development, is more important now than ever. This follows four other meetings of the Development Working Group (DWG), an important platform within the G20 Sherpa Track, during the course of South Africa's G20 Presidency. The DWG, which focuses on addressing global development challenges, advanced the overarching theme of South Africa's G20 Presidency – Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability – and put under the spotlight issues affecting developing and low-income countries.

Mapping the way forward

The discussions and negotiations of the DWG paved the way for the deliberations in the historic Ministerial Meeting, which adopted by consensus the Skukuza Development Ministerial Declaration and the Ministerial Calls to Action – "Towards Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable Development through Universal Social Protection Systems with special Priority on Social Protection Floors", and "Towards Voluntary and Non-Binding High-Level Principles for Combatting Illicit Financial Flows".

Additionally, the Chair's statement on "Emerging Principles on Fostering International Cooperation for the Protection and Delivery of Global Public Goods", calls for the establishment of the Ubuntu Commission – a panel of experts to take forward the work of supporting access to global public goods. We made this important intervention because investing in the optimal provision of global public goods will go a long way in shaping a more equitable world.

We have learnt lessons from

Delegates at the G20 Ministerial Meeting focused on addressing global development challenges.

the COVID-19 pandemic on the importance of dealing differently with global public goods that are non-excludable and non-rival, and have cross-border externalities. It is, therefore, with a deep sense of pride that South Africa has Chaired this progressive forward move in global development cooperation.

Advancing social protection

The Ministerial Calls to Action represent a positive step in the advancement of multilateralism in a time of significant geopolitical shifts. Social protection floors are crucial for the provision of dignity, resilience and opportunity for all, especially the poor, women, youth and vulnerable groups. The importance of social protection systems was further entrenched by the 4th International Financing for Development Conference, which prioritised investment in social protection systems as one of the measures to address inequalities.

The conference also called for countries to integrate financing of social protection systems and floors in line with International Labour Organization recommendations and inter-governmentally agreed standards into country-led plans and strategies. This aligns to South Africa's advancement of social protection systems as a cornerstone in the fight against poverty and inequality and building an inclusive society.

Addressing illicit financial flows

It was also crucial to mobilise collective action to address illicit financial flows (IFFs), which remain a critical challenge for many countries, especially on the African continent. IFFs lead to a significant loss of resources for the continent, which could be used to build schools, hospitals and infrastructure that is crucial for the development of communities.

As the G20 Ministerial Meeting on Development adopted the Ministerial Call to Action on IFFs, we are reminded of the High-Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa, which was commissioned by the African Union and Chaired by former President Thabo Mbeki, which found that large corporations are by far the biggest culprits of illicit flows, followed by organised crime. This 2015 report found that corrupt practices facilitate these outflows and weakened governance capacity on the continent. This meant that governments cannot manage against the resources of large corporations and organised crime, thereby resulting in weakened governments in Africa being vulnerable to state capture.

Strengthening state capacity

The interventions of the G20 Ministerial Meeting on Development advance the collective resolve to implement measures to deal decisively with issues which undermine development and worsen inequality. They emphasise the importance of governments from wealthy, developing and low-income countries, together with multilateral institutions, the private sector, civil society and all partners working together to strengthen state capacity to increase domestic resource mobilisation and financing for development to accelerate development.

Sustainable and inclusive development

The DWG can be proud of the work it has advanced during South Africa's G20 Presidency, which culminated in the historic Ministerial Meeting on Development at Kruger National Park. Despite the different contexts of our nations, we can be proud that South Africa has brought together various nations and partners to commit to collectively implement measures to achieve sustainable and inclusive development.

Let us celebrate the consensus that informed the Skukuza Ministerial Declaration and Ministerial Calls To Action, and recommit ourselves to continue working collaboratively and leaving no one behind in building a better nation and a better world that accelerates its path to achieve sustainable development. ❖

Source: G20 Education Working Group Content Team

Bridging the gap: Free State G20 Indaba charts bold path for education equity

In a powerful crescendo to the Free State G20 Education Indaba, held at the Central University of Technology (CUT) in Bloemfontein, leaders, educators and global partners converged to reimagine the future of South African education. Held under the theme; "Educational Professionals for Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability," the Indaba delivered more than dialogue; it delivered a blueprint for transformation.

Basic Education Minister Siviwe Gwarube emphasised the importance of getting things right from the foundation level.

A day of reckoning and resolve

Dr Mamiki Maboya, MEC for Education in the Free State, closed the Indaba with a stirring call to action.

"History will not remember the speeches we made today, but it will remember the opportunities we created, the systems we reformed and the futures we unlocked".

Her remarks captured the urgency and moral clarity that defined the day. With only 36.4% of children attending early childhood development (ECD) centers, the province faces a fork in the road: continue perpetuating inequality, or build a system that recognises different starting lines and acts accordingly.

ECCE: The cornerstone of equity

The Indaba placed Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) at the heart of foundational learning. Evidence shared revealed that 90% of brain development occurs before age five, yet most children begin school already disadvantaged. Speakers called for:

- Expanding ECCE access in every ward, especially rural and township areas.
- Upskilling and accrediting ECD practitioners.
- Embedding health, nutrition and psychosocial support into all ECD programmes.

