



IT'S  
**YOUR VOICE**



ubuntu diplomat

Internal Newsletter of the Department of International  
Relations and Cooperation

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Publisher	The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO)



In February 2019, South Africa was elected as the incoming Chair for the African Union (AU) and its tenure ended in February 2021. The Chairperson of the AU is the ceremonial head of the AU, elected by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government and rotates annually among the continent's five regions. The current Chairperson is the Democratic Republic of Congo.

## EDITOR'S

## LETTER

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to our first edition of *Its Your Voice* for 2021!

In this month's edition, you will find a number of highlighted events that took place in the previous months.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 2021, Minister Naledi Pandor addressed the Chatham House. In her address, The Minister stated that it was the international community's solidarity with oppressed South Africans that contributed to the dismantling of the apartheid regime. She also highlighted South Africa's continued efforts to encourage and foster strengthened relations between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union in order to address root causes and find lasting peace in the conflicts in Africa

We feature an article by Mr Jaimal Anand. The article focusses on how the COVID-19 pandemic has been presented as a unique global challenge; with the very foundations of a humane, interdependent world order that seems to be threatened by an increasing trend towards unilateralism and the undermining of multilateral structures.

Turn to the page, *Mission Accomplished*, as we feature Ambassador Ebrahim Saley's interview with Petra News Agency on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

*Voices from DIRCO* features an interview with Ambassador Beryl Rose Sisulu on keeping the legacy of former President Nelson Mandela alive all over the world.

Turn the page to *Health and Wellness* and read about self-care tools to master life's difficult challenges, as the COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant changes and challenges in our daily lives.

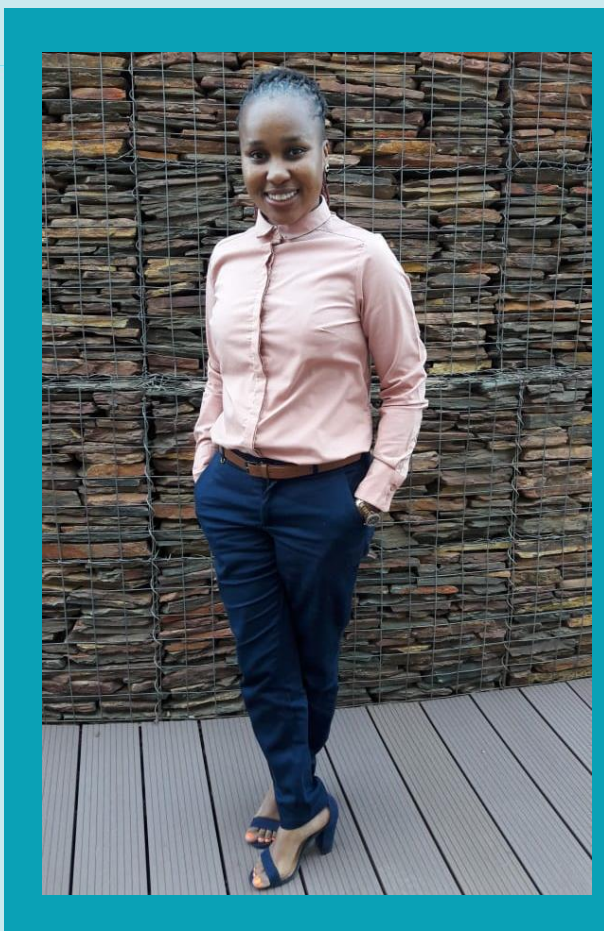
In addition, on 17 February 2021, Nurse Zoliswa Gidi-Dyosi from Cape Town became the first healthcare worker to receive the Coronavirus vaccine in South Africa.

Together, we can beat Coronavirus #VacciNation.

May you enjoy all that we have to offer in this month's edition. I am grateful for the opportunity to be guest editor of this issue.

Kind regards,

MM



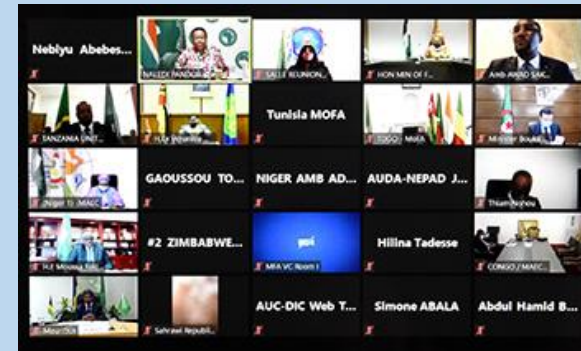
# IT'S YOUR VOICE

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# SOUTH AFRICA AT THE AFRICAN UNION



Minister Naledi Pandor participates in the 38th Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) Executive Council, Pretoria, South Africa, 3-4 February 2021.

## MINISTER PANDOR'S ENGAGEMENT WITH CHATHAM HOUSE 2021

By: Tyrone Gunnie  
First Secretary Political, London

Enter Covid-19. The traditional diplomatic engagements stopped abruptly. "Going out" to pursue opportunities to promote South Africa and its values was not possible. We asked serious questions about how to support the attainment of our domestic priorities. Technological tools provided one avenue.

