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Public Sector Manager
THE MAGAZINE FOR PUBLIC SECTOR
DECISION-MAKERS

Publishers:
Government Communication and
Information System (GCIS)
Enquiries: +27 012 473 0010
Switchboard: +27 012 473 0000
Tshedimosetso House:
1035 Francis Baard Street
(corner Festival Street), Hatfield, Pretoria
Private Bag X745, Pretoria,
South Africa, 0001
www.gcis.gov.za

Acting Director-General
Nomonde Mnuakwa

Acting Deputy Director-General:
Corporate Services
Terry Vandayar

Deputy Director-General:
**Intergovernmental Coordination
& Stakeholder Management**
Michael Currin

Acting Deputy Director-General:
**Content Processing &
Dissemination**
Sandile Nene

**Head of Editorial
and Production**
Zanele Mngadi
Zanelemngadi@gcis.gov.za

Managing Editor
Tshepo Nikosi
tshepon@gcis.gov.za

News Editor
Miriam Mokoena
miriam@gcis.gov.za

GCIS Photographic Unit
Elmond Jiyane
Ntswe Mokoena
Siyabulela Duda
Kopano Tlape
Busisiwe Malungwane

Production Assistants
Jauharah Khan

Graphic Designer
Tendal Gonesse



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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Development Indicators 2024

Report reveals gains, gaps and the path ahead



Image: GCIS

Following the Opening of Parliament Address in July 2024, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the Strategic Priorities for the 7th Administration, which are: inclusive growth and job creation; reducing poverty and tackling the high cost of living; and building a capable, ethical and developmental state. These priorities form the foundation of the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) 2024 – 2029, a five-year plan designed to propel South Africa towards

the National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030. *The Development Indicators (DI) 2024 Report* is the latest in a series tracking progress against the NDP. It serves both as a baseline for the 2024 – 2029 MTDP and as a close-out assessment for the 2019 – 2024 Medium-Term Strategic Framework (6th Administration).

Progress made

Using insights from the *30-Year Review of South Africa's De-*

mocracy, government engaged with various sectors of society to gather diverse perspectives on achievements, lessons and the roadmap for the future. These engagements confirmed the complexities involved in assessing development progress, yet they reaffirmed the nation's progress toward societal transformation while highlighting persistent challenges that constrain the attainment of development goals.

Evidence presented in the

report reflects these realities. It provides critical insights into South Africa's current development trajectory and assesses the extent to which key issues are addressed in government's existing plans.

Falling behind

Notably, none of the high-level NDP targets for reducing unemployment, poverty and inequality are currently on track to meet the 2030 goals. Achieving these will depend on sustained, higher

economic growth and creating massive employment opportunities in line with the target of 11 million additional jobs (2012 – 2030). Using an expanded set of 85 indicators, the report shows that 13 indicators (15%) are on track to meet their NDP 2030 targets, while 31 (36%) show promising progress, and 41 indicators (48%) are unlikely to meet their targets by 2030, as they are either stagnant, regressing or lack clear quantitative benchmarks for measurement. Situating this within a global context, as of 2024, only 17% of the SDGs were assessed to be on track globally and nearly half of the goals show minimal or moderate progress, while one-third have either stalled or regressed.

Strategic opportunities

Key areas of progress identified in the DI 2024 Report represent strategic opportunities to accelerate implementation through the MTDP 2024 – 2029:

- Progress in the infrastructure development pipeline, comprising 268 projects, of which 13 have been completed and over 80 are under implementation across energy, water, human settlements, roads, rail and ports. Government has committed R943.8

billion between 2024 and 2027 to this pipeline.

- Expansion of access to basic services through annual new household connections to meet growing demand. Currently, over 80% of households have access to electricity, water and sanitation.
- Continued contribution of public employment programmes, notably the Expanded Public Works Programme and the Presidential Employment Stimulus.
- Near-universal mobile network coverage, including the increasing uptake of
- 5G technology.
- Sustained growth in gross tax revenue, improved tax compliance, and positive audit outcomes at national and provincial levels over the past five years.
- Progress in access to Early Childhood Development for children aged 5 to 6; near-universal access to basic education for the compulsory school-age cohort (ages 7 to 15); and gender parity in enrolment and completion rates across various education levels.
- Expanded access to healthcare and trend of

improved health outcomes, including gains in life expectancy and reductions in maternal and child mortality.

- An expanded, more diverse and transformed labour force achieved through progressive labour laws advancing representation across race, gender, age and skills.
- Policies and interventions advancing the rights and opportunities of women, youth and persons with disabilities.
- Impact of expanded social assistance in reducing poverty and enhancing



Image: Freepik

human capabilities.

- South Africa's international positioning and economic diplomacy, including opportunities in BRICS+ and the African Continental Free Trade Area. Global achievements in sports, politics, science and the arts boost national pride and social cohesion.
- Progress in land reform, with 19.3 million hectares transferred by August 2024, achieving 78.1% of

the NDP target.

- Environmental sustainability gains, with Greenhouse Gas Emissions remaining within the Nationally Determined Contribution target range of 398 – 510 Megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, and expansion of the marine and terrestrial biodiversity areas.

Challenges

These accomplishments are a

result of progressive government policies and contributions from non-state actors, including non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations, the private sector and the international community. While the NDP remains South Africa's long-term plan, key assumptions underpinning its adoption in 2012 have since shifted. These include demographic changes, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and wider global disruptions.

South Africa's population

reached 63.02 million in mid-2024, with significant shifts due to urbanisation and immigration. Approximately 50% of the population now resides in 17 major urban centres, doubling the number of households to 19 million and reducing average household size over three decades. This trend has intensified demand for infrastructure, particularly in human settlement, education and healthcare. Global geopolitical and trade disruptions continue to challenge

“Notably, none of the high-level NDP targets for reducing unemployment, poverty and inequality are currently on track to meet the 2030 goals”.



Image: Department of Water and Sanitation

growth projections, underscoring the need for ongoing review and adaptation. Processes for long-term planning for beyond 2030 also need to be initiated, building on the pronouncement of the National Dialogue by the President.

Targeted interventions

As the 7th Administration begins its term, the MTDP identifies strategic opportunities to accelerate progress by building on strengths and addressing critical challenges through targeted interventions. Government aims to implement an integrated economic growth strategy anchored in accelerated structural reforms to foster private sector investment, innovation, productivity and international competitiveness.

To date, the Operation Vulindlela structural reforms have unlocked approximately R500 billion in new investments, which include 22 500 megawatts private investment pipeline in renewable energy; opening up private sector participation in port container terminals and later rail services; a 51% reduction in communications data costs for a 1.5 gigabytes bundle; streamlined water use licensing processes and a transparent water quality monitoring system; and expansion

of the eVisa system to 34 countries, boosting tourism and skills mobility.

Industrialisation efforts will target labour-intensive sectors such as business services, agriculture, manufacturing and mining, alongside masterplans in key areas. Job creation will be supported through active labour market interventions, and public employment programmes as well as skills development in emerging industries, such as digital services, oil and gas, biotechnology, green technologies, healthcare, medical devices and cultural industries like music and film production.

International relations will be leveraged to attract investment, expand exports, promote tourism and develop technological capabilities. The ultimate test of this strategy will be to sustain South Africa's position as Africa's largest economy, enhance the global competitiveness of key sectors and city regions (such as Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban), and achieve inclusive employment growth.

Strengthening state capacity

Strengthening state capacity is critical for effective implementation. Local government must improve quality and reliability of basic services; digital public infrastructure must broaden



connectivity and inclusion; and city regions must foster dynamic, business-friendly environments.

Inclusive growth is essential to ensure that no one is left behind – requiring job creation, higher household incomes and improved wellbeing for all citizens. Achieving these demands, addressing the unequal ownership of economic assets and access to opportunities through accelerated redress, economic empowerment and spatial transformation to uplift the previously marginalised groups. Prioritising women, youth, and persons

with disabilities will be central to these efforts.

By working together, South Africa can build a nation where every citizen has an opportunity to thrive. ♦

Scan to download the full report.



Shaping global conversations and advancing African priorities

The world's leading economies will gather in Johannesburg from 22 to 23 November 2025, for the historic G20 Leaders' Summit, as South Africa's Presidency concludes on 30 November. This is not only a milestone for South Africa, but

for the whole continent. For the first time, an African country has held the G20 Presidency, marking a turning point in our global engagement. This is an affirmation of our growing influence on the world stage and a catalyst for advancing Africa's voice in shaping the future of international cooperation and sustainable development.

Against the backdrop of Transport Month (October each year) we appreciate that mobility defines access to opportunity whether it's a minibus taxi or train ride to work or to school, or a walk along newly marked pedestrian routes, improved connectivity positions the country as a gateway to Africa, linking trade corridors and strengthens South Africa's voice in global conversations.

The G20, comprising the world's largest economies, is a critical platform for addressing global challenges and driving inclusive growth. South Africa's Presidency comes at a time when the world is navigating complex transitions, including climate change, digital transformation, geopolitical tensions and economic recovery.

This moment also comes five years before the deadline of the United Nations' (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. According to the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025, only around 35% of targets are either on track or showing moderate progress, while nearly half are advancing too slowly and worryingly, approximately 18% are regressing. In the foreword to this report by the UN Secretary-General António Guterres he describes the current state of global development as a "development emergency," highlighting the

urgent need for renewed commitment and action.