Mari Payne of Takalani Sesame highlighted the need for more than 270 000 additional ECD teachers, emphasising that quality and inclusivity must drive expansion.

Teachers: The engine of transformation

Teacher development emerged as the second pillar of reform. From foundational phase training to digital pedagogy, the Indaba called for:

- Accelerated professional de-

Photo: Freepik

Early Childhood Development is vital in the foundational learning of children .

Photo: Free State Provincial Government

Free State Education MEC, Dr Mamiki Maboya emphasised the importance of ECD.

Photo: Free State Provincial Government

velopment in modern teaching methods.

- Bridging the digital divide with age-appropriate tools.
- Using credible data to monitor Grade R – 4 outcomes and guide interventions.

Professor Pamela Dube, Vice Chancellor of CUT, reminded delegates that ECD is not a short-term fix but a long-term investment in human capital and economic productivity.

A whole-of-society approach

The Indaba underscored that education reform cannot be siloed. Cross-sector collaboration – with health, social development, higher education and traditional leadership – is essential.

Basic Education Minister Siviwe Gwarube's keynote address at the Indaba powerfully illustrated the stark disparities in South African learners' starting points, urging the nation to confront the bifurcation in its education system. She called for Grade 4 readiness to become a national benchmark and emphasised that early learning must be a shared responsibility across families, educators, communities and government.

The Minister's five-point intervention plan: upskilling ECD practitioners, ensuring smooth transitions to formal schooling, using credible data for decision-making, embedding nutrition and care and building community capacity underscored the need for contextual, locally grounded solutions. The Minister's message was clear: South Africa must choose transformation over inertia and build an education system that meets every child where they are, with dignity and purpose.

From dialogue to action

The Free State Department of Education committed to:

- Consolidating all insights into a provincial report for national and G20 integration.
- Embedding recommendations into provincial strategies.
- Sharing outcomes with stakeholders for broad ownership.
- Contributing to the national G20 Education Indaba.

In her closing remarks, Maboya emphasised the need for equality on the sector.

"Let us choose justice over inertia, equity over comfort and transformation over preservation of the status quo."

The Free State G20 Indaba was not just a conference, it was a turning point. A moment where South Africa's education leaders chose to bridge the gap. ❖

Writer: More Matshediso **Photos:** Ledikana Creations

Items that men can consider buying to celebrate heritage

This month, *Public Sector Manager* magazine celebrates the rich cultural heritage of our nation in honour of Heritage Month.

Fashion serves as a powerful expression of one's heritage and traditions. In this edition, Mapholo Ratau , Managing Director and founder of Ledikana Creations, shares her fashion recommendations for men looking to celebrate their heritage in style.

** Prices correct at the time of publishing.*

Shwe Trim Short Sleeve Shirt: R 1 299.99

This professional shirt features a short sleeve design and a unique *shwe* trim, adding a touch of elegance to your outfit. Designed by Ledikana, this shirt showcases a classic yet stylish look.

Ankara Short Sleeves Shirt: R1 399.99

Expertly crafted with traditional Ankara material and soft cotton, these short sleeve shirts are a stylish addition to any wardrobe. The Chinese collar adds a touch of cultural flair, fashionable and functional. Perfect for any occasion, these shirts are a must-have for the modern man.

Men's Long Pants: R1 099.99

These men's long pants boast 100% cotton Shweshwe material, which provides a slim and comfortable fit for everyday wear.

Simon and Mary Round Caps: R899.99

These round caps are made from high quality felt and come in a variety of colours. With a timeless design and durable materials, these caps are both stylish and practical. Perfect for any occasion, these caps are a must-have accessory for any wardrobe.

** Prices correct at the time of publishing.*

About the designer

Ledikana Creations is a South African fashion and accessories brand that specialises in the manufacturing of contemporary African garments, hats and other fashion items.

It is a sustainable business that embraces eco-friendly practices in every aspect of its operations. It prioritises sustainability by using locally sourced materials, supporting South African women from previously disadvantaged communities and promoting ethical production methods. To uplift other women in the industry, Ratau trains black women who seek a brighter future.

For more information about Ledikana Creations, visit:
www.ledikana.com | Email *info@ledikana.com*
Call: 011 684 1049, 011 390 1071 or 066 138 1070.
You can also visit the stores at O.R Tambo International, Airport and City Lodge at O.R. Tambo International Airport

Writer: More Matshediso
Photo: Lebo Phala

A traditional dish honouring Heritage

In celebration of **Heritage Month**, we feature a traditional recipe from Chef Lebo Phala, known for her elegant interpretations of indigenous African cuisine. This month, she shares her take on Kgodu – a nourishing wild melon porridge.

"Traditionally, Kgodu was a valued meatless dish, especially in cultures where eating meat was restricted due to sacred customs. Nothing was wasted, melon seeds were dried and roasted into *dithotse* (roasted melon seeds), enjoyed as a snack or served alongside porridge," she

Kgodu (wild melon porridge)

Ingredients:

- 1 medium wild melon.
- 1 cup mealie meal (maize or sorghum).
- Water, as needed.
- Salt, to taste.

