THE MAGAZINE FOR PUBLIC SECTOR DECISION-MAKERS

NOVEMBER 2026

PublicSector MANAGER

PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGER

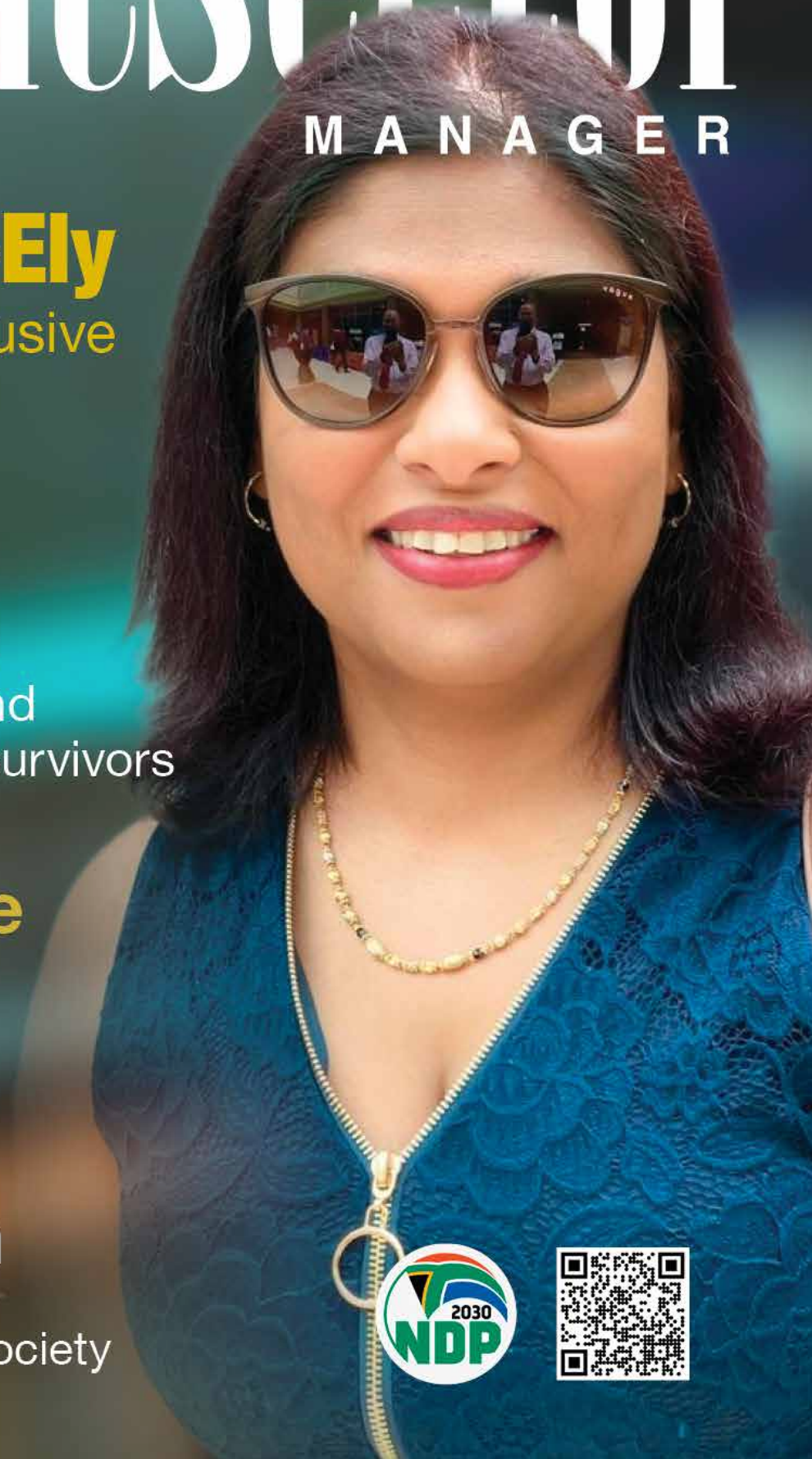
THE MAGAZINE FOR PUBLIC SECTOR DECISION-MAKERS

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The power of inclusive leadership

Minister Chikunga
Advancing justice and protection for GBV survivors

Lloyd Nedohe
Takes the helm at GCIS

16 Days of Activism
Building a whole-of-society response to GBVF



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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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From commitment to action: Strengthening justice, safety and support for GBVF victims survivors



Gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) remains among the most profound challenges confronting South Africa's constitutional democracy. Every act of violence against a woman, a child or any other victim undermines our collective commitment to human dignity, equality and the right to live free from fear. Behind every reported case is a human being whose safety, dignity and future may have been profoundly affected by violence.

As government, we recognise that addressing GBVF requires more than condemnation after a tragedy has occurred. It requires sustained prevention, effective law enforcement, accessible justice, responsive victim-support services and accountability across all sectors of society. Most importantly, it requires us to ensure that the rights guaranteed by our Constitution are experienced in the everyday lives of those who depend on government and its partners for protection.

Access to justice, safety and protection for all victims and survivors of GBVF remains a government priority. Our responsibility is to ensure that this commitment translates into tangible improvements in the lives of survivors, stronger institutions and safer communities.

Building on the progress already made

South Africa has made important strides in establishing the policy, legislative and institutional foundations for a coordinated response to GBVF. The National Strategic Plan (NSP) on GBVF (2020 – 2030) provides a



Victim support facilities at the Phuthaditjhaba Thuthuzela Care Centre.

Photo: Free State Provincial Government

framework for addressing the underlying causes of violence, strengthening justice and protection, improving survivor support and advancing women's economic empowerment.

The legislative framework has also evolved. The National Council on GBVF Act 9 of 2024 provides for a statutory mechanism to strengthen national coordination and oversight. The appointment of the National Council's members in 2026 represents an important step towards improving collaboration between government and relevant stakeholders.

Within the criminal justice system, specialised Sexual Offences Courts, Thuthuzela Care Centres and victim-support services provide important mechanisms for assisting survivors. These interventions bring together elements of healthcare, psychosocial support and the administration of justice, helping survivors navigate systems that can otherwise be difficult and traumatic to access.

Government departments, civil society organisations, community-based structures and development partners have also contributed to prevention, awareness, counselling, shelter services and community mobilisation. Their work demonstrates that the fight against GBVF is a shared responsibility requiring expertise, resources and commitment from across society.

These developments provide a foundation on which to build. However, we must be equally clear that the existence of legislation, institutions and programmes does not, on its own, mean that every survivor receives the protection and justice they deserve.

The next phase of our collective response must focus on the consistent implementation of commitments, the quality of services delivered and the measurable difference these interventions make.

Justice must be accessible to every survivor

For many survivors, reporting violence is an act of courage. It may involve confronting fear, economic dependence, threats from perpetrators, social stigma and uncertainty about whether the justice system will respond effectively.

When a survivor approaches a police station, seeks a protection order or reports sexual violence, the response they receive can influence their willingness to pursue justice and seek further assistance. They must be treated with dignity, listened to without prejudice and supported through the processes that follow.

No survivor should be subjected to victim-blaming, unnecessary delays, repeated and avoidable trauma or the indignity of being passed from one institution to another without meaningful assistance.

Strengthening access to justice requires professional investigations, effective evidence management, adequate forensic capacity, competent prosecution and improved coordination between police, health services, social workers and the courts. It also requires that survivors receive timely information about their cases


Photo: SAPS

KwaMakhutha SAPS Victim Friendly Room in KwaZulu-Natal.

and have access to appropriate legal and psycho-social support.

Accountability must apply to perpetrators through lawful processes, but it must also extend to institutional performance. Where procedures fail, cases are unnecessarily delayed or survivors cannot access services, those responsible must identify the shortcomings and take corrective action within their mandates.

Justice must not be determined by a survivor's income, geographical location, disability or ability to navigate complex bureaucratic systems. A responsive justice system must be accessible to all.

Safety and protection must begin before violence occurs

Our national response must place greater emphasis on preventing violence before it results in injury, trauma or loss of life.

Prevention requires us to recognise warning signs, respond to threats, challenge abusive behaviour and strengthen systems that protect people at risk. It requires coordinated interventions at household, community and institutional levels.

Police, social development practitioners, healthcare professionals, educators, local government officials and community organisations must be able to work together to identify risks and refer people to appropriate services. Protection orders and other legal remedies must be accompanied by effective responses when threats or violations are reported.

We must also confront the environmental and social conditions that expose people to danger. Poorly lit public spaces, unsafe transport routes, inadequate access to support services and the absence of effective local referral systems can compound existing vulnerabilities.

Women and girls must be able to participate fully in education, employment, recreation and public life without having to organise their lives around the constant fear of violence.

Persons with disabilities and other groups facing additional barriers must receive accessible and appropriate protection.

The responsibility for safety cannot be transferred to potential victims through advice about how they should dress, where they should go or when they should leave their homes.

Individuals may take reasonable precautions, but the primary responsibility for violence rests with those who perpetrate it. Institutions must fulfil their duties to prevent, investigate and respond to abuse.

Stakeholder partnerships must deliver measurable results

The complexity of GBVF means that no single department or organisation can eliminate it in isolation. Government must lead and coordinate the national response, while civil society, the private sector, labour, communities, research institutions, traditional leaders and faith-based organisations contribute according to their respective mandates and capabilities.

The National Council on GBVF presents an opportunity to strengthen this collaboration by promoting clearer responsibilities, better coordination and

more consistent monitoring of commitments.

However, effective partnerships require more than attendance at meetings, the signing of declarations or the implementation of isolated awareness campaigns. They must be judged by whether they improve access to services, strengthen prevention, support survivors and contribute to safer communities.

Government departments must report on their responsibilities and implementation challenges. Provincial and local structures must connect national priorities to the realities of communities. Civil society organisations must be meaningfully involved in programme design, implementation and monitoring, particularly where they provide frontline services and understand the barriers survivors face.

The private sector can contribute through safer workplaces, employee-support mechanisms, responsible funding and economic opportunities for survivors. Educational institutions can strengthen prevention and reporting systems, while traditional and faith leaders can help challenge harmful social norms and promote respectful relationships.

These partnerships must be supported by adequate resources, reliable information-sharing arrangements, appropriate safeguards for survivors and clear measures of success.

We must move from fragmented activity towards a coordinated system in which every stakeholder understands its responsibilities and can demonstrate the contribution it makes.

Changing behaviour is essential to ending GBVF

Although effective laws and institutions are indispensable, they cannot independently transform the attitudes and social norms that allow violence to persist.

We must confront beliefs that normalise men's control over women, excuse coercive behaviour or portray aggression as an acceptable expression of masculinity. Violence must never be justified by jealousy, relationship disputes, cultural interpretations, alcohol consumption or claims of personal authority.

Men and boys must be active participants in prevention. They must challenge abusive conduct among their peers, reject the humiliation and harassment of women, respect consent and demonstrate that strength is expressed through responsibility, emotional maturity and respect for others.

Parents, schools, community organisations, the media and faith-based institutions must reinforce these values consistently. Children should learn from an early age that disagreements can be resolved without intimidation, that no person has ownership over another, and that respect is fundamental to every relationship.

This behavioural transformation must be sustained rather than confined to commemorative events or annual awareness campaigns. Public education should be linked to community engagement, accessible support services and clear consequences for unlawful conduct.

We must also reject victim-blaming and the tendency to place the burden of prevention on women. The objective is not to teach women how to accommodate violence, but to build a society in which violence is neither tolerated nor excused.

Survivor support must restore dignity and independence

The consequences of GBVF often extend far beyond the immediate incident. Survivors may experience physical injuries, psychological trauma, financial insecurity, homelessness and disruption to their education or employment.

A comprehensive response must therefore connect survivors to healthcare, counselling, safe accommodation, legal assistance, social support and economic opportunities where needed.

We must also reject victim-blaming and the tendency to place the burden of prevention on women. The objective is not to teach women how to accommodate violence, but to build a society in which violence is neither tolerated nor excused.



Photo: SAPS

No survivor should feel compelled to remain in an abusive relationship because they lack financial resources or somewhere safe to go. Support services must be accessible, appropriately resourced and sensitive to the different circumstances of the people they serve.

Survivors must also be treated as individuals with rights, agency and the capacity to rebuild their lives. Their experiences should inform the development and evaluation of programmes, while their privacy and dignity must be protected.

The effectiveness of victim-support services should be assessed not only by the number of people assisted, but also by the quality, accessibility and continuity of that assistance.

Accountability must be measured by outcomes

South Africa must be able to demonstrate whether its investment in the response to GBVF is producing meaningful results.