Against this backdrop, South Africa's G20 Presidency theme; "Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability," is both timely and relevant.

These principles resonate deeply with infrastructure development. By investing in resilient, inclusive transport systems, South Africa is not just fixing roads; it's paving a path toward regional leadership.

South Africa's G20 leadership offers a unique opportunity to bring African perspectives to the forefront and advocates for solutions that reflect the realities and aspirations of the Global South.

Since assuming the Presidency, South Africa has made it a priority to elevate the African Agenda. We have championed issues such as sustainable development, equitable access to finance, food security, infrastructure investment and the empowerment of women



Nomonde Mnukwa, GCIS Acting Director-General.

and youth. These priorities have resonated strongly across G20 working groups and ministerial engagements, and we are proud of the progress made in aligning global priorities with Africa's development objectives.

The upcoming summit will mark the culmination of months of strategic engagement, policy dialogue and diplomatic coordination. It will bring together Heads of State, Ministers and global leaders to discuss key outcomes and commitments. For South Africa, this is an opportunity to consolidate our leadership, showcase our capabilities, and reaffirm our role as a bridge between developed and developing nations.

The significance of our Presidency extends beyond diplomacy. It has delivered tangible benefits to our economy and society. The international spotlight on South Africa provides a platform to boost investor confidence, stimulate local industries, and create new opportunities for tourism and cultural exchange. Our cities, heritage and innovation have been showcased on the global stage. Much like the 2010 FIFA World Cup – the first ever held on African soil – this summit and the G20 Presidency are poised to leave a legacy.

As public sector leaders, we have a critical role to play in ensuring that the momentum generated by the G20 Presi-

dency translates into lasting impact. This requires coordinated action across departments and all spheres of government to implement summit outcomes, strengthen regional partnerships and embed global best practices into our national development strategies. It also means deepening public engagement, so that citizens understand the relevance of the G20 to their lives and fostering a sense of pride in South Africa's achievements.

Our G20 Presidency has also served as a powerful reminder of the importance of multilateralism and inclusive governance. In a world marked by fragmentation and uncertainty, we have demonstrated that principled leadership, rooted in collaboration and shared values, can drive meaningful change.

This Presidency has also reaffirmed the importance of investing in our institutions, empowering our youth and building a future rooted in equity, innovation and sustainability. It has underscored the critical role of regional integration and the potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area to unlock new pathways for growth. Most importantly, it has brought renewed urgency to the task of addressing systemic inequalities – both within nations and across the global system.

As we approach the summit, let us reflect on the journey we

“For South Africa, this is an opportunity to consolidate our leadership, showcase our capabilities, and reaffirm our role as a bridge between developed and developing nations.”.

have undertaken. From the initial handover of the Presidency to the extensive consultations and preparations that followed, South Africa has embraced this responsibility with determination, purpose and vision. We have built consensus, fostered dialogue and positioned Africa as a key stakeholder in shaping the future of global governance.

Let us also look ahead with purpose. The G20 Summit is not the end; it is a beginning. It offers a platform to launch new initiatives, deepen strategic partnerships and drive transformative change. It is an opportunity to build a legacy that future generations can inherit with pride. At the end of the summit, South Africa will hand over the G20 Presidency to the United States – but the work we have started will continue, guided by the momentum

we have built and the shared commitment to a more inclusive, equitable and sustainable world. Let us work together in ensuring that this G20 Summit under the Presidency of South Africa is remembered as the moment South Africa shifted gears—accelerating toward a future where infrastructure is not just functional, but transformational.

We thank all public servants for their commitment to service excellence and to the advancement of our country and continent. Your work is the backbone of our democracy and the engine of our development. As we prepare to host the world, let us do so with confidence, unity and a shared sense of purpose, knowing that the work we do today will shape the future of our country, continent and the world.❖



Photo : TRIM

TRIM CEO Moshe Motlohi

Rail transformation:

Open Access and New Operators Set to Revitalise Freight Sector

South Africa's freight rail sector has long been under strain. Declining volumes, network inefficiencies and mounting costs have weighed heavily on logistics and the wider

economy. Now, with the recent completion of Transnet's first slot allocation process, a decisive step has been taken to change the trajectory of the sector.

This comes after the para-

statal, in September, granted 11 new train operating companies (TOCs) access to 41 routes across six key corridors. The development is not only expected to bring new players

onto the rails but also signals the operationalisation of a major policy reform: open access.

For Transnet Rail Infrastructure Manager (TRIM), which oversees the process, this

milestone is more than administrative.

In an interview with *Public Sector Manager* (PSM) magazine, TRIM Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Moshe Motlohi, described the process as “a significant moment in the transformation of South Africa’s rail sector”. He believes it gives practical effect to the core principle of the National Rail Policy, shifting the industry toward competition, efficiency and private-sector participation.

“This development will drive efficiency, increase rail utilisation and unlock private sector investment, ensuring that rail becomes a competitive and

reliable mode of freight transport,” he says. It is, in his view, a foundational step towards building a system that “supports economic growth, industrial development, and logistics resilience”.

The process

The allocation of slots is based on a thorough process that weighed the readiness and capacity of applicants. Of the 25 companies that applied, 11 met the stringent requirements. Motlohi emphasises that the selection was guided by transparency and rigour. “The initial allocation of the TOCs across the six key corridors and

41 routes was based on routes that the companies applied for and available capacity on the network,” he explains.

Applications were assessed on criteria such as operational readiness, financial capacity, compliance with Railway Safety Regulator (RSR) requirements and alignment with corridor-specific freight profiles. The operators chosen, he says, “demonstrated the ability to complement Transnet’s existing operations, enhance service coverage and contribute to long-term corridor viability”.

The North and Northeast Corridors emerged as especially critical in this first phase. These

routes carry high volumes of coal, chrome, magnetite, fuel and containers – commodities central to both local industries and export markets. Motlohi points out that they “link key mining and industrial regions to ports and domestic markets.” By improving efficiency along these stretches, he argues, South Africa can gain significantly in export competitiveness, supply chain reliability and job creation across the value chain.

Reducing pressure on roads

The broader goal is clear: Increase freight carried by rail and reduce pressure on the country’s roads. South Africa has set itself the ambitious target of moving 250 million tonnes of cargo by rail annually by 2029. According to TRIM, the inclusion of new operators could contribute an additional 20 million tonnes a year from the 2026/27 financial year. That boost, however, comes with challenges. “Significant investments in network rehabilitation and maintenance, train signalling systems and curbing theft and vandalism are required to achieve this target,” Motlohi says.

TRIM has already allocated funds within its five-year capital investment plan to ensure a safe and reliable rail network.



Image: Transnet Freight Rail

Transnet has granted 11 new train operating companies access to 41 routes across six key corridors.

This includes upgrading critical infrastructure and working with law enforcement to reduce theft and vandalism. Collaboration with the private sector is also a priority, both to secure financing and to draw on global expertise. Motlohi sees this as essential: South Africa must “access world-class practices to address these challenges”

Creating competition

While infrastructure upgrades are fundamental, so too is the role of competition in reshaping the system. For the first time, multiple operators will run on the same network, and Motlohi expects this to bring a different dynamic.

“Opening the network to third-party operators fosters a more competitive environ-

ment, driving innovation and service improvement,” he says. Customers, he believes, stand to benefit from reduced lead times, improved service options and a shift from road to rail that could lower logistics costs. The environmental impact will also be positive, with rail offering a more sustainable alternative to road freight.

Revenue generation

Financial sustainability underpins this vision. Access fees and increased volumes are expected to generate new revenue streams, which will be ploughed back into the network. “Our investment priorities include the upgrading of ageing infrastructure, digital signalling and optimising yard operations,” Motlohi explains.

TRIM’s role as an independ-

ent infrastructure manager is critical to making open access work. Its mandate, Motlohi notes, is to ensure non-discriminatory access as required by the National Rail Policy and the Economic Regulation of Transport Act of 2024. “We have implemented robust scheduling protocols and capacity allocation frameworks,” he says. TRIM also oversees safety, ensuring that all operators meet RSR compliance requirements.

Modernise rail transport

This reform is not happening in isolation. It forms part of Transnet’s broader transformation into what Motlohi describes as “a modern, agile, and customer-focused organisation.” For decades, Transnet operated as a vertically integrated mo-

nopoly. Today, it is repositioning itself as an infrastructure custodian, enabling multi-operator participation. “We are evolving from a vertically integrated operator to an infrastructure custodian,” he stresses. This represents a fundamental cultural and structural shift; one that places service delivery, efficiency and competition at the heart of rail operations.

A new chapter

For Motlohi, the entry of new operators and the reforms under way signal the beginning of a new chapter. The rail system is not yet where it needs to be, and challenges such as infrastructure rehabilitation, crime and funding persists. But with open access now in motion, a framework has been established to build on. It is a framework designed to revitalise rail, ease pressure on roads, attract investment and ultimately underpin South Africa’s wider economic ambitions.

“The announcement of new TOCs,” Motlohi says, “marks a significant moment.” It is not just about slots, routes or corridors but about the promise of a system that can once again serve as a backbone of industrial development and logistics resilience. ♦



For the first time, multiple third-party rail operators will run on the Transnet network.