Lessons were learnt from the Permanent Mission to the United Nations (UN), which began engaging virtually on Security Council (SC) matters, and it was in the crucial year of the aspiration to "Silence the Guns". South Africa did not allow the pandemic to impede it in its role - as Chair of the African Union - in driving priorities, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

In the United Kingdom (UK), the pandemic and post-Brexit trade negotiations were occupying the most significant space on all discussion platforms, but significant policy developments were occurring. These developments would have ramifications for developing countries, including in Africa. The UK decision to merge the Foreign and Commonwealth Office with the Department for International Development was being finalised for implementation in September 2020. The Parliamentary Oversight Committee was conducting a review on the effectiveness of aid while an integrated security, defence and foreign policy review focussed on all aspects of international policy, from defence to diplomacy and development.

Given the importance of the African Agenda and the Agenda of the South to South African foreign policy and its link to the attainment of our domestic priorities, creating a platform to restate these policy priorities to a wider British audience became important in light of the widespread policy changes taking place in the UK.

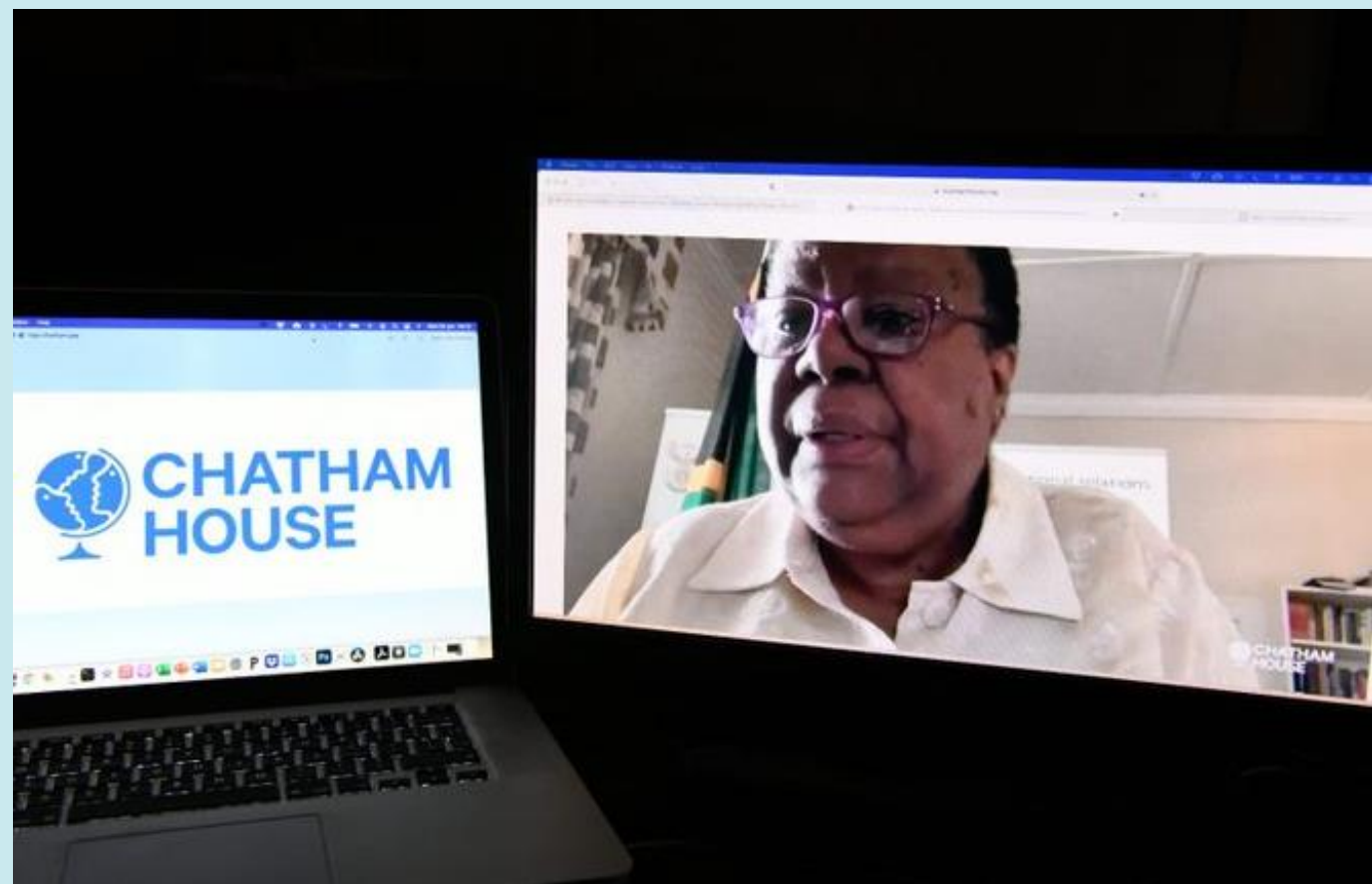
Therefore, building on the good relationship that exists between the Mission and Chatham House, the organisation was approached to pursue an opportunity for Minister Naledi Pandor to address the wider British public after South Africa had concluded its term on the UNSC, and as Chair of the African Union (AU).