This requires reliable and regularly updated information on access to services, case progression, prosecutions, convictions, protection-order enforcement, shelter availability and the implementation of prevention programmes. It also requires an honest assessment of where progress remains uneven and why.

We must distinguish between activities undertaken and outcomes achieved. A campaign may reach thousands of people, but its longer-term contribution must be assessed through evidence of changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour. A support centre may be established, but its effectiveness depends on whether survivors can access timely and appropriate assistance.

The NSP on GBVF must therefore remain a practical instrument for coordinating action, monitoring performance and identifying implementation gaps. The National GBVF Council, government departments and other relevant institutions must contribute to a system in which commitments are tracked and shortcomings are addressed.

Transparency about challenges does not diminish government's responsibility. Rather, it enables more informed decisions, stronger partnerships and better use of public resources.

A collective commitment to a safer South Africa

The fight against GBVF is ultimately about the kind of society we seek to build. It is about whether women and girls can live without fear, whether survivors can approach institutions with confidence, whether communities reject abuse and whether those entrusted with public responsibilities deliver the protection required of them.

Government remains committed to strengthening access to justice, improving safety and protection, supporting survivors and advancing the prevention of GBVF. We recognise the contribution of stakeholders across society and the importance of building on the progress already made while addressing the gaps that continue to place lives at risk.

Our response must be guided by a clear understanding: policies must lead to implementation, partnerships must produce results and accountability must translate into action.

We owe survivors more than expressions of sympathy. We owe them accessible services, professional investigations, effective protection, dignity and justice. We owe future generations a society in which violence is neither normalised nor excused.

The true measure of our progress will be whether survivors receive justice, whether those at risk are protected and whether every person can live free from gender-based violence and femicide.

This is a responsibility that government must lead, that institutions must fulfil, and that society must embrace. Together, we must turn our national commitment into a lived reality for every victim and survivor. ❖

2026 Media Awards DINNER

and the launch of the

2027 SADC Media Awards Competition

SAVE THE DATE

Friday, 04 December 2026

TSHEDIMOSETSO HOUSE
1035 cnr Francis Baard and Festival Streets, Hatfield, Pretoria, 0083

government communications
Department:
Government Communication and Information System
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Milestones Of Freedom

A NATION THAT WORKS FOR ALL

NDP 2030

Communication
that helps government deliver


Director-General Lloyd Nedohe

I begin with a simple conviction: public trust is earned through the daily experience of government. It grows when a citizen receives clear and reliable information, understands the services available to them, knows how to access those services and sees Government respond to their needs. The true measure of government communication is not how far the message travels, but whether it enables citizens to understand, participate and act.

As Director-General of the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) and Government Spokesperson, I take up this responsibility with respect for the institution's achievements.

The GCIS has built a national communication system and deepened its community reach, platforms and partnerships. That record provides a strong foundation for addressing constraints.

I recognise the public servants who sustain this system and the leadership that advanced the revised Government Communication Policy and integrated planning.

Effective government communication

An effective government communication system requires strong coordination, coherence and consistency. While departments and spheres have distinct responsibilities, citizens experience one state, and communication must connect government decisions and delivery with their lived experience.

The GCIS, the Media Development and Diversity Agency and Brand South Africa bring complementary mandates to this task, supported by coordination mechanisms such as the Government Communication Excellence Tool and communication forums.

This system-wide leadership was evident during South Africa's G20 Presidency, where the GCIS coordinated communication across government and helped translate a global forum into a broader national conversation.

Communication is also a matter of sovereignty. South Africa must tell its own story, explain its policy choices and protect its democratic information space from falsehoods, manipulation and narratives that undermine public confidence.

Communicate progress

Government must communicate progress across state-owned enterprises, including Eskom, where improved generation and reduced load-shedding demonstrate the value of credible, evidence-based communication.

The GCIS strengthens this connection through public education, community engagement and initiatives such as Local Government Thursday, which bring service-delivery information and government representatives closer to communities.

Communication is not the final step in implementation; it is part of implementation. A service is not fully accessible if people do not know it exists, how to access it or where to seek help when it fails. Government must be both visible and accessible.

The digital-first principle provides practical direction but does not mean digital only. The GCIS will publish verified information first on its own platforms, then adapt it for other channels and accessible formats. Information has public value when it reaches the people whose lives government decisions are intended to improve.

This matters especially in

local government, where people experience the State through essential services. Reform must be communicated as a practical commitment to accountability, capable institutions and better services.

Government's Love your Street campaign, led by Minister in The Presidency, Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, demonstrates this principle in action. By mobilising government, municipalities, civil society and communities to improve public spaces and strengthen safer communities, it shows that communication can support both active citizenship and service delivery. The task is not simply to announce action, but to make progress visible where people live.

Ahead of the 2026 Local Government Elections, government communication must protect the integrity of public information by providing timely, factual and non-partisan information. In a rapidly changing information environment, speed matters, but credibility matters more.

A capable developmental state communicates progress, constraints and the action being taken to address them. Credibility depends on an honest connection between what government promises, what it delivers and what citizens experience.

This work is already visible across the GCIS digital platforms, community engagement, research and audience insights. *Vuk'uzenzele* newspaper, Braille access, community media and localised content extend reach beyond digital channels. In 2025/26, GCIS-managed platforms reached over 1.4 billion people, as highlighted in the Minister's 2026 GCIS Budget Vote Speech.

Training communicators

Professionalisation is also well underway. GCIS has expanded training for government communicators, including work with the National School of Government, and has strengthened capacity to identify and counter misinformation and disinformation.

November includes Disability Rights Awareness Month and the start of the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children. These observances must move beyond messages to institutional action.



Accessibility for persons with disabilities must be built into planning, digital platforms and frontline services. Information must be usable, and barriers to services and participation removed.

On gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF), government communication must be an instrument of prevention, accountability and social change. The full government communication system must connect people to credible information and support, challenge harmful social norms and mobilise society around the shared responsibility to end GBVF.

A capable state requires a responsive communication system that listens as well as informs. Citizen experience, evidence of delivery and identified information gaps should shape how government communicates, responds to concerns and accounts for progress and challenges.

Every government message must help a citizen understand, act or access services. The GCIS will be led with that purpose. That is how communication supports delivery, how the State earns trust and how public service becomes an experience people can see and feel in daily life. ❖



Meet the new GCIS Director-General



Lloyd Nedohe is a seasoned executive with more than 25 years of leadership experience spanning strategic communication, corporate affairs, stakeholder engagement, corporate strategy, infrastructure, technology, mining and energy. He has served at chief executive and managing director levels and has held senior roles in corporate development, investor relations and strategic advisory services.

His career includes leading major investments and corporate transactions, shaping infrastructure development programmes, strengthening corporate reputation and stakeholder confidence, and advancing African market-entry and investor-engagement strategies. He has worked in complex, highly regulated environments and has engaged with boards, executive teams, The Presidency, Cabinet, Parliament and regulators. His governance experience includes serving as a board member at the City of Johannesburg and as Acting Head of Risk and Compliance at Metropolitan Trading Company.

He has worked with and advised leading organisations, including BHP Billiton, Rio Tinto and the Development Bank of Southern Africa. His corporate and public-sector experience is complemented by a strong media background as a journalist, broadcaster and policy analyst across SABC TV, Kaya FM, Metro FM, Channel Africa and Radio Bop Online, as well as experience with TBWA\Hunt\Lascaris, Groove Consulting and Africa Practice.

As founder of ESG Frontiers and the Centre for Africa Mineral Value Chains, he has provided leadership on environmental, social and governance matters, critical minerals, industrial development, policy dialogue and thought leadership.

He holds an MBA in Corporate Strategy and Finance, an MA in ICT Policy and Regulation, a BA in Communication and a Postgraduate Diploma in Media Management. He has also completed executive training in stakeholder relations through Georgetown University. His doctoral research focuses on transformative innovation, industrial policy, critical minerals, global value chains and economic development.

Nedohe brings to GCIS a distinctive combination of executive leadership, strategic communication, governance, policy insight and cross-sector stakeholder management. This positions him to drive institutional alignment, strengthen government communication and build confidence across government, business, the media and society. ❖

An in-depth interview with the Director-General will be featured in an upcoming edition of Public Sector Manager magazine.

South Africa, like other countries, is experiencing the effects of the El Niño phenomenon, which can have far-reaching consequences for communities, livelihoods, public health and the environment.

Communities are therefore urged to remain vigilant and take the necessary precautionary measures to protect themselves against potential health risks associated with extreme heat, water scarcity and other weather-related hazards.



HYDRATION & DIET



Stay hydrated by drinking water regularly, even if you do not feel thirsty.



Carry a refillable water bottle and take small sips frequently.



Use electrolyte drinks if you are sweating heavily for extended periods.



Avoid alcohol and excessive caffeine before and during prolonged exposure to heat, as these can contribute to dehydration.



Eat light meals and snacks rather than heavy foods that can increase body heat.

PERSONAL PROTECTION



Wear a wide-brimmed hat or cap to protect your head, face, and neck from direct sunlight.



Use an umbrella for portable shade while standing in the queue.



Wear light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing made from breathable fabrics such as cotton.



Apply sunscreen with a suitable SPF to exposed skin to reduce sun damage.



Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from intense sunlight and glare.

COOLING STRATEGIES



Seek shade whenever possible, even if only for short periods while the queue moves.



Use a cooling towel or damp cloth around your neck to help lower body temperature.



Carry a portable fan or hand fan to improve air circulation.



Avoid standing on dark asphalt or concrete surfaces when possible, as they radiate additional heat.



Take advantage of any cooling opportunities, such as air-conditioned buildings, misting stations, or shaded rest areas.

HEALTH & EMERGENCY



Monitor yourself for warning signs of heat exhaustion, such as dizziness, headache, nausea, excessive sweating, weakness, or confusion.



Inform someone nearby if you start feeling unwell and move to a cooler area immediately.



Check on children, older adults, and people with medical conditions, as they are more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses.



EMERGENCY: SUNSTROKE

If symptoms of sunstroke occur (high body temperature, confusion, loss of consciousness, hot dry skin, or seizures), seek emergency medical assistance immediately.

@NationalCoGTA

Theme: "Every Municipality must work"

Cooperative Governance
Traditional Affairs

A NATION THAT WORKS FOR ALL

WPLG WHITE PAPER ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

DDM DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT MODEL

2030 NDP

Writer: Sihle Manda
Photos: GCIS

Women's courage must inspire fight against GBVF – Morolong



South Africa cannot be free while women live in fear of violence, Deputy Minister in The Presidency Kenny Morolong has warned.

Speaking to *Public Sector Manager* magazine, the Deputy Minister urged men to turn the courage of women freedom fighters into action against gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF).

Morolong made the remarks while reflecting on the Milestones of Freedom Campaign.

He said women were never spectators in the struggle for democracy. Instead, they organised, marched and resisted oppressive laws. Honouring them, he argued, requires more than remembering their names; it demands protecting the rights and dignity for which they fought.

"We have a responsibility to protect women. We have a responsibility to protect the girl child," Morolong said.

"We have a responsibility to make sure that those who abuse women and who rape children do not do that in our name. We have a responsibility to call them out because this abuse is not meted out by females. It is the male figure that is responsible for the atrocities that we see in our country today, where women have been killed, women have been abused and women have been raped."

A national priority

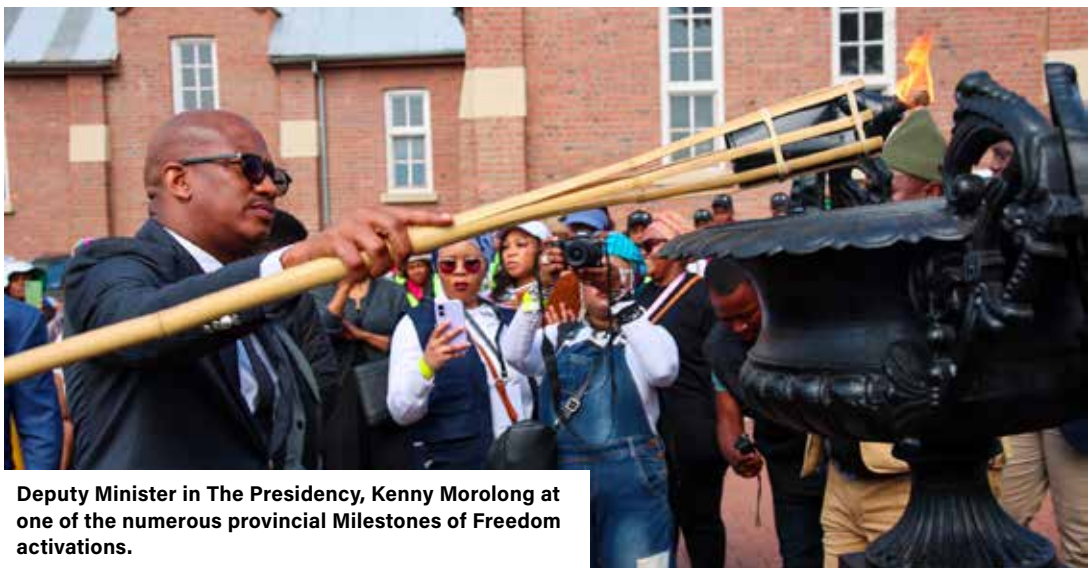
The urgency sharpened in August and September, as the number of women's bodies found in Ekurhuleni, Gauteng, since July reached 11. The

toll prompted President Cyril Ramaphosa to address the nation, acknowledging that government's response had not been enough. During the address, the President announced four time-bound national interventions to prevent violence.