MTDP 2024-2029: KEY INTERLINKED PRIORITIES

1

STRENGTHEN STATE CAPABILITY

Building a capable,
ethical state to drive
progress.

2

SUPPORT ECONOMIC GROWTH

Boosting growth to
create more resources
for development.

3

EXPAND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Using increased
resources to improve
social support systems.

These priorities are interlinked – strengthening the state boosts economic growth, which fuels more resources for social protection. Successful implementation will achieve these goals over the next five years.



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Professor Dikeledi Mokone, Head
of the Breast Unit at DGMAH.

Early detection

increases chances of surviving breast cancer

The Head of the Breast Unit at the Dr George Mukhari Academic Hospital (DGMAH), Professor Dikeledi Mokone, reiterates that early diagnosis of breast cancer increases chances of survival.

Mokone is a general surgeon with interest in breast disease (breast surgeon). She was appointed as the Head of the Breast Unit at DGMAH in 2007. Although she oversees the breast oncology unit, most of her patients are of benign diseases.

"We focus more on breast cancer because it is one of the leading causes of death. Early diagnosis of breast cancer increases chances of survival," she explained.

Regardless of continuous awareness campaigns about the disease, Mokone said a lot of breast cancer patients still wait until the disease has advanced before getting medical help.

"People tend to

wait until it is too late and when we ask why they waited so long, they say it was not painful. Breast cancer is not painful in its initial stages. It is rare that a patient will experience pain in its early stages," she said.

She said although breast cancer is mainly a disease that affects women, men also get it although it is rare.

"It is important for males who have family members who have been diagnosed with breast cancer to start self-examining their breasts and consult a doctor or clinic if they suspect any signs. The symptoms to look out for are the same for both genders," she explained.

Breast cancer signs

She said breast cancer presents mostly as a lump in the breast, but in rare cases it presents as a lump in the armpit, and the lump grows and becomes hard. It can also present with a nipple discharge, swelling of the breast, changes in skin texture,

inflammation of the breast, among other signs.

She added that every woman must examine her breasts at least once a month by looking at their breasts in a mirror for any changes in skin texture, redness or shape, then feel for lumps or changes in the under-arm and breast area using the pads of their fingers in a circular pattern with varying pressure and finally, squeeze the nipple to check for discharge.

Once a patient has been diagnosed with cancer, their case is investigated further to determine how far the cancer has progressed.

One-stop shop

The breast unit at DGMAH is different from all other hospitals in the country because it is headed by general surgeons.

Unlike other hospitals where breast cancer patients are diagnosed and investigated by general surgeons, have their cases discussed by a multidisciplinary

team for treatment, referred to a medical oncologist for chemotherapy administration and get referred for surgery, at DGMAH, Mokone and her team see the breast cancer patients through the whole process.

"The only thing that we do not do is radiotherapy, but we refer patients who need it to Steve Biko Academic Hospital," she said.

The breast unit has two clinics which operate on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The team sees between 5 000 and 7 000 patients per year.

Although most of her patients are of benign disease, the unit receives about 165 to 170 newly diagnosed breast cancer patients per year who visit the clinic more than once because their cases must be investigated and treatment must start right away.

After investigations, some of the patients are referred to surgery while the majority start chemotherapy. Those who are

on chemotherapy must go for six or eight cycles of the therapy every four or six weeks.

"We do not discharge a patient with breast cancer because we must keep following up with the patient for the first two years, on a three to six months basis after treating them. After the first two years, we follow up with the patient annually," she added.

A concerning trend

Mokone is mostly concerned that there seems to be an increasing number of young African breast cancer patients, and this is not exclusive to South Africa but a global challenge. Although she could not provide statistics, this is a worrying trend.

"Every type of cancer in young people is very aggressive and, in most cases, young patients tend to present cases of advanced cancer. Another challenge is dealing with patients who do not respond well to chemotherapy. Seeing the health status of a patient deteriorating affects us as professionals and it takes a toll on us, because at the end of the day we want people to be well," she said.

As the head of the unit, Mokone is primarily responsible for overseeing and supervising all activities at the breast clinic, including performing surgery on

"We do not discharge a patient with breast cancer because we must keep following up with the patient for the first two years, on a three to six months basis after treating them".



Early detection of breast cancer increases the chances of successful treatment.

patients. Her team comprises four surgeons, including herself, two interns, two oncology nurses, one professional nurse and two assistant nurses.

She leads meetings attended by multidisciplinary teams alongside the medical oncologist to discuss breast cancer cases.

She also lectures undergraduate and post-graduate students at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU), supervises their research and occasionally chairs and delivers presentations during academic meetings, together with heads of other units.

Breaking barriers

Mokone completed her undergraduate studies and went to specialise as a general surgeon at SMU, where she further trained as a sub-specialist breast surgeon.

Her research interests are in breast pathology, particularly, as it affects the indigent population of South Africa. In 2022, Mokone was announced as the first African woman, to become a professor of Surgery in South Africa.

"I do not have a PhD like other professors. I became a professor by promotion through the work

that I have been doing, including in supervising students, chairing high level meetings, attending congresses, organising, participating in outreach programmes and being an examiner for post-graduate students, among other things," she explained.

"It is a humbling achievement because I believe everything that happens is due to God. I have been looking forward to doing my PhD although time is not on my side because I am turning 65 in November," she said.

Although she has achieved a lot throughout her career, seeing patients survive breast cancer remains her biggest achievement.

"Survival in breast cancer is poorer, but we have a few patients who survive until 15 years later since their first diagnosis and this gives us hope as professionals".

Academically, seeing her students graduate warms her heart. ❖








World Health
Organization

African Region

BREAST CANCER

symptoms may include:

-  Nipple changes
-  Bloody discharge
-  Lump in breast or armpit
-  Breast or nipple pain
-  Change in breast colour



Fighting brain infections: A young scientist's mission to make a difference

Dr Rachael Dangarembizi is a pioneering force in neuro-infectious disease research, celebrated for her groundbreaking work on cryptococcal meningitis. Her dedication has not only secured major funding but also inspired and mentored the next generation of scientists, earning her global recognition in the field.

She is a senior lecturer at the Centre for Infectious Diseases Research in Africa (CIDRI-Africa) at the University of Cape Town (UCT). In July 2025, she was honoured with the TW Kambule-NSTF Award in the emerging researcher category.

The award ceremony, organised by the National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF) in partnership with South32, is widely regarded as South Africa's



Dr Rachael Dangarembizi.

Photo: Dr Rachael Dangarembizi

'Science Oscars.' It recognises and celebrates outstanding achievements in science, engineering, technology, and innovation across the country.

"The award is a deeply meaningful recognition of the importance of advancing brain research in Africa, particularly in the neglected area of neuro-infectious diseases like cryptococcal meningitis," she said.

For Dangarembizi and her team, the award is an affirmation that their work is not only scientifically impactful but also socially relevant, tackling critical challenges faced by communities.

Brain health

Based at the Neuroscience Institute at the UCT, Dangarembizi's doctoral training focused on neuroinfections, and her current research centres on fungal infections of the brain. As a neuroscientist, she studies how the brain works in both health and disease.

"A healthy brain helps us to control bodily functions, including movement, vision, hearing, memory, language, emotions and behaviour. Brain diseases and brain damage affect these normal functions, and this can result in disability and death," she explained.

Examples of brain diseases



include stroke, epilepsy, meningitis and depression. Neuroscientists work to understand the causes of these conditions and develop treatments.

Current research

Dangarembizi's current research focuses on uncovering the causes of brain injury in cryptococcal meningitis – a deadly fungal infection of the brain that affects people with weakened immune system, including those living with HIV and AIDS, cancer patients and individuals undergoing treatments that suppress the immune system. It is very difficult to treat and remains a leading cause of death for people living with HIV and AIDS in Africa.

"It is associated with about 200 000 deaths each year globally, the majority of which are from African. Growing up

in Southern Africa, I have seen, the devastating consequences of HIV-associated opportunistic infections. We lost family and friends to these diseases during the peak of the HIV pandemic.

Science-based solutions

"As a scientist, I believe in the power and potential of using scientific research to generate solutions. Therefore, I have dedicated my career to develop scientific approaches for tackling one of the biggest challenges that Africa has had to deal with and continues to grapple with," said Dangarembizi.

The neuroscientist shares that her fascination with the natural sciences has guided her diverse career, with past experience spanning biochemistry, microbiology and general

medical physiology.

"Of all the body systems I have worked on, the brain is the most complex and yet the most intriguing of them all. I, therefore, decided to pursue a PhD in neuroscience and thereafter started my career as a neuroscientist," she said in an interview with *Public Sector Manager* magazine.

Achievements

Among her most recent accolades, she was honoured with the African Research Leader Award from the UK Medical Research Council. The highly competitive award recognises "rising stars" in African research who are conducting exceptional, high-quality work that addresses critical global health challenges.

Dangarembizi has also secured multiple grants, includ-

ing a recent funding from the Wellcome Trust and the Gabriel Foundation.

Ground-breaking solutions

"One of the most meaningful moments in my career was seeing the successful establishment of the first lab in Africa dedicated to studying brain injury in cryptococcal meningitis," she said.