Method:

- Peel the wild melon and remove the seeds.
- Cut the flesh into small chunks and set the seeds aside (they can be used later to make dithotse).
- Place the melon chunks in a pot, cover with lightly salted water and boil until almost tender.
- Pour the mealie meal directly on top of the semi-cooked melon.
- Cover with a lid and reduce the heat to low. Steam for about 20 minutes or until the meal forms a thick, stiff porridge. Do not stir during this process.

Optional enhancements:

- For added flavour, roasted and ground melon seeds may be stirred in at the end.
- For a sweeter version, sun-dry the melon before cooking.

Serving Suggestions

- Serve warm as a filling, wholesome meal on its own.
- Pairs well with *dithotse* as a crunchy accompaniment.

** This recipe can serve up to four people.*

About the Chef:

Chef Lebo Phala was born and bred in Mohlaletse Village in Ga Sekhukhune, Limpopo. She holds a Diploma in Food Preparation and Cooking from Capsicum Culinary Studio. She is the founder and Executive Chef at HL Culinary, a brand that curates fine dining experiences rooted in indigenous African cuisine. She is also a professional photographer, videographer and a visionary who is passionate about women empowerment and promoting African heritage and culture.
For more information about HL Culinary, you can email: *lebo@hlculinary.com* or follow them on Instagram: *@hlculinary_experince.*

Source: Weskus Tourism
Photos: Weskus Tourism

Nieuwoudtville Dutch Reformed Church.

Weskus Flower Capital of South Africa

Explore the spectacular fields of flowers along the *Weskus*.

Every Spring, the *Weskus* transforms into a living canvas of colour, with rolling carpets of wildflowers stretching as far as the eye can see. From Namaqua daisies to delicate vy*gies* and succulents, the region boasts one of the most spectacular flower displays in the world. Towns such as Darling, Clanwilliam and Langebaan become hubs for flower enthusiasts, while the West Coast National Park offers unrivalled panoramic views of this seasonal wonder.

The beauty is not just in the flowers themselves, but in the experience. Self-drive flower routes, guided tours and local festivals invite visitors to immerse themselves in nature's annual celebration. This natural phenomenon is a powerful economic driver; it creates jobs, supports small enterprises and sustains livelihoods through nature-based tourism.

Whether you are a photographer, a hiker or simply someone who enjoys the outdoors, the Weskus in bloom is a bucket-list experience. This spring, come witness why the *Weskus* is rightfully known as South Africa's Flower Capital.

Outdoor spring activities

For adventure seekers and nature lovers, the *Weskus* is an outdoor paradise. The desolate coastline, rolling dunes and pristine reserves provide endless opportunities for exploration. Hiking trails in the Cederberg reveal dramatic rock formations and ancient San rock art, while the Langebaan Lagoon is a playground for water sports like kayaking, kitesurfing and sailing. Cyclists can enjoy scenic mountain biking routes, while birdwatchers delight in spotting hundreds of species across wetlands and nature reserves.

For a slower pace, guided horse rides along the beach or a peaceful day of fishing are perfect ways to soak in the landscape. The *Weskus* invites you to step outside, breathe deeply and reconnect with nature. Whether you crave adrenaline or relaxation, outdoor adventure here comes with vast open skies, fresh ocean breezes and the warm hospitality of the local people. This spring, make the *Weskus* your adventure destination.

Rooibos: A *Weskus* speciality with carmien tea

The *Weskus* is not only about natural beauty, but also about unique flavours rooted in the soil of the region. Rooibos, the world-renowned herbal tea, grows exclusively in the Cederberg mountains near Clanwilliam. With its earthy, naturally sweet taste and health-boost-

The Rieldans, an ancient dance with pre-colonial Khoi and San roots on the West Coast,

Hiking trails in Porterville.

ing properties, Rooibos has become a proudly South African export enjoyed across the globe. Local producers like Carmien Tea bring this *Weskus* treasure to life, offering everything from traditional brews to creative infusions that blend Rooibos with spices, fruits and herbs. A visit to a Rooibos farm or the Carmien Tea experience is a journey into the heart of *Weskus* hospitality, where stories of heritage, sustainable farming and innovation are shared with every cup.

Celebrating Heritage and Tourism Month

September is a special month in South Africa, as we celebrate both Heritage Month and Tourism Month. It is a time to reflect on our diverse cultures, traditions and stories while also highlighting the importance of tourism in connecting people to these experiences. On the *Weskus,* heritage comes alive in many forms: from the rock art of the Cederberg, to fishing villages that still honour age-old traditions, to vibrant festivals that showcase local food, dance and music. Tourism Month encourages us to explore our own country, discover hidden gems and support local businesses that keep communities thriving. The *Weskus* is perfectly positioned to offer both – a deep dive into cultural heritage and unforgettable tourism experiences. ❖

For more information, email *tourism@wcdm.co.za*