These include the Police and Justice Ministers working with the South African Police Service and the National Prosecuting Authority to launch a national case recovery operation. Within 60 days, it must identify unresolved murders, attempted murders, rapes and serious sexual offences involving women and children, including delayed cases and matters awaiting forensic evidence.

The President also ordered a funded national plan within 60 days to reduce DNA and forensic backlogs; immediate municipal women's safety audits to identify dangerous, unlit and neglected spaces within 60 days; and a coordinated legislative and enforcement package to restrict alcohol access and reduce alcohol-related violence, also due within 60 days.

> **It is the male figure that is responsible for the atrocities that we see in our country today, where women have been killed, women have been abused and women have been raped.**



Deputy Minister in The Presidency, Kenny Morolong at one of the numerous provincial Milestones of Freedom activations.

Milestones of Freedom Campaign

The Milestones of Freedom Campaign was launched by President Ramaphosa at the Union Buildings in June under the theme, "Honouring the Past. Delivering the Future". It connects four defining anniversaries: 30 years of the Constitution, 50 years since the 1976 youth uprising, 70 years since the 1956 Women's March and 60 years since the forced removals from District Six.

The Deputy Minister, who has been championing the campaign, emphasised that it is not just a remembrance of the past, but a call to use history as a guide for the work that remains unfinished.

"We are celebrating Milestones of Freedom this year because a nation that forgets its past has no future. Therefore, our past must influence the strides that we are yet to make as a country to fundamentally alter the circumstances under which our people live," he explained.

Cabinet approved a whole-of-government and whole-of-society programme, featuring public dialogues, civic education, cultural events, youth engagement and service weeks. The rollout reached all nine provinces between 26 July and 22 September, using commemorations, clean-ups and intergenerational dialogues to connect memory with civic responsibility. The Eastern Cape honoured Sarah Baartman while confronting GBVF.

When women took the stand

As South Africa observes the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children, milestones such as the 1956 Women's March and the adoption of the Constitution take



on renewed significance. Both stand as enduring reminders of the struggle for women's rights and the country's commitment to equality, dignity and the protection of the most vulnerable.

For Morolong, the march exemplifies women shaping South Africa's democratic future.

"We celebrate Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa, Mam' Sophia Williams-De Bruyn and many other women who undoubtedly changed the course of history when they marched to the Union Buildings. Through their courage, they demonstrated that women have always been at the forefront of the fight against social injustice, particularly against apartheid segregation," said the Deputy Minister.

He added that one of the campaign's most important lessons was the power of unity, noting that the campaign had reminded South Africans of the solidarity that underpinned the struggle against apartheid. According to Morolong, the campaign demonstrated that there is little that can withstand a united South Africa working towards a common purpose.

Women's resistance

Morolong traced the history of women's resistance from Charlotte Manye Maxeke, who attended the 1912 founding conference of the South African Native National Congress and later founded the Bantu Women's League, to Josie Mpama, a prominent figure in the 1929 beer-hall protests. "Women have always led from the front. They were not spectators," he said.

The campaign also brought renewed attention to the many women whose contributions to the liberation struggle have yet to receive their rightful place in mainstream historical accounts.

"There are many untold stories of heroes and heroines whose commitment to the liberation of South Africa has brought us to where we are today – where you and I can enjoy the fruits of our hard-won democracy," he said.

A joint effort

Despite women's resistance helping to build a constitutional order founded on equality, dignity and freedom, the continued scourge of GBVF stands in stark contrast to the rights and protections these women fought to secure. Morolong acknowledged that, despite government interventions and legislative measures, the fight against GBVF cannot be won by government alone.

The Deputy Minister noted that the whole-of-society response requires men to reject perpetrators openly, challenge harmful behaviour and refuse the silence that protects abusers.

Women, he said, must be able to walk the streets at any time without fear of attack. Anything less diminishes the meaning of democracy.

The Milestones of Freedom Campaign, therefore, asks South Africans to treat history as a responsibility rather than a ceremonial memory. The courage of the women of 1956 must be measured against the safety, dignity and opportunities enjoyed by women today.

"Without the contribution of womenfolk, we would not have achieved our formal liberation in 1994," Morolong said.

"The lasting legacy for the Milestones of Freedom is that we would not have abandoned our past. We want to build a generation of new leaders who will forever remind us where we come from as a nation – a generation of young people who will be proud of their heritage," he concluded. ❖



VOTE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS 2026

STOP THE SPREAD OF FAKE NEWS

You can help to stop the spread of fake news and disinformation. If you see content online that you believe to be false or misleading, you can report it immediately to the hosting social media platform.

FACEBOOK

How do I mark a Facebook post as false news:

1. Click next to the post you'd like to mark as false.
2. Click Report post.
3. Click False information, then select the kind of false information.
4. Click Submit.

Source: United Nations https://www.who.int/campaigns/connecting-the-world-to-combat-coronavirus/how-to-report-misinformation-online

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Milestones Of Freedom

A NATION THAT WORKS FOR ALL

2030 NDP

Writer: More Matshediso
Photos: Supplied

Dr Praveena Sukhraj-Ely is a powerful symbol of possibility for persons with disabilities



As South Africa marks National Disability Rights Awareness Month from 3 November to 3 December, Dr Praveena Sukhraj-Ely's appointment as Acting Director-General (ADG) of the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD) stands as a powerful reminder of how far the country has come in advancing the rights of persons with disabilities, and how much work remains.

In July, Sukhraj-Ely became the first person who is totally blind to lead a national government department. A legal practitioner, public policy expert and disability rights advocate, she sees her appointment not as a personal achievement, but as an opportunity to challenge stereotypes and expand opportunities for others.

National Disability Rights Awareness Month culminates in the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December and aims to encourage action to remove barriers, challenge stigma and improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities.

As the department responsible for driving government's equity, equality and empowerment agenda for persons with disabilities, women and young people, the DWYPD is at the centre of that effort.

Ahead of the commemoration, *Public Sector Manager* magazine

sat down with Sukhraj-Ely to discuss her journey.

Taking up the reins

Although she has spent much of her academic and professional life advocating for the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities, Sukhraj-Ely never imagined that she would one day lead a national government department.

"I never dreamed that one day I would hold this position, even in an acting role as a DG, because I understand the stereotypes, the stigma and prejudice, and bearing in mind that this is the highest level that you can occupy as a civil servant.

"To be trusted with accounts, figures and to lead the entire national department as a blind person is something that I do not take lightly," she said.

She emphasised that her advocacy has always centred on ensuring that persons with disabilities can access employment, become entrepreneurs and participate meaningfully in the country's development.

Sukhraj-Ely remains concerned that society still expects leaders to look, walk, act and make eye contact in a particular way before they are deemed fit for certain positions.

While her appointment is a significant milestone for persons with disabilities, Sukhraj-Ely is determined not to be viewed as an exception to the rule. Instead, she hopes it will become part of a broader shift towards recognising the capabilities of persons with disabilities and removing barriers to leadership.

Advancing inclusion

The ADG called on South Africans to create an environment in which persons with disabilities can thrive. For too long, she said, many have been excluded, isolated and treated differently because of their disabilities.

She believes her appointment signals growing confidence in the leadership potential that exists within the disability sector and hopes it will encourage other institutions to broaden opportunities for persons with disabilities.

"This step, I am hoping, will make other departments move in a similar direction by not only employing persons with disabilities but also putting them in leadership positions so that when we say 'nothing about us without us', our word and what we speak holds water," she added.

While awareness of disability rights has improved over the years, Sukhraj-Ely believes the focus must now shift towards practical change that improves people's daily lives.

"We need to focus on ensuring that the awareness that we raise is more practical as we move forward. This needs to be practical and not just high-level talk about awareness, it must speak to everyday lived experiences, the exclusion and segregation that is felt by persons living with disabilities so that people can change their mindset regarding disability rights. We also need to raise awareness among people living with disabilities so that they understand their rights and are empowered to exercise them," she said.

A journey of perseverance

Like many persons with disabilities, Sukhraj-Ely's path to leadership was shaped by perseverance, determination and a refusal to accept barriers placed in her way.

Originally from Durban in KwaZulu-Natal, she attended Arthur Blaxall School for the Blind in Pietermaritzburg, where she matriculated in 1995.

She holds four degrees, including a Bachelor of Social Science, a Bachelor of Laws, a Master of Arts in Political Science awarded cum laude and a >



This step, I am hoping, will make other departments move in a similar direction by not only employing persons with disabilities but also putting them in leadership positions so that when we say 'nothing about us without us', our word and what we speak holds water.



PhD in Public Policy from the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Career journey

Sukhraj-Ely has extensive experience in governance, constitutional law, disability rights, gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF), public administration and policy development.

She also serves as the State Representative on the Commission for Employment Equity, where she advocates for a 7% disability employment target by 2030.

She is among the leaders driving the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act of 1998, the development of the Femicide Strategy, and the drafting of the Disability Access to Justice Policy.

Her appointment as ADG is the culmination of years of advocacy, public service and work to advance the rights of women, older persons and persons with disabilities.

Reflecting on her journey, she recalled the difficulties she faced entering the job market despite her academic achievements and professional credentials.

A bumpy ride

"It seemed like nobody wanted to employ me despite the fact that I got called to many interviews and I had Golden Key (an international student honour society), various Deans' commendations and 19 distinctions... but no one in the private sector wanted to employ me," she said.

At the age of 24, she registered for pupillage at the Durban Bar to qualify as a practising advocate. She later established a private practice and worked as an Advocate of the High Court of South Africa from 2003 to 2006, before joining the South African Law Reform Commission as a Senior State Advocate.

She later served as in-house counsel in the Chief Litigation Office at the Department of Justice before being promoted to Director responsible for Domestic Violence, Femicide, Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities.

Between 2014 and 2022, she focused on protecting and advancing legislation affecting women, persons with disabilities and older persons, particularly in relation to GBVF and access to justice. In 2022, she was appointed Chief Director for Governance and Compliance at the DWYPD.

She has also served on various national and international boards in a voluntary capacity, including the South African National Council for the Blind, where she was Vice Chairperson and Chairperson of the Children with Disability Training Sector. She is currently the second Vice President of the South African Federation for Mental Health and previously served as Vice Chairperson of the South African Disability Alliance.

Internationally, she has served as Vice President and now Treasurer of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment. She is also Co-Chairperson of the Accessible Books Consortium and a member of the International Disability Alliance Inclusive Education Task Team. ❖



Bana Pele

SHARED BLUEPRINT
TO ACHIEVE
UNIVERSAL ACCESS
TO QUALITY
EARLY LEARNING

FEBRUARY 2026

basic education
Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Writer: CoGTA Minister Velenkosini Hlabisa
Photos: Supplied

From a 'honeymoon' to a 'game-changing' policy

Cabinet's recent approval of the reviewed *White Paper on Local Government, 2026* (WPLG26), marks a watershed moment for local government reform in South Africa.



Minister Velenkosini Hlabisa

It is the culmination of an extensive process to improve municipal performance and ensure that local government fulfils the constitutional promise made to the people of South Africa.

Section 152(1)(b) of the Constitution provides that one of the objectives of local government is "to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner". Section 152(2) further requires municipalities to strive, within their financial and administrative capacity, to achieve these objectives.

This constitutional obligation places municipalities at the centre of delivering essential services such as water, electricity, sanitation and waste removal, and ensuring that communities experience local government as a sphere that works for them.