During her PhD studies, Dangarembizi had to travel to Eu-

rope to conduct her research because no local laboratory had the capacity to support the advanced work she was undertaking at the time.

Just five years after completing her PhD, she established the very lab that now empowers scientists to train and mentor young African researchers, fostering globally competitive science right here in Africa.

"This is deeply inspiring to me, every day," she said.

As a Senior Lecturer, her key

responsibilities include teaching, training, research and community service. She primarily teaches neuroscience to medical and allied health science students, and supervises Master's, PhD and postdoctoral candidates pursuing careers in neuroscience.

"...part of my work involves educating the community about brain diseases, brain infections, brain injury and mental health disorders and how these can be both prevented or

treated," she said.

Her message to young scientists is that curiosity, perseverance and passion are their greatest tools on the path to discovery and impact.

"The path is not always easy, but if you remain committed to asking important questions and seeking solutions that matter, you can make a real difference," she concluded. ♦



Dr Rachael Dangarembizi won the TW Kambule-NSTF Award in the emerging researcher category this year.

Photo: Dr Rachael Dangarembizi



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.

Your input matters! Please take a moment to share your views on the G20's initiatives and priorities using the link or QR code below.



<https://zfrmz.com/cpEbVy7Xf85SjweJW0yO>



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Dr Rachel Chikwamba.

The CSIR

prepares for future pandemics

Photo: Supplied

The COVID-19 pandemic may have exposed Africa's heavy reliance on external medical supplies but the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) is vigorously preparing for future pandemics, and Dr Rachel Chikwamba is at the forefront of it.

A Group Executive for Advanced Chemistry and Life Sciences at the CSIR, Chikwamba emphasised the importance of pandemic preparedness in an interview with *Public Sector Manager* magazine.

"Pandemic preparedness and response involve improving global access to medical

interventions, building more agile and resilient local health systems, and anticipating potential barriers to equitable access," she explained.

She added that African countries should always be proactive in pandemic preparedness through innovative medical countermeasures accessible to African populations and beyond at a fraction of the cost.

Beyond pandemic preparedness, Chikwamba said the import of high-value biological medicines to treat growing chronic diseases like diabetes, cancer and heart disease contributes signifi-

cantly to the negative balance of payments, with pharmaceuticals being the fifth-largest contributor to the deficit.

Home-grown solutions

To address the challenge of relying on imported medical supplies, the CSIR is making strategic investments in key infrastructure.

"Health as we know it is a question of security. If you are not healthy, then you are vulnerable. The COVID-19 experience taught us that the capability to make your own vaccines, medicine diagnostics is strategic capability and that waiting on other countries to supply our needs puts us in a vulnerable state," she said.

Chikwamba added that South Africa should never find itself waiting on the line to receive vaccines in the future, like it did during COVID-19.

"It is not a question of "if" but when the pandemic will come, and because we do not know when, we can only monitor the signals in the environment. We need to be prepared and protect our country," said Chikwamba.

She emphasised that it is time for South Africa to start manufacturing its own medicines and vaccines. This would allow the country to control both production volumes and pricing, ultimately reducing its reliance on imports and gaining more self-sufficiency in healthcare.

Launching the FuturePharma facility

She made this statement as the CSIR gears up to officially launch one of its key strategic initiatives, the FuturePharma facility. The facility is set to manufacture small-molecule and biologic active pharmaceutical

ingredients using cutting-edge pharmacological technology.

"The FuturePharma infrastructure will go a long way in contributing to local production of clinical grade. It offers an adaptable space for hybrid batch-flow process development and is compliant with current Good Manufacturing Practices. This facility will also support process engineering, digital integration and small and medium enterprise development in the pharmaceutical sector," she explained.

The project aligns with CSIR's current strategy which was updated in 2017. This strategic direction aims to significantly enhance the CSIR's impact on industrial development.

"A particular area for my team and I was envisioning how this could yield results in the pharmaceutical sector, and we drew up a vision for FuturePharma in 2018 to build a facility with

multiple capabilities to make all types of medicines, including small-molecules, protein biologics, hormones, factors, therapeutics, vaccines and others," she explained.

Research-based solutions

Upon analysing the pharmaceutical sector, they found that a significant portion of spending goes toward importing medicines. South Africa's pharmaceutical industry is currently valued at approximately US\$2.8 billion (R48.5 Billion at the average rate of R17.33) and is projected to reach nearly US\$4 billion (R69 billion) by 2030. However, less than 10% of this market is supplied by locally manufactures products.

"South Africa imported US\$2.33 billion (R40.35 billion) worth of pharmaceutical products in 2023 (R43 Billion at the South Africa imported



Dr Rachel Chikwamba (centre) during a progress walkabout of the FuturePharma facility.

Photo: CSIR



Photo: CSIR

FuturePharma's carbon dioxide encapsulation facility ensures consistency, quality and enhanced bioavailability of pharmaceutical products.

US\$2.33 billion (R40.35 billion) worth of pharmaceutical products in 2023 (R43 Billion at the 2023 average rate of R18.45). In the same year, South Africa's pharmaceutical exports were valued at US\$456.6 million (R8.4 Billion at the 2023 average rate of R18.45). We needed to do something to reduce this through facilitating local production of pharmaceuticals," she explained.

Leaving no one behind

The team also observed a significant imbalance in the consumption of pharmaceutical products due to the importation of high-value, expensive

medicines. As a result, around 16% of the population – those who can afford private health-care – consume approximately 84% of the country's pharmaceutical expenditure. She pointed out that this is unfair, as it leaves the majority of the population without access to essential, high-value medicines. Local pharmaceutical production, she explained, would help make these medicines more affordable and accessible to a larger portion of the population.

After drafting the vision, Chikwamba and her team designed the necessary infrastructure to support local medicine production. They envisioned a

facility where all stages of the manufacturing process could take place in one location. This integrated setup ensures the medicines meet the standards required for clinical trials within South Africa.

Funding

With funding from the National Treasury and allocated resources from CSIR, Chikwamba and her team successfully established a facility capable of producing clinical-grade pharmaceuticals to be manufactured locally. Additional support came through grants from international organisations, private sector stakeholders and a Parliamentary grant, which were used to purchase equipment for the facility.

"We hope to launch this facility in October [this month] as part of the celebrations and invite the industry to join us so that they can also contribute their ideas and make a global contribution from the facility," she said.

Although South Africa currently depends heavily on imported medicines, it does export certain pharmaceuticals, including child immunisation vaccines. However, the volume of these exports remains minimal compared to its imports. This is set to change, thanks to FuturePharma.

About Chikwamba

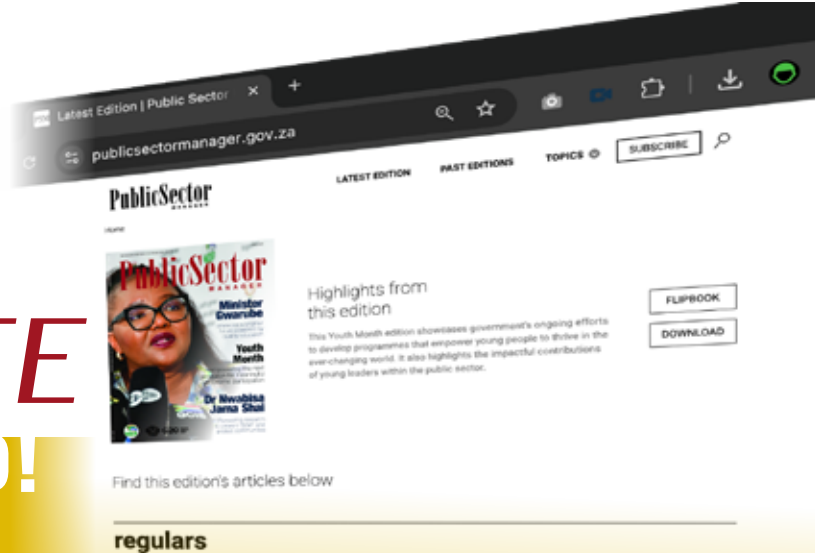
Boasting more than 20 years of experience in the public sector, Chikwamba joined the CSIR in 2004, after serving as a post-doctoral research associate at Arizona State University in the United States.

In her current role, Chikwamba works closely with academic institution, as well as the public and private sector partners both locally and internationally, to drive innovation that enhances competitiveness and economic performance.

Chikwamba is specifically interested in translating research into real-world impact, particularly across the CSIR's biomanufacturing programmes, which include vaccines, pharmaceuticals, and therapeutics. She is also deeply involved in biotechnology applications that support industry development and agro-processing initiatives that add value to agricultural outputs.

For Chikwamba, serving the public is a privilege. She believes that public servants should strive to leave a lasting legacy – one marked by meaningful contributions to the lives of ordinary citizens. Over her two decades at the CSIR, she has already demonstrated this commitment through her impactful work. ❖

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Business ties with the United States

are strong and expanding

Last week, I addressed a Trade and Investment Dialogue between South African and United States (US) businesses on the sidelines of the United Na-

tions General Assembly in New York.

This was one of a number of engagements we had with US companies while in the

city. Some of these companies already have business operations in South Africa, while others are interested in investing. All of the companies commended the

reforms being undertaken by the government and the prospects for growth in our economy.