Transformation

Following the advent of freedom and democracy in 1994, it became imperative to transform a local government system shaped by apartheid and racial segregation. *The 1998 White Paper on Local Government* (WPLG98) laid the foundation for democratic and developmental local government and sought, among other things, to address the profound spatial inequalities inherited from apartheid.

For almost three decades, that policy framework guided the establishment and evolution of democratic local government.

But South Africa has changed significantly since 1998. The pressures confronting municipalities have also changed.

A new framework

The revised White Paper therefore provides a new framework for building an ethical, accountable, capable and developmental local government system. It seeks to address persistent governance weaknesses, maladministration, inadequate financial controls, inefficiencies and corruption within parts of the municipal system.

The reforms will also facilitate the professionalisation of local government, promote greater stability in municipal administration and clarify the role of traditional and Khoi-San leadership.

Targeted interventions

Importantly, we are moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach.

A rural municipality serving dispersed villages cannot necessarily be expected to operate

under the same funding, governance, and institutional model as a large metropolitan municipality. The revised framework recognises these differences and seeks to develop more appropriate arrangements according to the functions, circumstances and capacities of different categories of municipalities.

As the sphere of government closest to communities, local government carries an enormous responsibility.

The effectiveness of a municipality is ultimately judged by what residents experience every day: whether clean water flows from their taps, refuse is collected regularly, electricity and streetlights work, roads are maintained, and communities are kept clean and safe.

Yet our local government system is under considerable financial and institutional pressure. Rapid urbanisation, ageing and neglected infrastructure, increasing service demands and constrained municipal finances have placed many municipalities under severe strain.

For millions of South Africans, poor service delivery is not merely a source of frustration. It undermines communities' dignity and constitutional rights.

Clear signs of municipal service failure include uncollected revenue, taps frequently running dry, prolonged electricity interruptions that leave homes and streets in darkness, burst water pipes left unattended for days, and uncollected waste piling up on street corners.

In many communities, frustration with inadequate services and unfulfilled commitments has resulted in protests.

Serving the people

Service delivery is also about responding efficiently when things go wrong. It means repairing leaking water and sewage pipes, clearing blocked drains and filling potholes before they become dangerous.

A well functioning municipality should have an efficient customer service system that responds promptly to residents, an accurate and timeous billing system, effective revenue collection and councillors and municipal officials who engage regularly with communities.

Municipalities must also create an environment conducive to economic development and the establishment and sustainability of small businesses, particularly enterprises owned by women and young people. Local government must become a catalyst for socio-economic development, especially in historically neglected communities.

Reimagining local government

The need to reimagine local government has been developing over several years.

The South African Human Rights Commission's National Conference on Local Government Accountability, Service Delivery and Human Rights held in August 2022, facilitated an important national dialogue on the challenges facing local government.

The Presidential Local Government Summit followed in September 2022. It reinforced the need to restore municipal governance, professionalise municipal administrations, and improve the quality and efficiency of local government through better funding, planning and implementation.

A decisive moment came in July 2024 when, as Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), we announced in Parliament our intention to review the 1998 White Paper.

The review involved extensive consultation with stakeholders, including the South African Local Government Association, national and provincial government departments, municipalities, traditional and Khoi-San leadership, non-governmental and community-based organisations, the private sector, business, labour, civil society and individual citizens.

This extensive process was necessary because the challenges facing local government cannot be solved by national government alone.

Building a

> **Our task now is to translate the reforms contained in the White Paper into functioning institutions, sound financial management, professional administrations and, most importantly, better services for communities.**


Photo: @GDCOGTA

functional municipal system

Many municipalities have experienced recurring administrative and governance difficulties. Section 139 of the Constitution empowers provincial executives to intervene when municipalities fail to fulfil their executive obligations. In some instances, struggling municipalities have consequently been placed under administration.

But intervention should not become the normal way in which municipalities are governed.

We must build municipalities with the leadership, professional administration, financial management and institutional capacity needed to perform their constitutional responsibilities without repeated intervention. That requires ethical and accountable leadership.

The revised White Paper therefore places significant emphasis on professionalisation and the merit-based appointment of suitably qualified and experienced personnel. Appointing people to senior positions through political patronage, without the necessary qualifications, competence or experience, inevitably weakens governance and ultimately compromises service delivery.

The reforms also envisage appropriate competency requirements for political leadership positions. Complementary legislative reforms currently before Parliament seek to strengthen requirements relating to the experience, skills and qualifications of municipal office bearers and specified committee positions.

Managing coalition governments

Political instability is another significant obstacle to effective municipal government.

Frequent changes in leadership, particularly in coalition-governed municipalities, can disrupt administration, delay decisions and undermine the delivery of essential services.

Complementing the White Paper reforms, the Local Government: Municipal Structures Amendment Bill of 2026, commonly referred to as the Municipal Coalitions Bill, currently before Parliament, seeks to establish a legislative framework for forming and managing coalition governments and mechanisms to minimise coalition-related instability.

The objective is not to determine which political parties should govern together. It is to ensure that, where voters produce a result requiring coalition government, political instability does not prevent a municipality from performing its constitutional responsibilities.

Implementation

Cabinet's approval of the revised White Paper marks the beginning of another important phase: implementation.

The implementation programme will require coordinated action across government, jointly led by CoGTA, The Presidency and National Treasury, supported by a time-bound transition management body.

Policies themselves do not fix municipalities. Implementation does.

Our task now is to translate the reforms contained in the White Paper into functioning institutions, sound financial management, professional administrations and, most importantly, better services for communities.

As CoGTA, our objective this year and beyond the Local Government Elections scheduled for Wednesday, 4 November 2026, remains clear: to fix local government and ensure that every municipality works.

But government cannot achieve this alone.

Citizens also have an important role in strengthening local democracy. Communities must participate in municipal affairs, hold their representatives accountable, make their voices heard and exercise their democratic right to vote.

The future of our municipalities will be determined not only by progressive policies or by those who are elected to public office, but also by the active participation of the communities they are elected to serve.

The revised White Paper allows South Africa to reset local government.

We must now turn that opportunity into functioning municipalities and tangible improvements in the everyday lives of our people. ❖

WPLG
WHITE PAPER ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

01 CHAPTER 1: WHY REFORM NOW

Key Challenges
- Declining public trust
- Weak implementation of reforms
- Financial and service-delivery crises
- Fragmented accountability

Key Reforms
- Whole-system local government renewal
- Stabilisation plus long-term reform
- Stronger enforcement and consequence management
- Transition Management Body (TMB)

02 CHAPTER 2: DIFFERENTIATED INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM

Key Challenges
- One-size-fits-all municipal model
- District-local tensions
- Rigid powers and functions framework
- Unclear accountability

Key Reforms
- Differentiated two-tier system
- More Category A municipalities
- Reoriented district municipalities
- National framework for powers and functions
- Licensed municipal service providers

03 CHAPTER 3: COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Key Challenges
- Fragmented regulation
- Poor coordination across spheres
- Weak support and intervention system
- Disjointed planning and investment

Key Reforms
- National Local Government Coordination Centre
- Local Government Inter-Ministerial Committee
- Local Government Intergovernmental Forum
- Local Government Impact Assessments
- Stronger Section 139 framework
- Shared data and reporting system

04 CHAPTER 4: POLITICAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

Key Challenges
- Political instability
- Weak consequence management
- Procurement interference
- Weak council oversight

Key Reforms
- Ethical leadership framework
- Stronger Municipal Public Accounts Committee and oversight systems
- Municipal integrity management
- Protected disclosure systems
- Coalition governance framework
- Procurement transparency

05 CHAPTER 5: PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Key Challenges
- Politicised appointments
- Leadership instability
- Weak technical capacity
- Consultant dependency

Key Reforms
- Merit-based appointments
- Professionalisation pathway
- Long-term administrative stability
- Technical capability protection
- Municipal digital backbone
- Decision-useful reporting

06 CHAPTER 6: CITIZENS & COMMUNITIES

Key Challenges
- Participation fatigue
- Poor feedback loops
- Weak complaints management
- Limited civic education

Key Reforms
- Participation-to-partnership model
- Citizen care system
- Community referral tracking
- Civic education framework
- Transparency by default
- Structured social accountability

07 CHAPTER 7: TRADITIONAL & KHOI-SAN LEADERSHIP

Key Challenges
- Unclear institutional relationships
- Land-use conflicts
- Weak planning coordination
- Fragmented participation

Key Reforms
- Municipality-Traditional Council compacts
- Settlement planning coordination
- Structured governance cooperation
- Local dispute resolution mechanisms

08 CHAPTER 8: MUNICIPAL FINANCE

Key Challenges
- Municipal financial distress
- Revenue collapse
- Bulk service debt
- Infrastructure maintenance backlog

Key Reforms
- Financial rescue programme
- New local government fiscal framework
- Improved revenue collection
- Finance-follows-function principle
- Service ring-fencing
- Infrastructure renewal focus

09 CHAPTER 9: SERVICE DELIVERY & INFRASTRUCTURE

Key Challenges
- Service reliability failures
- Ageing infrastructure
- Weak asset management
- Inefficient procurement

Key Reforms
- Lifecycle asset management
- Professionalised trading services
- Licensed service providers
- Climate-resilient infrastructure
- Strategic procurement model
- Smart infrastructure management

10 CHAPTER 10: SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION, LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Key Challenges
- Fragmented planning
- Weak local economic growth
- Spatial inequality
- Climate risks

Key Reforms
- Place-based development model
- Regional economic corridors
- Climate resilience planning
- One-window development system
- Community plans

11 CHAPTER 11: IMPLEMENTATION & TRANSITION

Key Challenges
- Reform implementation failure
- Fragmented accountability
- Weak intergovernmental coordination
- Lack of reform ownership

Key Reforms
- TMB
- CoGTA as System Steward
- Sequenced reform programme
- Public implementation reporting
- Permanent System-Coherence Architecture

OVERALL MESSAGE

FROM POLICY REFORM TO IMPLEMENTATION REFORM

1998 WHITE PAPER FOCUS: INSTITUTION BUILDING →

2026 WHITE PAPER FOCUS:
- INSTITUTIONAL CAPABILITY
- ACCOUNTABILITY & ETHICS
- FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY
- SERVICE RELIABILITY
- IMPLEMENTATION DISCIPLINE

A WHOLE-SYSTEM APPROACH TO BUILDING CAPABLE, ACCOUNTABLE AND FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE MUNICIPALITIES THAT DELIVER FOR COMMUNITIES.

@NationalCoGTA

Theme: "Every Municipality must work"

Cooperative Governance Traditional Affairs | SALGA | A NATION THAT WORKS FOR ALL | DDM | NDP 2030

Writer: Sihle Manda

Mnqobi Sikhosana uses award-winning research to advance economic justice



Photos: Supplied

Mnqobi Sikhosana is an analyst at the Competition Commission's Mergers and Acquisitions division.

Growing up in Santombe, a small village in the rolling hills of Harding on KwaZulu-Natal's South Coast, Mnqobi Sikhosana saw education as both a personal ambition and a means of serving others.

Today, as an analyst at the Competition Commission's Mergers and Acquisitions division, he applies that belief to questions affecting markets, workers and economic inclusion.

In April, his career received a stamp of approval when he scooped the Best Soft Laws and Studies in the Africa and Middle East subcategory of the 2026 Antitrust Writing Awards.

The paper won plaudits for challenging policymakers to view restrictions on workers' mobility not only as employment law issues but also as matters of competition and economic justice.

It was also selected for presentation at the SA BRICS Conference, the ACER African Conference in Namibia and the CRESSE International Conference in Greece.

European Commission guidance and United States Federal Trade Commission developments led him deeper into the subject. He identified a gap in South African and BRICS jurisprudence, then collaborated with Acting Divisional Manager for Market Inquiries Itumeleng Lesofe.

The research examined approaches in the United States, European Union and United Kingdom, as well as Kenya, Nigeria, Egypt and Brazil. It argues that clauses restricting workers from joining competitors can affect far more than an individual employment relationship.

Enforcing competition laws in labour markets

"Competition authorities worldwide are increasingly recognising that non-competes directly impact market dynamism, talent mobility and economic equity," Sikhosana explained. "The fundamental takeaway for South Africa is clear; competition law enforcement must actively extend beyond product markets and into labour markets."

The paper calls for South African enforcement guidance balancing legitimate business interests with worker mobility. Sikhosana believes this could protect employees, give employers certainty and support entrepreneurship and small businesses.

Sikhosana's wish is for the work to stimulate policy discussion rather than remain a static academic exercise.

"As our economy evolves, bridging the gap between labour law and competition enforcement becomes essential."

Sikhosana, the youngest of five children, credits his late father, a school teacher, with making learning central to family life. Growing up, his family home often hosted graduation celebrations, giving the future lawyer a gleaming glimpse of possibilities education presented.

"As a young boy watching those milestones unfold, I constantly envisioned myself wearing a graduation gown one day," he recalled.

His father also insisted that the family watch news every day. Sikhosana encountered prominent jurists, including the late former Chief Justice Pius



Photos: @CompComSA

Langa and former Chief Justice Raymond Zondo, who also hails from the South Coast. His mother's delight for radio dramas instilled in him the power of storytelling and human connection.

Fighting injustice

The realities surrounding him supplied a sharper motivation. "Witnessing everyday injustices around me sparked a deep-seated determination to act. I realised that I did not just want to earn a law degree, I wanted to become an advocate who could actively empower the people of my community, apprise them of their rights and ensure their voices were heard," he said.

The television drama, *Sokhulu & Partners*, portraying three accomplished black legal practitioners, helped him imagine that future.

"Beyond the courtroom drama, that show provided something far more powerful: representation. It allowed me to see what was possible and envision a future for myself in the legal profession," he added.

Sikhosana completed his LLB at the University of Fort Hare, where he chaired Students for Law and Social Justice and the Constitutional Literacy and Services initiative. Through the Know Your Constitution campaign for elderly people in King William's Town, he began turning legal knowledge into public service.

Career journey

A university career fair introduced him to representatives from his current employer and planted the idea that the institution could offer the career he sought. After graduating, he interned at SECTION27, advocating for healthcare access and taking statements from families affected by the Life Esidimeni tragedy.

A project on access to life-saving medicines introduced him to the connection between competition law and social justice. He later served his articles at a major law firm before joining a local bank in a compliance role.

At the bank, he learnt how competition law informs executive and board-level risk management. His experience at the Competition Commission include abuse of dominance investigations, stakeholder engagement on the Competition Act of 1998 amendments and regulatory guidelines and merger analysis.

"My role sits right at the intersection of competition law, company law and economics," Sikhosana explained. His work entails assessing complex merger transactions, analysing market dynamics, drafting recommendations for decision-makers and designing conditions intended to protect competition and the public interest.



"It is an incredibly dynamic and intellectually stimulating space, but above all, it is deeply fulfilling because the work we do directly shapes the health, fairness and growth of the South African economy."

Sikhosana's ambitions include contributing to leading South African and international competition law journals and collaborating with experienced practitioners worldwide.

To young South Africans considering law or economic regulation, his advice combines excellence with community, "pursue strong academic results, find mentors, build networks and remain resilient". ❖



PLAY YOUR PART

STOP GBVF
Gender-Based Violence and Femicide

Protect women.
Protect children. Protect communities.
Embrace positive masculinity
and reject violence.

CRIME STOP HOTLINE: 08600 10111 **GBVF COMMAND CENTRE ON 0800 428 428**

@GovernmentZA | #StopGBVF | #EndGBVF | #GovZAUpdates

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

2030 NDP

Writer: Sihle Manda
Photos: NRF – SARAO website

Engineering the future by looking to the stars

For Keitumetse Molamu, helping South Africa explore deep space is the fulfilment of a childhood dream. As Head of Engineering and Technology Development at the South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (SARAO), she leads the people who turn difficult scientific questions into technology.

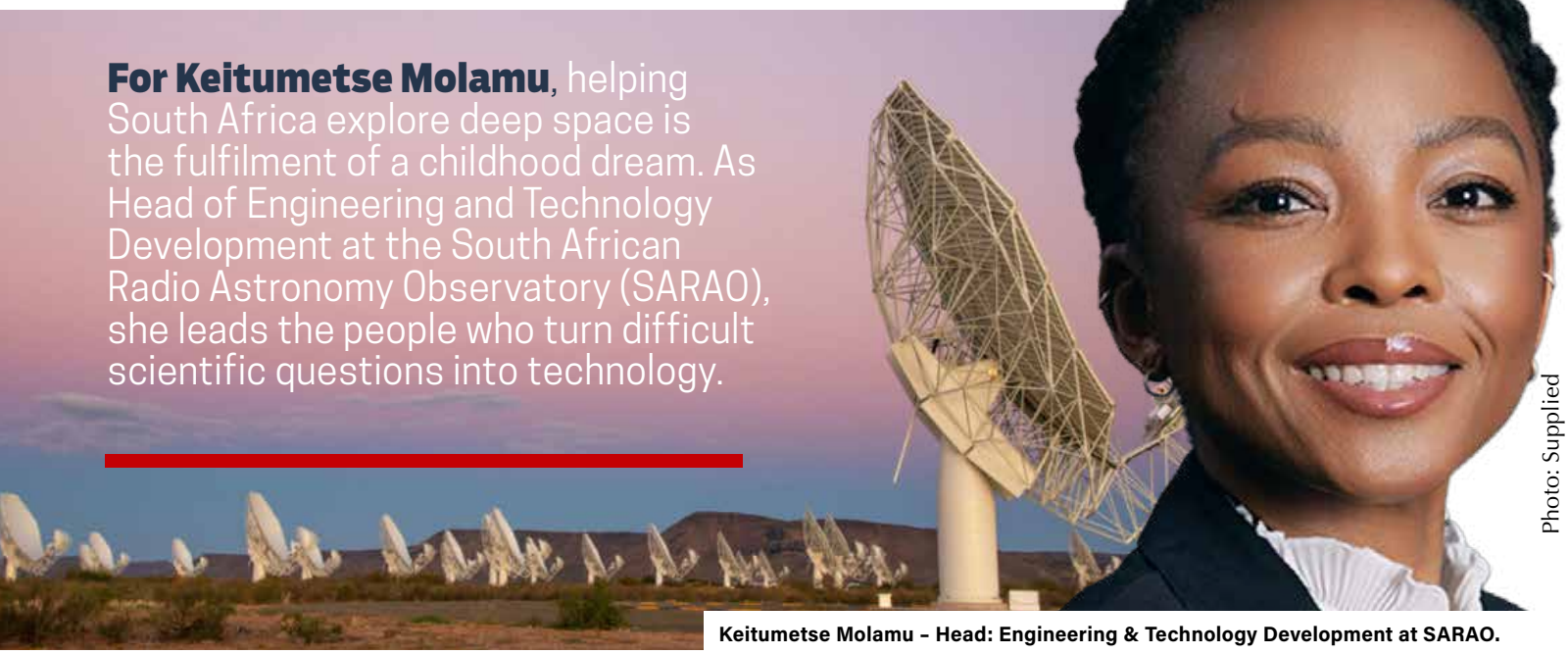


Photo: Supplied

Keitumetse Molamu – Head: Engineering & Technology Development at SARAO.

Her multidisciplinary team supports MeerKAT and the Square Kilometre Array (SKA), maintains the Hartebeesthoek Radio Astronomy Observatory (HartRAO) and develops technologies beyond astronomy.

At the Future Space Subforum of the Pujiang Innovation Forum in Shanghai in September, Molamu explained that discovery begins before scientists examine data.

"I come to astronomy through engineering. So, I tend to see what happens between the scientific question and the discovery: the receivers, timing systems, electronics, software, computing, structures and infrastructure that all have to work before a scientist can see something that has never been seen before," she said.

"And that is why I think astronomy belongs in an innovation forum."

Appointed to lead the division from September 2022, Molamu brought experience in telecommunications, optical technologies and power systems. She holds a Bachelor of Engineering, a Bachelor of Science in Information Technology and a Master of Business Administration in Information Technology. Her experience includes working at Airports Company South Africa, Ericsson, Clyde Bergemann Africa and the Royal Bank of Canada.

Astronomy explained

A Massachusetts Institute of Technology graduate, her thesis examined African innovation ecosystems, reflecting her belief that engineering should advance countries and communities.

"Innovation is often described as starting with an idea for a product. Astronomy often works the other way around," she said.

"We start with a question we cannot answer. That question demands an instrument, or a capability, that may not exist yet. Building it forces us to solve difficult engineering problems. And when we solve

I like this result because it says something important about science. You build an instrument to answer a question and, if you are lucky, it shows you something you did not know enough to ask about. And then the discovery creates the next problem.

them, we are left with capability that did not exist before."

Inaugurated in the Karoo in 2018, MeerKAT has become an important scientific asset. Since its first full-array science paper in 2019, more than 700 scientific articles have been published. Observing demand is three to four times its capacity, with more than 1 000 proposals from 30 countries.

"But numbers are not really the interesting part," Molamu explained.

One early result revealed enormous bipolar radio bubbles at the centre of the Milky Way. Evidence points to an energetic event there millions of years ago.

"I like this result because it says something important about science. You build an instrument to answer a question and, if you are lucky, it shows you something you did not know enough to ask about. And then the discovery creates the next problem."

Molamu used rapidly rotating neutron stars called pulsars as an example. Their radio pulses can function like cosmic clocks, helping scientists search for gravitational waves.

"That sounds like an astronomy problem. But the words 'precisely enough' turn it into an engineering problem," she added.

The MeerKAT Pulsar Timing Array uses about 80 millisecond pulsars. Its 4.5-year dataset has matched the significance of searches using much longer datasets. Engineers drove MeerKAT's absolute timing uncertainty below seven nanoseconds.

Science versus engineering

"At that level, it is not enough to have a good clock and declare the problem solved. Every element in the signal chain introduces delay. Those delays have to be measured component by component, understood, calibrated and integrated," she explained.

"A scientist asks a question about gravitational waves. The question creates a requirement for extraordinary timing precision. That requirement creates engineering problems. Solving those problems creates technology, know-how and people capable of working at that level of precision," she added. "Science creates the problem. Engineering creates the solution. Solving the problem creates capability. So, whether we are measuring a radio pulse to nanosecond precision or posi-



tioning an optical component to micrometre precision, the point is the same: astronomy gives us a difficult problem to solve," she said.



Building capabilities

As a result, she resists measuring a scientific facility only by its published papers. The country should also ask what capabilities it acquired through producing the science.

"At SARAO, we are quite deliberate about this. We are not only here to build and operate telescopes. Part of our job is to make sure that the investment in astronomy also builds technology, people and capability across Africa. That includes technology development, commercialisation and human capital development."

This would also mean benefiting underserved communities, strengthening national technical capacity and encouraging young people to pursue science, technology, engineering and mathematics careers.

International collaboration

MeerKAT also participates in very long baseline interferometry (VLBI) with the European VLBI Network, sharpening its resolving power and preparing for future SKAO-VLBI operations. NASA Earthdata defines VLBI as a "geometric technique that measures the time difference between the arrival at two Earth-based antennas of a radio wavefront emitted by a distant quasar. Using large numbers of time difference measurements from many quasars observed with a global network of antennas, VLBI determines the inertial reference frame defined by the quasars and simultaneously the precise positions of the antennas."

"International collaboration in astronomy is not something we add after the technical work is done. Often the collaboration is part of the instrument. No single telescope, institution or country has everything needed to answer the questions we are now asking. We have to combine instruments, expertise, data, engineering and ideas," said Molamu.

Plans are underway for South Africa to host the mid-frequency component of the SKA, one of the most ambitious scientific instruments ever undertaken. For Molamu, its significance extends well beyond hosting a telescope.

"It means developing and sustaining the engineering, digital infrastructure, computing, skills and industrial capability required to participate in a project of this scale. It also means that South African engineers and scientists are not simply users of the next generation of astronomy infrastructure. We are helping to build it," she added.

The MeerKAT Extension will add 14 SKA-design dishes, extend baselines to 17 kilometres and introduce a new graphics processing unit correlator. The international partnership has also contracted SARAO to deliver a digitiser system – evidence of sought-after South African expertise.

"We are not only building the next telescope. We are building the capability to participate in what comes after it," Molamu said.

Opportunities for communities

According to Molamu, progress must be visible on the ground. The Karoo's telescopes look through cosmic time and its rocks preserve Earth's history, but communities live between those histories.

"At SARAO, we think about that impact quite broadly. It is skills. It is businesses getting the opportunity to do difficult work. It is research and technology. And it also has to be about the communities around these facilities."

Molamu believes astrotourism could extend beyond telescope visits to embrace the Karoo's science, landscape, natural history, culture and people.

"If large scientific infrastructure is going to transform a place, then the people who live there should have a real opportunity to participate in the value that grows around it," she said. ❖

SARAO – a facility of the National Research Foundation – is responsible for managing all radio astronomy initiatives and facilities in South Africa.