As part of strengthening ties with the US, we also used the op-

portunity to meet with members of the US Congress and Senate. Some of our Ministers and officials also held meetings with representatives of the US administration.

The Trade and Investment Dialogue was convened by the US Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business advocacy organisation with representation in more than 120 countries, including South Africa. A number of government officials and representatives from business and industry from both countries were present.

The optimistic, future-focused tone of this important engagement underscored how, beyond the headlines and debates around trade policy and political frictions, US and South African businesses are forging ahead.

Addressing the dialogue, the President of the US-Africa Business Centre of the US Chamber of Commerce Kendra Gaither said that there was "no economic

relationship more foundational than the ties that the US and South Africa have". She said it was a vital relationship that merits dedicated attention.

As further testimony to the strength of this relationship, later this year the US Chamber of Commerce will be sending a high-powered delegation, led by its CEO, to the B20 Summit, the official dialogue forum of the G20 for the global business community.

Commercial ties between South Africa and the US have proven to be both durable and resilient. There are more than 600 US companies in South Africa. Our country is the second-largest African destination for US exports. Both South African and US businesses can see the clear opportunities and commercial gains of investing in the other's respective markets.

South Africa is positioning itself as an investment destination for critical minerals, with the digital

transition and the global move towards net zero driving global demand. We also had the opportunity to engage with US industry around investment opportunities in agriculture, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, technology and other key sectors.

We announced the establishment of the South Africa-United States Trade and Investment Forum, which will be inaugurated at next year's South Africa Investment Conference as a vital bridge between the two countries.

These engagements with business take place alongside discussions with the US administration around a reciprocal trade agreement. Our Department of Trade, Industry and Competition has been meeting with the US Trade Representative to finalise an agreement that benefits both our countries.

We are also encouraged that the US Chamber of Commerce supports the reauthorisation of

the African Growth and Opportunity Act, describing it as "the cornerstone of US-Africa commerce". Predictable, preferential access to the US market is not just vital to South Africa's own exports, but also to US companies that depend on reliable imports. We are also prioritising the African Continental Free Trade Area as a vital tool for strengthening US-South Africa trade and investment.

As a country, we will continue to advocate for the principle of reciprocity in investment and trade relations with the US. As the presence of US companies on South African soil continues to grow, we want to expand the number of South African companies operating in the US market, thereby creating more jobs for Americans.

As the official talks around trade tariffs continue, we take to heart the words of the US Chamber of Commerce representative at the recent dialogue, that expanding commercial partnerships "happens one deal, one investment at time".

Our engagements in the US show that South African and US businesses remain deeply connected and are committed to mutually beneficial partnerships well into the future. ♦

***This message was
first published on
29 September 2025**



President Ramaphosa calls for an end to Gaza conflict

President Cyril Ramaphosa recently addressed the 80th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), where he stressed the importance of taking action to stop the conflict in Gaza. "Israel is committing genocide in Gaza. Just last week, the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry found that Israel is responsible for the commission of genocide in Gaza. As Palestinians continue to face

genocide and famine, we have a duty to act," said the President in his address.

His remarks came in the wake of a report by the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry that found Israel responsible for acts of genocide against Palestine.

President Ramaphosa emphasised the need for international cooperation and solidarity in addressing global challenges.

Reflecting on the founding principles of the UN, he reminded the assembly that the organisation was established "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and build a peaceful, prosperous and just world arising from the devastation brought about by global conflict".

He cited the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, who recently reported that global

military expenditure has reached historic highs just as the world is falling behind on its core development promises.

"We are building weapons when we should be building social infrastructure. We must act decisively to silence all guns, everywhere, to realise the goal of sustainable development and global peace".

Eradicating poverty and inequality

He stressed that it is essential now more than ever to uphold the values of the UN.

"We are called upon to advance cooperation and solidarity between nations," he said as he highlighted South Africa's commitment to eradicate poverty and inequality both domestically and across the African continent.

As South Africa gets ready to host the G20 Leaders' Summit for the first time on African soil in November, President Ramaphosa emphasised the theme of this year's presidency:



President Ramaphosa at the UNGA.

“Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability”.

He highlighted the ongoing challenges in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, attributing the obstacles partly to the insufficient financial resources available in developing economies.

Many countries in the Global South, particularly in Africa, are grappling with high debts, which inhibit investments in health and education.

“They are indebted and are paying more on debt servicing than they do on health and education,” Ramaphosa added, advocating for “fairer lending rules” to help these countries meet their development goals.

The President also highlighted the need for reform in international financial institutions to address global challenges better, emphasising that “the multilateral trading system needs to be reformed”.

Global trade

The President reaffirmed the World Trade Organisation’s essential role in managing trade differences but expressed concern over geopolitical shocks and trade policy volatility threatening global economic stability.

“Unilateral trade practices and economic coercion have a detrimental impact on many nations,” he stated, specifically calling for an end to the long-standing economic embargo against

“We are building weapons when we should be building social infrastructure. We must act decisively to silence all guns, everywhere, to realise the goal of sustainable development and global peace”.

Cuba, which he characterised as having caused “untold damage to the country’s economy over the years”.

On the other hand, the President pointed to the African Continental Free Trade Area as a model for sustainable economic growth and cooperation.

He also announced the launch of an Extraordinary Committee of Independent Experts on Global Wealth Inequality, chaired by Nobel laureate Professor Joseph Stiglitz.

This committee is tasked with delivering a report on global inequality to G20 leaders, signifying South Africa’s proactive approach to addressing pressing global economic disparities.

Climate change

Shifting his focus to climate change, the country’s Head of State warned that this is an existential threat.

“We are failing future genera-



tions by our inability to reduce global warming.”

He stressed that while Africa contributes least to climate change, it bears the brunt of its effects, witnessing extreme weather events that exacerbate food insecurity and displace populations.

“Extreme weather events like floods and droughts are driv-

ing food insecurity, displacing populations, causing damage to infrastructure and leading to the unnecessary loss of livelihoods”.

He called Member States to honour their undertakings and commitments in line with the guiding principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

SANParks' Vision 2040 marks a new era of conservation



Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Minister Dion George at the SANParks Vision 2040 Indaba

When SANParks introduced its Vision 2040 strategy a year ago, it was billed as a transformative step for conservation in South Africa. At the recent SANParks Vision 2040 Indaba held in Gqeberha, Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Minister Dion George made it clear that this was not just an ordinary strategy but a pivotal moment in the country's conservation journey

"Vision 2040 is not simply about preserving land or counting species," he told delegates. "It is about integrated conservation. It is a deliberate, holistic approach that links ecological integrity, climate resilience and human well-being. It is about reimagining landscapes as Mega Living Landscapes, where protected areas, agricultural land, communal spaces and private holdings come

together in a network that supports biodiversity, sustainable livelihoods and cultural heritage".

He added that this reimagining is about changing the very core of conservation. "The environment and people are not separate," he said firmly. "They are inextricably connected. The well-being of one depends on the thriving of the other".

Protecting the lives of rangers

The Minister condemned the illegal harvesting of wild animals describing it as "undermining livelihoods, threatens biodiversity and destabilises local economies".

"Our iconic species define our natural heritage and sustain our tourism and economy. Yet from rhinos to lions, pangolins to abalone, illegal harvesting is a sophisticated, multi-



million-rand criminal enterprise," George said.

The Minister commended and paid tribute to the rangers who risk their lives each day to protect South Africa's natural heritage.

"They are guardians of life, defending species against organised crime networks, poachers and traffickers. They confront danger daily, often away from families, yet their commitment never wavers"

"I am committed to ensuring that they are equipped, valued and protected. Without them, no conservation strategy can succeed"

George highlighted one of his department's flagship initiatives:

the Kruger, Kirstenbosch, iSimangaliso Icon Status Strategy (KISS).

"Our natural heritage is one of South Africa's greatest assets," he said. "Through KISS, we are elevating three of our national icons into global leaders in conservation, ecological protection, and inclusive tourism. These parks and gardens are not just destinations. They are engines of employment, education and sustainable development"

Job creation

The Minister linked this to the broader economic vision, stating: "By harnessing the biodiversity economy, South Africa is projecting global leadership while

creating economic opportunities at home. The revised National Biodiversity Economy Strategy is estimated to unlock 397 000 jobs and inject R127 billion annually into our economy by 2036"

Protecting the rhino

Of all species, none captured George's tone of urgency and hope more than the rhinoceros.

"South Africa is the custodian of over 80% of Africa's white rhino population" "Early 20th century conservation action grew our rhino numbers from fewer than 100 to over 20 000 by 2010. Recent years have seen a decline due to poaching, drought and organised crime. The KISS

campaign is not only about protecting rhinos. It is about community empowerment, green jobs and inclusive conservation"

He added that SANParks had launched the Rhino Renaissance Campaign, in which it trains and deploys 90 Rhino Monitors annually. These are young South Africans from communities bordering the Kruger National Park who bring local knowledge, ancestral tracking skills and a vested interest in the future of our wildlife.

"Using drones, GPS collars, and digital reporting systems, these monitors provide real-time intelligence to enforcement teams"

He added that this work symbolises the heart of Vision 2040.