English

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS 2026

Safety During the Local Elections

- As citizens, **we must resist manipulation and observe constitutional provisions** by calling out untoward behaviour.
- The **destruction of infrastructure is illegal** and must be reported to law-enforcement agencies.
- **SAPS Crime Stop Hotline 08600 10111**



- For verified information from the South African Government, **visit www.gov.za.** #GovZAUpdates

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

A NATION THAT WORKS FOR ALL

2030 NDP

Improved public finances are about making the lives of South Africans better

Last week, the Minister of Finance presented the Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) in Parliament, which showed just how far we have travelled along the path of restoring the health of our public finances.

For many of us, the state of the country's public finances might feel like something far removed from the struggles of daily life.

But the truth is, the decisions we make about how we raise, spend and manage public money have a direct impact on our lives. They determine whether our children get a good education, if our local clinics and hospitals actually work, if our roads are kept in good shape, and if our economy can finally create the jobs people so desperately need.

Over the last few years, we have been walking a difficult path: to both stabilise our public finances and tackle the high levels of poverty and unemployment in our country.



We have been working to recover and clean up the mess left behind by state capture, which weakened our institutions, hurt economic growth and drove up our public debt. The COVID-19 pandemic made this worse, as government had to implement a stimulus package to protect workers, communities and businesses from the worst effects of the subsequent economic contraction.

As our debt went up, so did the cost of paying interest on it. Every rand we spent on interest was a rand that could not be used to build a school, build houses, equip a hospital, fix a road or provide essential services. We simply could not let that continue forever.

For the first time in nearly two decades, public debt has stabilised, and it is now beginning to decline. Since 2023, we have maintained a primary budget surplus, meaning that, excluding debt service costs, we have been spending less than we have been earning. This allows us to further reduce our debt and lower the cost of borrowing, while increasing confidence in our economy.

These improvements are part of a bigger economic recovery. The end of load shedding, our improved fiscal position and our removal from the Financial Action Task Force grey list have contributed to the rise in public confidence and our first sovereign credit rating upgrade in over 16 years.

The recovery of the South African Revenue Service following the era of state capture has enabled better collection rates.

This is revenue being used to deliver tangible benefits to the South African people as more resources are made available for social and development spending. It is being used to build more schools and clinics, improve public services, deliver social grants and invest in public infrastructure that communities rely on.

We are allocating more funds to combat gender-based violence and femicide. This includes additional funds to hire more than 3 500 social workers and to improve the capacity of our forensic and investigative services to ensure gender-based violence cases result in successful prosecution and conviction.

The social wage, which cov-

ers health, education, social development and services for low-income households, makes up around 60% of non-interest spending. It funds free basic services for over 11 million households, school meals and grants to more than 18 million beneficiaries.

We know the rising cost of living is putting a massive strain on households. The temporary reduction in the fuel levy announced by the Minister is one of the ways we are trying to provide some relief.

The improved fiscal position allows us to invest more in infrastructure, which is an essential driver of inclusive economic growth and job creation. Payments for capital assets are the fastest-growing item in our budget, and new measures have been put in place to increase private sector investment in infrastructure.

The improved financial position is being supported by the reform of the budgeting process. We are fundamentally changing how public money is being spent, monitored and accounted for.

However, fixing our finances is not just about collecting more tax or cutting debt. It is also about making sure every single rand of public money is spent wisely, honestly and effectively. We are eliminating waste and inefficiencies in government programmes. We are phasing out programmes that perform badly or lack clear outcomes. This process is already producing measurable savings. More than R11 billion in savings has been identified in the medium term from rationalising low-priority programmes.

This means that we are making targeted savings rather than indiscriminate cuts to departmental budgets to reduce overall spending. As part of this approach, we are reviewing the Infrastructure Conditional Grant to assess why provinces and municipalities underspend, why projects are not delivered on time and within budget, and why the quality of deliverables is poor in many cases. Our aim is not to spend less but to spend smarter.

Beyond the funds that have been dedicated over the next three years to growing the economy, creating jobs and fighting poverty, this MTBPS signals confidence and stability. It shows that we have made significant progress along the path of recovery and demonstrates our commitment to continue along that path. In doing so, we are steadily improving the conditions for far greater investment, growth and job creation.





We know that many South Africans have not felt the benefits of this economic recovery yet. Unemployment is still far too high, too many families are struggling to get by and too many communities are dealing with poor services. We should not mistake financial stability for the end of the road. There is still a lot of work to do.

But we should recognise how far we have come. A country that manages its money responsibly is better equipped to protect its most vulnerable citizens, handle economic shocks, attract investment and build for the future. The progress we are seeing gives us confidence that we are moving in the right direction.

It also puts a bigger responsibility on government to make sure these financial gains turn into real improvements that South Africans can actually see and feel. Our job now is to turn financial stability into economic opportunity and a better quality of life for everyone.

At the end of the day, that is what responsible management of public money is all about: not just a healthier balance sheet for government, but a better life for the people of South Africa. ❖

***This message was first published on 26 October 2026**

Sources: SAMRC

New femicide risk assessment and safety planning tools support South African women at risk

The South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) has called for the urgent adoption and implementation of evidence-based femicide risk assessments and safety planning tools to assist women experiencing severe intimate partner violence to remain safe. This is particularly important following the recent spate of killings of women across the country. Femicide remains one of South Africa's most pressing public health and human rights crises. The national femicide studies in South Africa show that femicide is preventable, yet the most recent study shows an increase in the rate of intimate partner femicide.

"Many women who are ultimately killed by intimate partners experience escalating patterns of violence, threats, coercive control and abuse prior to their deaths," says SAMRC's Chief Specialist Scientist, Professor Naeemah Abrahams.

Yet early identification of risk, combined with appropriate safety planning and support, can create critical opportunities for intervention. Many women at risk do not access protection orders or other available safety mechanisms, while measures such as safety monitoring and



weapons confiscation remain underutilised, despite their potential to improve women's safety.

"This needs to urgently change to ensure that women have ready access to prevention and response options", says SAMRC's Gender and Health Research Unit Director, Associate Professor Nwabisa Shai.

Practical solutions

To strengthen prevention efforts, researchers from SAMRC 's Gender and Health Research Unit worked with women survivors, service providers, and experts to produce a femicide risk assessment tool and a safety plan that includes both an emergency safety and a long-term safety plan. The easy-to-use one-page risk assessment tool is designed to help women identify if they are at heightened risk of severe violence or femicide.

The safety planning tool, includes a safety plan for an emergency (women who need to leave in a hurry), and a long-term safety plan for women to get ready to leave violent relationships after considering the implications for themselves and their children. All tools were developed specifically for women experiencing intimate partner violence and their adaptation ensured that these are relevant to local realities and practical for use across national diverse settings.

While the tools can be used by women themselves, it is highly recommended that they be administered by frontline service providers, including police officials, social workers, health professionals, victim support services, and community-based organisations.

"Femicide is often preceded by warning signs and missed opportunities for intervention. Risk assessment and safety planning tools can help women, families, communities and service providers recognise danger early and take action before violence escalates to a femicide", says Senior Specialist Scientist at the Gender and Health Research Unit, Leane Ramsoomar.

The tools form part of South Africa's National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide and a standalone draft National Integrated Strategy on the Prevention of Femicide, both of which emphasise prevention, early intervention and coordinated responses across sectors.

The SAMRC is currently engaging with government departments and stakeholders to support the adoption and implementation of the risk assessment and safety planning tools within existing services. Successful implementation will require training, awareness raising, monitoring and collaboration across the justice, health, social development and community sectors.

As South Africa grapples with the continued loss of women's lives, the message remains clear: femicide is preventable. Identifying risk early, listening to women's experiences and ensuring access to practical safety interventions can help save lives. ❖



Writer: Cassius Selala
Photos: Supplied

Ending GBVF begins with changing human behaviour



Traditional leaders attend the launch of government's National Positive Masculinity Initiative in Ermelo, Mpumalanga.

South Africa cannot end gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) through legislation, law enforcement and public awareness campaigns alone. While these interventions are indispensable, sustainable prevention requires a deeper societal shift: changing the human behaviours, attitudes, beliefs and social norms that allow violence against women, children and other vulnerable groups to persist.

At the heart of GBVF lies a question that demands honest reflection: what kind of society are we building when controlling another person is mistaken for love, aggression is celebrated as masculinity and violence is sometimes excused as a private family matter?

These are not merely individual behavioural concerns. They reflect broader social attitudes about power, gender, entitlement and accountability. Unless these attitudes are confronted directly, South Africa will continue to respond to the consequences of violence

without sufficiently challenging the conditions that allow it to happen.

Prevention must begin before violence occurs

The National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (NSP on GBVF) 2020 – 2030 recognises prevention and rebuilding social cohesion as one of its six pillars. It calls for evidence-based interventions that change harmful social norms and behaviour, promote positive alternatives to toxic masculinities and help create communities where violence is unacceptable.

Cabinet's Programme of Action on GBVF similarly identifies prevention, the engagement of men and boys, communication and stakeholder mobilisation as essential elements of the national response.

These commitments point to a necessary shift in how prevention is understood and implemented. Awareness is important, but awareness alone does not guarantee behavioural change.

The real test of prevention is whether people change how they behave towards one another.

The engagement of men and boys is indispensable to ending GBVF. This does not mean shifting responsibility away from perpetrators or treating all men as perpetrators. It means recognising that men have an important role in challenging the attitudes, peer expectations and social practices through which violence is normalised.

We must redefine masculinity in ways that affirm responsibility, respect, emotional maturity, equality and non-violence. Boys must learn early that strength is not demonstrated through intimidation, that rejection is not an invitation to coercion and that no relationship creates an entitlement to another person's body, time or choices.

Men must also be prepared to challenge other men when conversations, jokes or conduct degrade women, excuse sexual violence or promote the idea that controlling a partner is acceptable.

There can be no legitimate solidarity in protecting a perpetrator from accountability. Friendship, brotherhood and loyalty cannot be used to excuse abuse.

This requires sustained programmes in schools, universities, workplaces, sports organisations, faith communities and local communities. Once-off campaigns may attract attention, but consistent engagement is needed to influence behaviour and reinforce new social expectations.

Families, schools and communities have a responsibility

Behaviour is shaped long before a person enters adulthood. The way children observe adults resolving disagreements, sharing responsibilities, treating women and exercising authority can influence their understanding of relationships and power.

Families must create environments in which respect is practised, emotional expression is encouraged and violence is never presented as a legitimate means of resolving conflict. Schools must reinforce gender equality, age-appropriate education on consent, respectful relationships and safe reporting.

Traditional and religious leaders, community organisations, sports bodies and employers must also use their influence to challenge harmful practices and establish clear expectations of acceptable conduct.

Communities must learn to recognise warning signs, respond safely when abuse is disclosed and connect survivors with appropriate support services.

Equally important is confront- >

ing victim-blaming. The responsibility for violence rests with the person who commits it. A woman's clothing, movements, employment, independence or decision to leave a relationship cannot justify violence against her.

A society that demands behavioural change from women to avoid abuse, while failing to demand accountability from those who perpetrate it, has misunderstood the problem.

The role of government communication

Government communication also has a critical role in advancing this behavioural shift.

Communication should deliberately challenge the beliefs that sustain violence, present positive alternatives and encourage specific actions that individuals and communities can practice.

Messages on consent must be accompanied by conversations about entitlement and respect. Messages encouraging men to speak out must be supported by practical opportunities to challenge harmful peer behaviour. Campaigns promoting safe communities must connect people to credible reporting channels and survivor support services.

This requires collaboration between government communication structures, community radio, television, digital platforms, civil society, educators, researchers and trusted community voices.

Messages must be accessible to persons with disabilities, available in relevant South African languages and responsive to the experiences of women and girls across different social and economic circumstances.

Most importantly, communication must be sustained throughout the year. Prevention cannot be seasonal when the harm it seeks to prevent is ongoing.

Accountability must accompany behaviour change

Behavioural prevention must never be used as a substitute for law enforcement, justice or survivor-centred services. Education and dialogue cannot replace the consequences that must follow criminal conduct.

South Africa requires a comprehensive approach that combines early prevention with effective policing, timely prosecution, protection orders, accessible support services and accountability for institutions that fail to respond appropriately.

The same principle applies to government implementation. Prevention programmes must have clear responsibilities, adequate funding, measurable targets and credible monitoring mechanisms.

Success cannot be measured solely by the number of posters distributed, dialogues held, people reached or media interviews conducted. These outputs matter, but they do not necessarily demonstrate that behaviour has changed.

We must also assess whether attitudes that justify violence are declining, whether men and boys are adopting more respectful behaviours, whether communities are intervening safely and whether institutions are responding effectively when abuse occurs.

Stakeholders should ensure that prevention commitments are translated into coordinated programmes with measurable outcomes, defined responsibilities and regular reporting.

At the same time, economic inequality, dependency, unsafe public spaces and barriers to justice must be addressed because they can increase vulnerability and constrain the choices available to survivors. Behavioural interventions must therefore complement, rather than replace, structural reforms.

The responsibility belongs to all of us, but accountability for acts of violence must always remain with those who commit them.

Changing society begins with changing what society accepts. ❖



Cassius Selala is the Head of Communications at the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities.



DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR

ENCOURAGES WORKPLACES TO SUPPORT WORKERS' CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO VOTE



The Department of Employment and Labour (DEL), working in support of South Africa's democratic values and in the spirit of cooperation with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), calls on employers and employees across the country to work together to ensure that eligible workers are able to exercise their constitutional right to vote.

As South Africans prepare to participate in the democratic process, the Department encourages employers and workers to engage proactively and make reasonable workplace arrangements that support voter participation while maintaining operational requirements and service delivery commitments.

#Yazini

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Department:
Employment and Labour
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

A NATION THAT WORKS FOR ALL

2030 NDP

Writer: Lawrence Ngoveni

Beyond the ballot: active citizenry as the foundation of a **safer and stronger South Africa**



The 2026 Local Government Elections will mark another important milestone in South Africa's democratic journey. Millions of citizens will exercise their constitutional right to vote, reaffirming the central role of democracy in shaping the country's future. Elections are a cornerstone of democratic governance and are the beginning of a new cycle of civic participation, accountability and partnership between government and the people.

The strength of a democracy is not measured solely by voter turnout or electoral outcomes. It is measured by citizens' actions in between elections. Active citizenry requires individuals and communities to remain engaged in public affairs, participate in decision-making processes, hold leaders accountable and contribute towards solving the challenges confronting society. It is through this sustained participation that democracy becomes meaningful in people's everyday lives.

Local government occupies a unique position in South Africa's governance system. It is the sphere closest to the people and responsible for delivering many of the services that directly affect communities.

Water, sanitation, roads, waste management, human settlements, local economic development and community safety are all functions that shape citizens' lived experiences.

The election of councillors and municipal leaders carries significant expectations. Communities rightly expect improved service delivery, responsive governance and accelerated development. However, the achievement of these outcomes depends not only on elected representatives but also on active and informed citizens who work alongside government to identify solutions, monitor progress and contribute to development initiatives.

Partnering for the development of the country

South Africa's developmental agenda, as articulated in the



National Development Plan Vision 2030 and the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP), recognises that sustainable development cannot be achieved by government acting alone. The MTDP places strong emphasis on building a capable, ethical and developmental state while fostering partnerships with citizens, communities, civil society and the private sector.

These partnerships are critical for driving inclusive growth, reducing poverty and inequality, strengthening local governance and improving the quality of life for all South Africans.

Communities that participate in Integrated Development Plan consultations, ward committee structures, community policing forums, school governing bodies and local development programmes help ensure that government planning responds to actual needs rather than assumptions. Citizens become co-creators of development rather than passive recipients of services.

As the nation observes the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children, the importance of active citizenry assumes even greater significance. Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) remains one of the gravest threats to South Africa's social fabric, undermining human dignity, equality, safety and development.

Shared responsibility

Violence against women and children cannot be addressed solely through legislation, policing or government interventions. It requires community ownership and collective action. Silence, indifference and inaction allow violence to persist.

Active citizenship demands that individuals challenge harmful social norms, support survivors, report abuse, promote gender equality and participate in building communities where women and children can live free from fear.

The fight against GBVF is closely linked to the broader project of nation-building and social development. Communities characterised by violence, inequality and exclusion cannot achieve sustainable development. Likewise, developmental goals cannot be realised where women and children continue to experience violence and insecurity.

Active citizens therefore play a dual role. They contribute in improving governance and development outcomes while simultaneously strengthening the social values that underpin a caring and inclusive society.

Beyond the elections

In the aftermath of the local government elections, citizens should view their democratic responsibility as extending beyond the vote. Participation in community forums, local de-



Photo: www.vecteezy.com

velopment initiatives, anti-GBVF campaigns, municipal accountability mechanisms and social mobilisation efforts all contribute to building resilient communities capable of addressing local challenges.

Technology and digital platforms also provide new opportunities for civic engagement. Citizens can use these tools to access information, engage constructively with government, monitor service delivery and mobilise collective action around local priorities. Used responsibly, these platforms can strengthen transparency, enhance participation and deepen democratic engagement.

The future of South Africa's municipalities will not depend solely on the performance of elected leaders. It will also depend on the willingness of citizens to remain engaged, informed and committed to the development of their communities. Elections may determine who governs, but active citizenry determines how well democracy works.

A reflection

As we reflect on the outcomes of the 2026 Local Government Elections and commemorate the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children, we are reminded that the work of building a capable developmental state belongs to all of us. The aspirations contained in the MTDP can only be realised through partnerships between government and society.

The ballot has spoken, but democracy's work continues. Now is the time for citizens to move from participation at the polls to participation in development; from being observers to becoming active agents of change; and from demanding accountability to helping build the safer, more inclusive and prosperous South Africa as envisioned in the country's national development agenda.

A thriving democracy is not built every five years on election day. It is built every day by active citizens who choose to participate, contribute and act in the public interest.



Lawrence Ngoveni is Director: Senior Specialist: Media Engagement at the DPME



PLAY YOUR PART

STOP GBVF
Gender-Based Violence and Femicide

Play Your Part by Supporting Survivors.

Listen. Believe. Support.

Help survivors access the GBVF Command Centre or a Thuthuzela Care Centre.

CRIME STOP HOTLINE: 08600 10111 **GBVF COMMAND CENTRE ON 0800 428 428**

@GovernmentZA | #StopGBVF | #EndGBVF | #GovZAUpdates

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

2030 NDP

Writer: Nosihle Shelembe
Photos: GCIS

How BRICS summit outcomes could benefit South Africans

From new export opportunities and investment commitments to support for small businesses, the outcomes of the 18th BRICS Summit have the potential to drive growth, create jobs and expand market access for South Africans.



Global summits can feel far removed from the daily realities of South Africans waiting in long queues at clinics, searching for employment or stretching household budgets in the face of rising living costs.

Yet decisions taken in international forums often shape the economic opportunities available at home. When President Cyril Ramaphosa joined other leaders in New Delhi for the 18th BRICS Summit in September 2026, the agenda touched on many of the forces that shape those daily realities: investment, industrial growth, energy, technology, trade and the resilience of public institutions.

South Africa used the summit to advance its priorities of attracting investment, expanding trade within BRICS and increasing investment in African infrastructure linked to the African Continental Free Trade Area. The potential benefits for citizens include more local processing of minerals, stronger demand for South African products, improved logistics, broader participation in regional and global value chains, and wider market access for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Realising these benefits will not be automatic. Success depends on sustained imple-

mentation, reliable infrastructure, investment-ready projects and collaboration between government and the private sector.

As part of this effort, the President met with Indian business leaders to strengthen bilateral trade and investment ties and position South Africa as the gateway to the African market.

Deeper trade relations

Trade opportunities for South Africa in India's vast market are significant. The country has a population of about 1.48 billion and, according to the International Monetary Fund, is expected to record a gross domestic product of US$4.15 trillion in 2026, with growth of about 6.5%.

To narrow the trade deficit and increase value-added exports, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic) is focusing on increasing exports of manufactured and value-added products.

Trade, Industry and Competition Deputy Minister Zuko Godlimpi, who formed part of the President's delegation, said engagements with Indian business leaders revealed a strong appetite for investment in South Africa.

"When the President had a series of engagements with Indian business leaders, it was a positive surprise that all the major conglomerates that are listed on the stock market in India are very eager to invest in South Africa. They view South Africa as an anchor base for the expansion into Africa," he said.

BRICS INDIA 2026

"They want to build their products in South Africa. If it is a steel manufacturing company, they are not talking about bringing steel from India to South Africa.

He noted that Indian companies were interested not only in selling goods to South Africa but also in manufacturing locally.

"They want to build their products in South Africa. If it is a steel manufacturing company, they are not talking about bringing steel from India to South Africa. They want to produce that steel in South Africa," he said.

The Deputy Minister said BRICS offered South Africa an opportunity to attract substantial capital from countries such as India and China, which are at the forefront of technological innovation in automotive and steel manufacturing, critical minerals and computing.

"That helps us to develop information and technology, including not just the transfer of skills, but also the transfer of the know-how in building things, as well as the know-how of selling things in a much more global market," Godlimpi said.

Tapping into new trade areas

The Deputy Minister also highlighted a landmark protocol signed on 8 September 2026, which granted South African cherry producers access to the Chinese market for the first time.

The protocol is expected to bring substantial economic benefits to South Africa, as China is the world's leading importer of cherries.

The finalisation and signing of the Cherry Protocol confirmed the two countries' commitment to expanding trade under the Framework Agreement on Economic Partnership for Shared Development and gave South African cherries tariff-free access to the Chinese market.

China has also submitted a draft protocol for the import of South African blueberries. Agriculture Minister Willie Aucamp has asked Team South Africa to fast track the coordination of inputs and negotiations with a view to finalising the protocol before the end of the year.

In April 2026, South Africa and China signed a supplementary citrus phytosanitary agreement to unlock opportunities in the citrus sector. The agreement is intended to ease export requirements, strengthen market access for Western Cape producers, support economic growth and create jobs.

eTrade South Africa

To help micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) access international markets, the dtic has introduced the eTrade South Africa Programme, which helps

established businesses strengthen their export readiness.

The programme equips South African businesses with the knowledge, skills, tools and market access needed to participate in cross-border eCommerce and expand their international footprint.

"If you are a small business that is emerging in South Africa and you are trying to sell your product, let us say a shoe, one of the things you might encounter is that the South African shoe market is too small to accommodate 500 MSMEs that are producing shoes.

"But if you think about the fact that India has about 1.5 billion people, China has about 1.5 billion people, an MSME needs only to sell its shoes to about 200 000 or 100 000 in India or China for their business to make sense," the Deputy Minister explained.

The initiative is being implemented in partnership with DHL's GoTrade Programme to increase the participation of MSMEs and emerging exporters in international trade.

Through the programme, MSMEs receive capacity-building support to improve export readiness, understand trade finance and obtain information about different markets.

"We have spoken to banks about a strategy of encouraging their SMME clients to access information about the GoTrade Programme. We will provide them with assistance, including funding instruments in the BRICS ecosystem.

"That also includes a series of equity funders in other BRICS countries who are willing to put their money forward to help SMMEs scale up," the Deputy Minister said.

Access to information

Godlimpi identified limited access to market information as one of the biggest barriers facing South African businesses seeking to expand into BRICS markets. He said the GoTrade Programme was designed to help address this challenge by connecting businesses with information on market opportunities, export requirements and financing options.

"The second issue is tariff problems. When a South African product enters the shelves of a different country, there are particular tariffs in place.

"Qualifying agricultural products are doing much better in China now than at any other period in history, because we were able to negotiate tariff-free market access for them. The same applies to the Indian market," the Deputy Minister explained.



President Cyril Ramaphosa engaging Chairman of Jindal Steel and Power, Mr Naveen Jindal, on the sidelines of the 18th BRICS Summit held in New Delhi, India.

He added that government was working towards a system of compulsory specifications that would help SMMEs understand the requirements of different markets.

"They would then not have to chop and change their compliance work, which makes it difficult for them to move products from South Africa to market.

"There is the issue of transportation costs. China is what, 13 or 14 hours away from South Africa by flight? So, you can imagine the transportation costs involved. That is part of what the GoTrade Programme is tackling with the trade finance element," the Deputy Minister said.

More than a fifth of South Africa's trade is with BRICS countries, while the country has also benefited from development finance through the New Development Bank, commonly known as the BRICS Bank.

Funding from the bank has supported major investments in energy, water and transport infrastructure.

South Africa also has access to a $100 billion pool of currency reserves through the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement in the event of a liquidity crisis. ❖



EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR WARNS AGAINST ANY ATTEMPTS TO PREVENT WORKERS FROM VOTING

Workers Must Not Be Denied Their Democratic Right to Vote, Says Employment and Labour

No worker should be intimidated, penalised or unfairly prevented from exercising their constitutional right to vote. Democracy belongs to all of us.