"Our strategy is comprehensive. From 24/7 rhino tracking and targeted dehorning to DNA tagging, genetic research and transnational cooperation, the Rhino Renaissance represents a blueprint for what integrated conservation can achieve."

G20 Presidency

The Minister noted that South Africa's leadership during its G20 Presidency had created a unique opportunity to highlight the country's strengths in conservation, policy innovation and environmental stewardship on the global stage. He emphasised that the country's integrated approach, linking biodiversity protection, sustainable land use, climate resilience and community empowerment, is increasingly being recognised as a global model.

He highlighted the importance of international partnerships, noting that collaboration with organisations such as the United Nations Environment Programme, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the World Wildlife Fund and the Global Environment Facility had significantly strengthened South Africa's conservation efforts. These partnerships, he explained, help ensure that the country's strategies align with global climate and biodiversity commitments, while also unlocking international funding,

technical support, and knowledge exchange.

But his emphasis remained on South Africa's role as a pioneer. "Protected areas are no longer isolated pockets of greenery. They are strategic assets in climate mitigation, carbon storage, and water security. Through nature-based solutions, we are demonstrating that conservation is essential to achieving climate targets and sustainable development goals."

Looking ahead

Reflecting on the progress made on the vision so far, George was clear-eyed about both achievements and challenges.

"As we reflect on the progress of this first year, it is clear that Vision 2040 is more than a strategy. It is a movement. A movement where parks are people-centred, biodiversity thrives, and communities are empowered to share in the benefits of conservation," he said.

"Yet we must remain vigilant. The threats we face – climate change, wildlife crime, habitat loss – are complex, interconnected and urgent. Our response must be equally integrated, coordinated across agencies, borders and sectors and anchored in the principles of justice, equity and inclusivity". ♦

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Driving the Future:

SA's path to electric mobility and industrial competitiveness

South Africa's automotive industry is a cornerstone of the national economy, contributing 5.3% to the gross domestic product and supporting approximately 110 000 direct jobs, according to Naamsa.

In 2023, the sector generated R270.8 billion in export revenue, with vehicles and components shipped to over 148 countries. Yet, this vital industry faces

unprecedented challenges as global markets pivot toward electric vehicles (EVs). With the European Union and United Kingdom set to ban internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles by 2030 and 2035, respectively, South Africa's export markets – where 45% of locally assembled vehicles are destined – are at risk.

To remain competitive,

South Africa must embrace the global shift to electric mobility while leveraging its industrial strengths and critical mineral resources.

A historic crossroad

The automotive industry is undergoing transformative disruption driven by EVs, Industry 4.0 technologies, the Internet of Things, evolving

consumer preferences and stringent regulatory pressures. This shift places South Africa at a critical juncture: will the country lead the transition to electric mobility or risk losing its competitive edge? The question is not whether the transition will occur, but whether South Africa can seize this opportunity to drive innovation, create jobs and strengthen its position in the global value chain.

President Cyril Ramaphosa at the launch of the BMW X3 Plug-In Hybrid at the BMW plant in Rosslyn, Tshwane.



Thought leadership in action

In May 2025, the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) hosted a Thought Leadership Seminar through its Institute for the Future of Work (IFOW), themed; "Accelerating and Building Capacity in the Automotive Sector for the Future of Work in South Africa". The event brought together government, industry, academia and civil society to chart a path for South Africa's automotive future. Discussions centred on the South



Photo: Supplied

President Cyril Ramaphosa at the launch of the BMW X3 Plug-In Hybrid at the BMW plant in Rosslyn, Tshwane.

African Automotive Masterplan (SAAM) 2035, which aims to integrate the industry into global value chains while promoting local empowerment and competitiveness.

Key seminar insights highlighted the need for:

- **Enhanced localisation:** Increasing local production of components to reduce reliance on imports.
- **Skills development:** Aligning educational curricula with industry needs, particularly for EV technologies and sustainability.
- **Innovation ecosystems:** Fostering research and development (R&D) to create local intellectual property and support advanced manufacturing.

TUT's project-based learning model, which bridges academia and industry, was showcased

as a vital tool for preparing the next generation of automotive professionals.

Government commitment to electric mobility

In July 2025, President Cyril Ramaphosa underscored South Africa's commitment to the EV transition during the launch of the BMW X3 Plug-in Hybrid EV in Rosslyn, Tshwane. He emphasised the opportunities for local component manufacturing and the potential to leverage South Africa's vast reserves of critical minerals, such as lithium and cobalt, to position the country as a hub for processing and beneficiation. "The global shift to clean vehicles is not just a challenge but an opportunity for South Africa to redefine its industrial future," Ramaphosa stated.

The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition has

reinforced this vision through its *Electric Vehicle White Paper*, released in December 2023. The policy outlines a roadmap to establish South Africa as a regional EV production hub, with key measures including:

- A 150% tax rebate on qualifying EV investments starting in 2026.
- Support for battery manufacturing and component localisation.
- Investment in charging infrastructure for urban logistics and long-distance corridors.
- Development of EV-specific skills pipelines, including training for technicians, engineers, and charging station operators.

Public-private sector partnership

The Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone (TASEZ), a

public-private partnership, has attracted over R10 billion in investment and supports a vehicle production capacity of 200 000 units. TASEZ is also gearing up for plug-in hybrid production, signalling South Africa's readiness to adopt advanced manufacturing capabilities.

Critical challenges ahead

Despite these advancements, significant hurdles remain. Seminar participants identified three critical challenges:

1. **Skills misalignment:** South African universities lack dedicated EV or automotive engineering programmes. While TUT's project-based learning initiatives are promising, scaling these efforts requires sustained investment and policy support.
2. **Limited local innovation:** Most vehicle design and



Thought leaders at the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) Thought Leadership Seminar, from left: Mr Mkatheko Makhubela (Academic: TUT), Mr Tebogo Magubane (Tshwane FM Station Manager), Mr Msokoli Ntombana (Acting CEO: TASEZ), Ms Roouxzeta van Der Merwe (Lecturer: TUT), Mr Tseliso Mohlomi (Senior Director: IFOW), Mr Tshepo Rapudi (Chief Information Officer: AITF), Ms Lebalang Molobele (Skills Project Manager: NAACAM), Mr Naphtaly Mokgotsane (Acting CEO: MerSETA), Mr Tshetthe Litheko (Chief Policy Officer: NAAMSA), Mr Mkhululi Mlota (Chief Director: DTIC)

R&D occur abroad, limiting South Africa's ability to develop proprietary technologies. Investments in prototyping, systems integration, and local intellectual property are essential.

3. Infrastructure bottlenecks: Stable electricity supply and efficient rail-port connectivity are critical for large-scale EV manufacturing and export competitiveness. Energy reliability and logistics remain persistent challenges.

A collaborative path forward

The seminar underscored the need for coordinated action among government, industry, and academia. The partnership between IFOW and TASEZ exemplifies this approach. Together, they are establishing an Automotive Innovation and Skills Development Research Lab to accelerate green mobility, promote local resource beneficiation, and foster inclusive industrialisation, particularly for black-owned and emerging suppliers.

This initiative will align curricula with industry needs through work-integrated learning, develop industry-informed courses to prepare students for future roles and reskill current workers to adapt to the evolving

automotive landscape.

This model of academia-industry collaboration is critical to unlocking South Africa's electric mobility potential. Strategic investments in research, skills development, and partnerships with universities and startups will drive innovation and localisation. Advocacy for policies that prioritise local manufacturing and green technology adoption is equally vital.

A future designed and driven

South Africa's industrial heritage, strategic geography and human capital position it to become a continental leader in electric mobility. However, this future requires deliberate action. As the SAAM 2035 undergoes review in 2025, policymakers must centre the EV transition in their vision, prioritising:

- **Innovation:** Incentives for local R&D and intellectual property development.
- **Skills:** Expanded training programmes to meet the demands of EV manufacturing and maintenance.
- **Infrastructure:** Investments in energy reliability and lo-

gistics to support large-scale production and exports.

- **Inclusivity:** Support for black-owned businesses and emerging suppliers to ensure equitable growth.

With bold leadership and collective resolve, South Africa's automotive sector cannot only adapt to the global shift to electric mobility but also redefine its role as a competitive, innovative, and inclusive player on the world stage. The time to act is now – South Africa's automotive future is ours to design, build and drive. ❖



Dr Gabriel Lekalakala.



Transport Month

Transport infrastructure investment as another way of job creation. Tshwane plans massive industrial park

Tshwane is planning to grow Rosslyn by extending its automotive precinct and building more houses, shopping malls, banks, parks and transport links. The plan is expected to create 150 000 jobs. MMC for Economic Development and Spatial Planning, Councillor Sarah Mabotsa recently said the plan outlines a development vision to build a 7 157 ha, globally competitive and transformed automotive manufacturing city in Rosslyn, north-west of Tshwane. "Our studies estimate that the total development will create around 150 000 direct and indirect jobs for the residents of Tshwane over the lifespan of this development." <https://www.citizen.co.za/rekord/news-headlines/2025/04/02/tshwane-plans-massive-industrial-park/>

Empowering women

through equitable socio-economic development



Photo: Freepik

Women often shoulder the burden of unpaid care work.

South Africa's G20 Presidency comes at a critical moment, as the world grapples with overlapping crises – from climate change and economic underdevelopment to inequality, poverty and geopolitical instability.

Addressing these challenges requires bold, transformative policies that promote inclusive and sustainable development. South Africa's commitment towards this agenda is guided

by the principles of Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability.

Globally, we are facing a care crisis of unprecedented scale, making it increasingly difficult for individuals, families and communities to balance paid work and unpaid care, often resulting in poor physical, mental and social outcomes. Since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, over the years, progress towards equal rights

for women has remained elusive. No country has achieved gender equality and the COVID-19 pandemic has eroded the limited gains that have been made.

The Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals and efforts to recover better from the pandemic, offer a chance to transform the lives of women and girls, today and tomorrow.

South Africa is the only African nation with permanent membership in the G20. This current presidency marks a historic milestone – the first time the G20 summit will be hosted on African soil. This moment offers both a symbolic milestone and a strategic opportunity.

Empowerment of Women Working Group

Centered around the Empowerment of Women Working Group (EWWG) are three key priorities: policy perspectives on the care

economy – paid and unpaid care work and household responsibilities; promoting financial inclusion of and for women; and addressing gender-based violence and femicide.

The EWWG is a dedicated forum within the G20 framework aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering women worldwide. Established to address the unique challenges faced by women in the economy, the group focuses on fostering inclusive growth, enhancing women's participation in the labour market and supporting women entrepreneurs.

As South Africa's prosperity is inextricably linked to the strength of its economic and trade relationships across the continent, this G20 Presidency serves as a strategic opportunity to uplift the entire African continent. However, Africa's full potential cannot be realised while women remain on the margins of economic participation.

Decisive shift

Forty years have passed since the 3rd United Nations Women's Conference in Nairobi in 1985, and with just five years remaining to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) critical gaps in implementation still exist.

This is despite strong global commitments like the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. We need a global decisive shift; from research to results, from ideation to implementation, from isolated efforts to shared accountability, from competition to collaboration.

Experts believe that advancing women's empowerment can significantly boost global gross domestic product, reduce poverty, and accelerate progress towards the SDGs.

As the world continues to evolve, the G20's commitment to empowering women signals a pivotal step towards inclusive growth and shared prosperity.

Overcoming barriers

Despite advancements, challenges such as cultural barriers, unequal access to education, and the limited representation of women in leadership roles continue to exist. The G20 persists in emphasising the significance of implementing comprehensive and multifaceted strategies to



Cassius Selala,
Communications Director, DWYPD

overcome these barriers.

Looking ahead, the G20 EWWG endeavours to strengthen its initiatives through enhanced collaboration among member nations, the utilisation of digital technologies, and the cultivation of a global environment conducive to women's empowerment. The group acknowledges that empowering women is not only a moral duty but also a strategic catalyst for sustainable economic growth and development.

The G20 group plays a crucial role in promoting gender equality worldwide. Through the implementation of targeted policies and the encouragement of international cooperation, it aims to establish a future in which women can fully participate in and benefit from economic opportunities, thereby fostering

more inclusive and sustainable development on a global scale.

Primary objectives

The group's objectives include:

- **Advancing women's economic participation:** Promoting policies that increase women's participation in the workforce, including reducing barriers to entry and ensuring equal opportunities.
- **Supporting women entrepreneurs:** developing initiatives to facilitate access to finance, markets and technology for women-led businesses.
- **Promoting gender-inclusive policies:** Encouraging member countries to implement gender-responsive policies that address issues such as unpaid work, gender-based violence and career development.
- **Addressing data gaps:** Improving gender data collection and analysis to inform better policymaking and track progress effectively.



G20 SOUTH AFRICA 2025

- **In recent years, the G20 EWWG has launched several programmes, including:**

- ⦿ Women's infrastructure and employment initiative, which aims to create more inclusive infrastructure projects that support women's employment.
- ⦿ Best practices and policy recommendations to foster gender equality in different sectors.
- ⦿ Innovative Financing Mechanisms to increase investment in women-centric projects and startups.

Chaired by the Minister in The Presidency for Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities, Sindisiwe Chikunga, the G20 EWWG is an intergovernmental platform that will drive global efforts to create a more equitable and prosperous South Africa and Africa. It aims to highlight the importance of collective action in promoting women's leadership and economic empowerment, fostering solidarity, equality and sustainability. ♦

Adaptive and reflexive leadership:

preparing leaders for an uncertain future

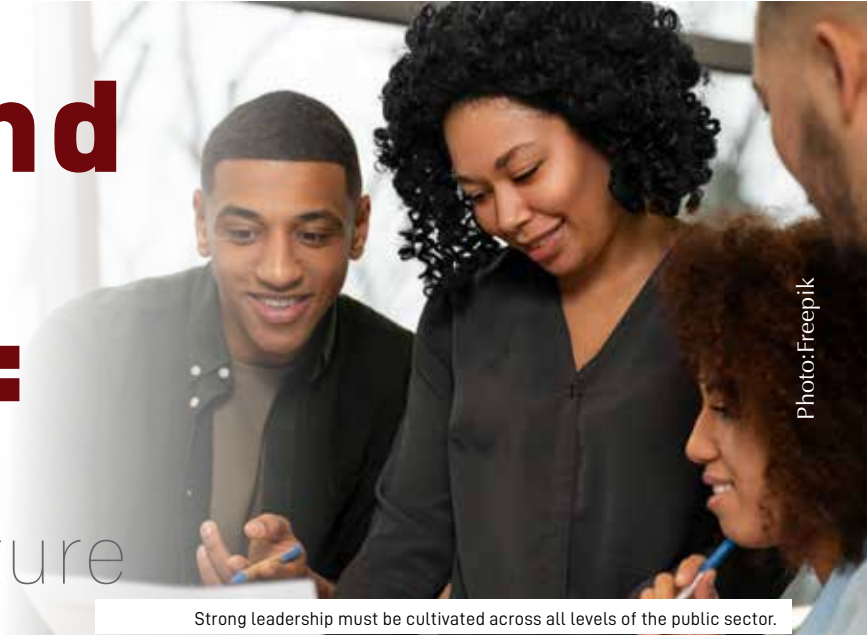


Photo: Freepik

Strong leadership must be cultivated across all levels of the public sector.

Much has been written and said about leadership in the South African public sector – beginning with the Constitution, whose preamble acknowledges the importance of leadership by “respecting those who have worked to build and develop our country.” The National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030 further emphasises the need for strong leadership across government, business, labour and civil society as a critical requirement for its successful implementation.

The National Framework towards the Professionalisation of the Public Sector highlights, among other priorities, the need for improved leadership, governance and accountability. Strong leadership is, therefore, essential to building a capable state and ensuring a functional, efficient government.

As both a concerned citizen and a public servant, I have found myself grappling with a persistent question over the past two years: How is it that we are experiencing a dysfunctional state when there seems to be an abundance of leadership in our beautiful country?

If we accept the idea that “everyone is a leader” – based on the understanding that leadership is fundamentally about influence – then we must also acknowledge that everyone, to some degree, influences others. Leadership expert John C. Maxwell puts it plainly: “Everyone is a leader because everyone influences someone.” This perspective suggests that leadership is not confined to formal roles or titles, but is a quality that resides in all of us and can be developed.

Maxwell further asserts that

“everything rises and falls on leadership.” If this is true, then why are we not seeing effective service delivery in the public sector?

Service delivery

We are faced with a state that struggles to provide basic and critical services. Many communities are enduring water shortages – now referred to as “water shedding” – frequent power outages, deteriorating roads riddled with potholes and a healthcare system under immense strain. There is a visible lack of functionality within the security cluster and governance in general often appears inconsistent or absent.

This raises a difficult but necessary question: Is the problem truly a lack of leadership? Or is it a lack of courageous, principled and visionary leaders – leaders

who are fearless, wise and committed to the public good?

Adaptive and reflexive leadership

Perhaps the answer lies in the presence – or absence – of adaptive and reflexive leadership. This form of leadership challenges the status quo in favour of experimentation and continuous learning. It enables institutions to remain flexible in their decision-making, allowing them to navigate evolving environments and address complex challenges effectively. It is a collaborative approach that empowers individuals and organisations to adapt to change and find innovative solutions.

We witnessed the power of this kind of leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. Presi-

dent Cyril Ramaphosa and his team demonstrated an adaptive response. The President led from the front, communicating regularly and transparently through his widely followed “family meetings”.

Recommendations

Developing leadership cannot be left to chance. All relevant institutions; such as the National School of Government, the South African Local Government Association, the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority, institutions of higher learning, training bodies and professional organisations; have a critical responsibility to actively cultivate and build capable leaders across all levels of the public sector.