#Yazini

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Department:
Employment and Labour
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

A NATION THAT WORKS FOR ALL

2030 NDP

Writer: Dino Poonsamy

Public servants must be patriotic in the manner in which they perform their duties

Competence and ethics are patriotic acts and public servants should put their country first, and South Africans first in the manner in which they perform their duties and deliver services to the people.

"Whether you change the linen or stitch up wounds, cook the food or dispense the medicines, it is in your hands to help build a public service worthy of all those who gave their lives for the dream of democracy" – a profound statement by former President Nelson Mandela, delivered to hospital employees in April 1998.

This was a clarion call for public servants to be patriotic in their commitment to our democracy. Mandela was not describing sentiment but an obligation: the living owe something to those who died so that a public service could exist to serve everyone. Measured against that debt, patriotism is not a feeling a public servant holds privately, but a standard of conduct the public is entitled to experience.

Patriotism is often reduced to sentiment, including pride in our flag, affection for our history and heritage, loyalty to our sports teams and national symbols. These are not wrong and should continue to be embraced.

For a public servant, though, a more exacting articulation treats patriotism as active loyalty: a willingness to defend the country's national interests, participate in civic engagements, and work deliberately to address the stubborn challenges of unemployment, inequality and poverty.

First a citizen then a public servant

It is our citizenship – our own stake in whether a service delivery failure gets fixed, our own investment in the country's progress – that should discipline how we occupy the role of public servant. The public servant who never forgets they are first a citizen sees no "them" to administer, only an "us" they belong to; they are simply also empowered to act on society's behalf. This is why patriotism cannot be legislated or proclaimed into being but must be lived in daily conduct, which is exactly where public trust is won.

An opportunity to earn trust

Patriotism cuts both ways: the State must deliver on citizens' legitimate expectations and rights to earn their patriotism in return. Public institutions do not deliver services; public servants do. South Africans will test that distinction directly at the local government elections on 4 November 2026, the sphere of government where service delivery is felt most immediately, at the coalface.

Turnout in 2024 fell to 58%, our lowest ever, with research by the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa (HSRC) finding that 57% of South Africans were dissatisfied with democracy. Rather than a verdict on citizens' patriotism, this is an invitation: every public representative and public servant has the chance to show that



Photo: www.vecteezy.com



Photo: GCIS

a vote still changes something.

Nor is this a generational problem. The HSRC research published in July 2026 found that youth disengagement reflects disillusionment rather than apathy. Young South Africans still believe in democracy, even as they question whether it delivers for them. That is positive, as the Public Service does not need to win back belief in democracy, only belief in delivery.

Building on what we already started

Nation-building and social cohesion have long been priorities of this democratic government, across administrations. The National Development Plan places leadership at every level of society, not only at the top, and insists that transformation is activated through citizen participation rather than administered from above. The current Medium-Term Development Plan builds on this, centring constitutional literacy and active citizenry in a social compact for equity and inclusion.

The Moral Regeneration Movement, commemorated each July alongside Mandela Day, reflects the same recognition: rebuilding trust takes sustained effort, not a single campaign - as President Ramaphosa affirmed in September, linking the movement's work to changing the attitudes that enable violence against women.

That same reciprocity applies to public servants themselves. A government that expects patriotic citizens must honour its own side of the bargain. When a social grant is delayed, a procurement process is manipulated, or an official treats a citizen with contempt, the damage lands on the credibility of the nation-building project the State champions. This is exactly why competence and ethics are patriotic acts in their own right.

It also demands seeing past the racial and class categories the country inherited. Thabo Mbeki's 1996 address described a South African identity woven from many streams of ancestry and migration. A public servant who internalise that cannot treat citizens differently based on where they come from.

The commitment already made

None of this is a new demand. The 2013 Public Service Charter, which was signed by the State and the major public sector unions, already commits every public servant to "be faithful to the Republic, honour the Constitution and abide by the laws," and to "promote the unity and well-being of the South African nation." Patriotism has been contractual language in our public service for a long time; what remains is to fully live it.

This is precisely the terrain the National School of Government occupies: building the capability of public servants to understand the Constitution not as a compliance document but as a value system they embody.

More than thirty years into democracy, South Africa already has a public service that is committed to exactly this. What remains is for daily conduct to let citizens experience it – officials who treat unemployment, poverty, and inequality as unfinished business of their own, and who give citizens every reason to believe that voting, trusting, and belonging still mean something. ❖



Dino Poonsamy is the Chief Director of Strategy and Systems at the National School of Government.

Writer: More Matshediso
Photos: Supplied

Find creative ways to express yourself through The Modern Us



Classic Leather Tote Bag: R2 350.

Personal style plays an important role in how professionals present themselves in the workplace. Beyond dress codes, clothing and accessories can **communicate confidence, attention to detail and individuality** while maintaining a polished and professional image. As workplaces continue to evolve, many professionals are embracing versatile pieces that balance functionality, comfort and contemporary design.

In this edition we feature items from The Modern Us, a South African lifestyle brand founded by creative entrepreneur and **designer Lebohang Tsinyane**. The collection reflects a modern approach to everyday dressing, combining practicality with distinctive design elements suited to today's dynamic professional environment.



Denim Utility Vest: R1 150.

Workmanship Wear: R2 800.



Retro Dungaree Skirt: R1 800.

About the designer

Free State-born designer Lebohang Tsinyane is the founder and creative director of The Modern Us, a lifestyle brand and creative studio established in 2020. With a background in Public Relations, he combines creativity, storytelling and branding to produce fashion and lifestyle products inspired by culture, innovation and personal expression.

His work reflects a commitment to creating pieces that are both functional and stylish, while celebrating contemporary South African creativity.

** Prices correct at the time of publishing.*

Writer: More Matshediso
Photos: Supplied

Beef trotters get a summer makeover

Rich, slow-cooked and deeply comforting, *amanqina* or *tlhakwana* (beef trotters) are a beloved South African delicacy. For summer, **chef Philani "Le_Chef_Phill" Mkhize** gives the traditional dish a seasonal refresh by pairing its hearty, gelatinous richness with fragrant herbs and bright citrus notes. This version gives the traditional dish a lighter summer character.

Slow-Cooked Beef Trotters with Citrus and Herbs

Ingredients

- 1 kg beef trotters, thoroughly cleaned and scraped clean of any fine hairs
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 large tomatoes, chopped
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 beef stock cube, dissolved in boiling water
- Freshly cracked black pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons fresh orange zest and juice (or apricot chutney)

Method

- **Clean and blanch:** (blanch refers to the process of quickly scalding food in boiling water and then plunging it into ice water to stop the cooking process). Place the beef trotters in a large pot and cover with water. Bring to a rolling boil for 10 minutes. Drain and rinse well under cold running water.
- **Slow simmer**: Return the trotters to the pot. Add 1.5 litres of water, stock, half the onion, two cloves of garlic, rosemary and thyme. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer gently for 2½ to 3 hours, topping up with hot water as needed.
- **Build the flavour**: Once the meat is tender and beginning to loosen from the bone, add the remaining onion and garlic, tomatoes and black pepper.
- **Add the summer twist:** Stir in the orange zest and juice or chutney. Simmer for a further 30 to 40 minutes until the tomatoes have broken down and the gravy has thickened.
- **Serve:** Remove the herb stems and allow the dish to rest for 10 minutes. Serve with soft pap, samp or crusty sourdough bread.



Wine pairing

To balance the richness of the dish, Le_Chef_Phill recommends a South African Pinotage or a lightly chilled Syrah/Shiraz. For outdoor summer dining, a dry Syrah Rosé or slightly chilled Grenache Noir offers a refreshing alternative, with enough acidity to cleanse the palate between bites.



About the Chef

With more than 25 years of culinary experience, Le_Chef_Phill has worked for leading hospitality brands, including the Pestana Group, Legacy Hotels, Sun International, Primi Piatti and Amakhala Game Reserve. He is the founder of The Unorthodox Chef Catering, a business known for its creative approach to traditional African cuisine. The company exports traditional African meals to clients in the United Arab Emirates.

He can be reached on his social media handle #the_unorthodox_chef or contacted on +27 81 269 7515.

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Photos: ©2005-2026 Shanghai Municipal Administration of Culture and Tourism

Shanghai moves to a *rhythm* on its own

When an assignment to cover a week-long science forum with the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI) in Shanghai, China, landed on my desk in early September, I was more enthusiastic than usual about this trip.

That was purely because China fascinates me: from *feng shui (pronounced fung shway)* and the Great Wall of China to its political system and commerce. How did this East Asian imperium mutate from a war-torn, impoverished agrarian empire into the modern economic superpower we know today?

A simple desktop search will tell you it was through decades of strategic economic reforms, infrastructure investment and pragmatism. That sounds a tad bit facile. Lucky for me, I was about to find out. But not before trudging through six time zones over 18 gruelling hours, which was not ideal for a light sleeper.

I was in Shanghai for five days to cover the 19th Pujiang Innovation Forum. South Africa had been named the forum's Country of Honour, bringing its scientists, innovators and government representatives into the spotlight.

Founded in 2008 by China's Ministry of Science and Technology and the Shanghai Municipal People's Government, the



Pujiang Innovation Forum is an annual international conference that brings together scientists, entrepreneurs, policymakers and investors to explore advances in science and technology and strengthen global collaboration. Its discussions span basic research, emerging technologies, future industries and science governance.

Beautiful and calm

When we landed at Pudong Airport, it quickly became evident why Shanghai, with an estimated gross domestic product of R14.66 trillion, is China's economic hub. Located on the East China Sea at the mouth of the Yangtze River, this municipal city of 30 million people is a high-tech global financial centre.

The drive to the Shanghai

Marriott Parkview felt like an introduction to a city that knew how to keep moving without appearing hurried. As a South African in Shanghai for the first time, I watched the roads open ahead of us, clean and orderly, with traffic flowing in a steady rhythm, often punctuated by disorderly manoeuvres that all drivers appeared to be at peace with.

The streets seemed remarkably free of the litter and disorder I had half expected in a city of such scale. Even the spaces between buildings gave an impression of care.

What struck me, however, was the sheer number of blocks of high-rise residential towers hugging the multi-layered elevated expressways, which wove between skyscrapers like giant ribbons as we drove into the yawning horizon of obscurity.

I looked for the familiar signs of a busy city – people lingering at street corners, noise spilling into the road, the sense that everything was happening at once – but the scene felt unexpectedly calm. There was movement everywhere, yet little commotion.

I remember being struck by that contrast: the vastness of Shanghai and the quiet composure of the drive through it. From the airport window, the city seemed both intensely urban and carefully ordered, its roads, buildings and everyday life fitting together with a precision that made my first arrival feel less like entering chaos and more like being carried gently into a different rhythm.

A boat cruise on the Huangpu River

After five days of deciphering Mandarin-saturated science and technology jargon, we took a boat cruise on the Huangpu





Century Park, Shanghai.

River. Coming from Durban, I wondered why the excursion was in the evening. The unfolding neon-drenched, kaleidoscopic marvel soon explained why.

The hour-long cruise etched in my memory a vivid sense of a city looking to the future while remaining unwilling to defile its historic architecture, with skyscrapers gasping for prominence across the Huangpu River from grand European buildings more than a century old.

Two evenings earlier, we were treated to a China–South Africa Night gala, featuring speeches by guests while we indulged in a flavourful buffet at the tranquil Shanghai Dong Jiao State Guest House. According to the hotel's website, it is Shanghai's largest garden-style state guest house, occupying about 490 hectares of landscaped grounds.

"Gardens, lawns and stands of trees cover 80% of the total area, making for a uniquely peaceful atmosphere within easy reach of Zhangjiang High-Tech Park Pudong and excellent transportation links connecting the Dongjiao to the rest of metropolitan Shanghai and, via Pudong International Airport, the rest of China, the region and the world," reads the website.

A night of entertainment

At the soirée, the South African delegation was regaled by performances that embraced the cultural nuances of both countries. These included performances of the Hunan Flower-Drum Opera and "Liu Hai Cuts Firewood", performed by Chen Shiyi and Zhang Qing.

China-based South African vocalist Judith Mudau put on a show-stopping performance of Brenda Fassie's iconic *Vulindlela*. Local acts Jazz SH and YES SHOW presented a music and dance medley featuring *Night Shanghai; Rose, Rose, I Love You; Phoenix Dance; By the Suzhou Creek* and *Pata Pata*. The Hunan Acrobatic Arts Theatre performed *Ode to Harvest – The Straw Hats*, and the Little Star Art Troupe performed the South African song *Siyahamba* and the forum's theme song, *The New Mission*. ❖



Lujiazui is China's premier financial district, located on a peninsula in the Pudong New Area of Shanghai.



Century Park, Shanghai.