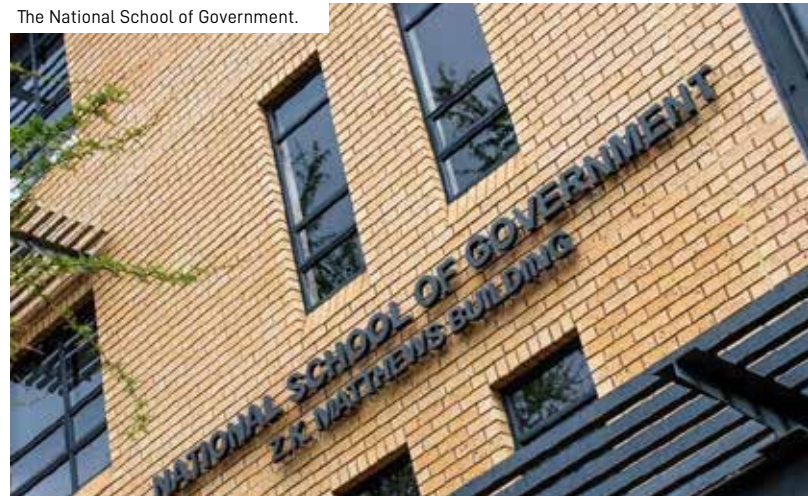
We need leaders who are equipped to thrive in complex and rapidly changing environments. This includes leaders who:

- ◉ **Exhibit emotional intelligence (EQ):** Self-aware individuals who can effectively manage their emotions and relationships. EQ is vital for navigating the interpersonal complexities that arise during periods of uncertainty and transformation.
- ◉ **Embrace experimentation:** In today’s unpredictable

world, the ability to test new ideas, adapt quickly and learn from failure is essential. Leaders must foster environments where innovation and iteration are encouraged.

- ◉ **Leverage digital and artificial intelligence (AI):** With the increasing integration of AI in governance and service delivery, leaders must be agile and capable of using digital tools and frameworks. This agility enables rapid responses to community feedback and empowers teams to continuously refine and improve their solutions. We require leaders who not only respond to challenges, but also anticipate and prepare for them through proactive strategies. This includes:
- ◉ **Environmental scanning:** Continuously monitoring emerging trends, ranging from market shifts to technological advancements and societal changes, to stay ahead of potential disruptions.
- ◉ **Scenario planning:** Using foresight to consider multiple future possibilities and their potential impacts,

The National School of Government.



enabling more informed and flexible decision-making.

- ◉ **Continuous Learning and Professional Development:** Prioritising the growth of both themselves and their teams by investing in ongoing training and knowledge-building within their organisations.
- ◉ **Resilience building:** Equipping teams to manage and recover from setbacks by fostering both mental and organisational resilience. This also involves adopting a risk-based approach that encourages innovation while remaining compliant with the legal and regulatory frameworks governing the public sector.

Adaptive and reflexive leadership is essential to building a capable state. The traditional,

“business-as-usual” approach to leadership is no longer sufficient in today’s complex and rapidly changing environment. To drive long-term success, we must all embrace the ongoing challenges of continuous learning, innovation and adaptation.

If we truly aspire to be adaptive and reflexive leaders, we must be willing to take calculated risks, challenge the status quo, and provoke meaningful and lasting change for South Africa. ♦



Lusani Madzivhandila.

Wear items from

THESIS

Lifestyle this spring

In this edition of *Public Sector Manager* magazine, we feature items by Thesis Lifestyle, which was co-founded by **Wandile Zondo** from Soweto, Gauteng.

Thesis Lifestyle was registered in 2005 and opened its doors on 16 June 2006, in the premises of an old record store in Mofolo, Soweto. Two more outlets have since been opened in Orlando and Protea Glen. The brand also has an online store.



* Prices correct at the time of publishing.



HERE ARE SOME OF THE ITEMS YOU CAN BUY THIS SPRING:

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Classic Zip Jacket: R1 400.00

Combo floral short: R350.00

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For more information visit:
www.thesislifestyle.co.za
You can follow the brand on
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Instagram @thesis_lifestyle
Call: (011) 982 1182



Indulge in sticky wings



In this edition, we feature a light meal prepared by 25-year-old Chef Latino Ruwaan Alkant from Pretoria. His Sticky Wings recipe provides a meal that can either be served as a snack, starter or as part of the main course.

Ingredients:

- Soya sauce
- Apricot jam
- Chicken spices
- Sweet chilli sauce
- Portuguese spice
- Cayenne pepper
- Pepper
- Chicken wings

Method:

- Place your wings in a bowl and spice them with chicken spices and soya sauce.
- Place the bowl in the oven to bake at 190°C.

- While your chicken is baking in the oven, start making your sticky sauce.

Sauce method:

- In your pot, place your Apricot jam, soya sauce, chicken and Portuguese spice, pepper, cayenne pepper and sweet chilli sauce and cook it for 10 minutes.
- Bake your wings for 25 to 35 minutes. After Every 10 minutes, glaze your wings in the oven with your sticky sauce and when done baking, glaze for the last time. The meal is ready to serve.

**You can have this meal with a glass of any type of wine just to rinse your palate.*

About the Chef:

Chef Latino Ruwaan Alkant, also known as Skivovo, acquired his Assistant Chef qualification from the Capital Hotel School in Hatfield, Pretoria through a fully-funded bursary by Build Africa.

He currently works as a private chef for a Pretoria-based family. You can email Chef Skivovo on ruwaan01@icloud.com

Wild Coast Sun

draws attention to the Mzamba fossils and Petrified Forest



The Wild Coast Sun Golf Course.

Two kilometres from the Wild Coast Sun near Port Edward in the Eastern Cape, on the beach, are the Mzamba fossils and Petrified Forest, in the northerly reaches of the Wild Coast.

When you think petrified forest, you may expect to see a forest in the traditional sense.

This forest does not stand tall next to you but rather underneath; as you walk, you will see 80-million-year-old fossilised trees and deposits on the rocks.

Breathtakingly beautiful, the four-star rated Wild Coast Sun is the perfect year-round family holiday destination, with ac-

tivities for all ages and energy levels.

Flanked by a Blue Flag beach, Indian ocean, lagoon and 750 hectares of lush indigenous bush, the property boasts an R80-million water park, games area, a top ranked 18-hole golf course, casino and a range of restaurants.

The surrounding area also abounds in adventure. Choose from deep-sea fishing, rock, surf, fly or spear fishing, scuba diving, hiking trails and horse riding on the beach. Walk along sandy beaches where the only footprints are your own, or hunt for relics from old shipwrecks along the coast.



Water activity at the Riverside Aqua Sports and Beach Bar at the Mtavuna River.

Wild Coast Sun's Wild Waves Water Park.



At the Mtamvuna River, the Riverside Aqua Sports and Beach Bar offers a fantastic selection of water sports and river activities such as kayaking, speed boats, paddle boats, tube rides, water skiing and a lazy boat cruise.

Take a guided walk on the stretch of the beach between the Wild Coast Sun and the Mzamba river, and see the Petrified Forest, representing the fossilisation remains of an ancient marine environment deposited during the Cretaceous period some 85 million years ago.

Picture perfect

Glide along the beautiful botanic forest or take a tour of the famous golf course on a Segway, which will show you the most Instagrammable backdrops in the area. There are few better ways to explore the Wild Coast Sun's serene surroundings than on a quad bike. Four wheels equals freedom, so enjoy the multi-terrain of the wilderness.

For thrilling adult entertainment, the casino has a wide range of slot machines and popular tables games such as roulette, blackjack and other classics. Both smoking and



Wild Coast Sun's Wild Waves Water Park.



Horse riding along the beach.

non-smoking facilities are available. High rollers at Wild Coast Sun Resort can now enjoy placing their bets in the recently-renovated Salon Privé – Sun International's only casino with an ocean view.

The championship 18-hole Wild Coast Sun Golf Course is famed for its magnificently curated fairways and greens that cross rugged terrain of hills,

ravines, rivers, dams, waterfalls and the lagoon until the final hole, with unforgettable views of the Indian Ocean.

Land-based sports are mostly located at the Sports Centre which houses lawn bowls and tennis. Guests can maintain their regular fitness regime, should they wish, at the hotel's gym situated on the 4th floor.

Entertainment for the whole family

The AquaPlay area's slides will keep youngsters safely entertained for hours, while the entire family will enjoy activities such as Segway, quad biking and cycling. Indoor entertainment for children is provided by the Magic Company and Cosmic Bowling in the Aloha Village, with the recent inclusion of the first indoor Skypark in South Africa.

Challenge the family to problem-solving skills with Breakout, the ultimate game escaping a room. Squawkers crèche offers supervised fun for children over weekends and school holidays.

The entire family will enjoy the adrenaline rush of Wild Waves Water Park, which boasts some of the world's best water rides. Choose from

a gentle Lazy River tube experience, to fast paced, heart-pounding body slides, tube rides and flume experiences.

Grab a bite to eat at one of the fast food stores or restaurants, or indulge in a meal with an Indian Ocean backdrop at the resort's various sit-down restaurants and bars such as Chico's and Calypso Bar.

Enjoy African relaxation at its best at the Mangwanani Spa, as you rejuvenate with a face or body treatment. The ultimate escape for tired bodies and minds, the spa also offers a children's treatment menu.

The resort's guests can have a holiday or conference trim at Legends Barbershop, rated by the African Hair Awards Council as the leading barber-shop in South Africa.

Located just five kilometres from Port Edward, the resort straddles the border between KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape provinces. It is a two-hour drive from Durban's King Shaka International Airport. ♦

***Information used to write this article was supplied by the Wild Coast Sun.**

You can follow the Wild Coast resort on Instagram: @wildcoastsunresort and Facebook: @WildCoastSun