In her address, Minister Pandor stated that it was the international community's solidarity with oppressed South Africans that contributed to the dismantling of the apartheid regime. South Africa, therefore, stands in solidarity with the people of Palestine and the Saharawi Democratic Republic who yearn for freedom and the right to self-determination.

The Minister highlighted South Africa's continued efforts to encourage and foster strengthened relations between the UNSC and the AU in order to address root causes and find lasting peace to the conflicts in Africa. She spoke on the issue of financing for African-led peace missions, as well as the role of women in peace-support operations.

The Minister also highlighted South Africa's efforts, as part of the Southern African Development Community, in engaging Mozambique on its current challenges, as well as bilateral engagement with the Government of Zimbabwe. She addressed ongoing support for the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in South Sudan.

One particular defining aspect of this engagement was the youth from the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan who thanked the Minister for South Africa's role in resolving conflict in their countries and, on the continent. In terms of the impact of the pandemic globally, the Minister highlighted the inequality of access to the vaccine because developed/rich nations were buying up the supply.





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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala is the first woman and first African to be elected Director-General for the World Trade Organisation.

Dr. Okonjo-Iweala will serve a four-year term beginning 01 March 2021.



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## Connectivity in an Age of Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity (VUCA): Realising SDG9 and 17 amid the COVID Pandemic

By: Jaimal Anand  
Office of the DDG: Asia & Middle East

*"As we begin the task of reconstruction in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic, financing for development becomes all the more critical. The overarching principle of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals is that we leave no country behind, and that those furthest behind receive our full support." – President Cyril Ramaphosa*

### The Context of Connectivity in the Age of COVID

This article is written in the context of the looming "global reset", which, in many ways, resembles the global reform agenda that has been a priority for the nations of the South for decades. The reality is that developing nations continue to bear the economic brunt of underdevelopment, and this gap has been brutally exposed during the COVID pandemic in recent months.

To reverse the effects of this crisis, we need to realise a few practical objectives. These objectives are fundamental and include, among others, ensuring that medicines and healthcare reach rural communities to ensure education is minimally disrupted and to protect populations from pandemics such as COVID and others, to facilitate tourism, to maintain trade and investment flows and secure all vital arteries of the international system. We should avoid treating infrastructure development as merely an issue of economic growth. It is a developmental issue and in many respects must be treated as a public good.

We have learned in this era of COVID that in order to rebuild humanity, we must ensure the realisation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 9, which demands inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, together with innovation and infrastructure. SDG 9 is crucial to allow for a dynamic and competitive economic environment to generate employment and livelihoods. Connectivity plays a key role in introducing and promoting new technologies, facilitating international trade and enabling the efficient use of resources.

SDG 17 provides for the cultivation of international partnerships that aim to secure a peaceful, prosperous and reformed world order. The goal is to enhance development through multi-stakeholder partnerships, which are critical to efficiently share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources. Partnerships are a necessary pillar to support the achievement of the SDGs, especially for nations of the South. As a number of developing nations continue to emerge economically, they become engines of growth and development, which in turn drive development.

The late 20th and 21st centuries have been characterised by the steady rise of Asia; this has impacted the world in numerous ways. Transnational relationships and new flows of finance, trade, technology, information, energy and labour have created multiple geopolitical formations, which are reshaping the world as we know it. Interestingly, all of these developments are taking us to a pre-colonial era. The decolonising of history, trade and even geopolitical maps that reflect the historic, age-old and natural trade route that range from the Silk Road to the Spice Route, the Trans Saharan Route in Africa and increasingly the strategic placement of the Indian Ocean as an enabler of trade and commerce for centuries are again coming to the fore.

There are usually two disciplines that have traditionally fed our perceptions of interstate relations; we can either look at interstate relations as either economic or political. The idea of a complex and multidisciplinary world order to explain our current context is probably a more accurate tool. When we examine events in this way, the zero sum logic is easily displaced by an interests-driven mutually beneficial logic that plays out as states strive to maintain equilibrium between political, security and economic realities, at any given time.

It is estimated that China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is likely to boost world gross domestic product (GDP) by US\$7.1 trillion per annum by 2040. This raises world GDP by 4.2% of likely GDP in 2040 (or 8.3% of GDP in 2019). The benefits of the BRI ensure that as many as 56 different countries are forecast to have their annual GDP in 2040 boosted by more than US\$10 billion as a result of the project. China is Africa's largest trade partner, with Sino-African trade topping US\$200 billion per year. Over 10 000 Chinese-owned firms are currently operating throughout the African continent, and the value of Chinese business since 2005 amounts to more than US\$2 trillion, with US\$300 billion in investment currently on the table. Africa has surpassed Asia as the largest market for China's overseas construction contracts.

Chinese President Xi Jinping and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa co-chaired the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in September 2020. The summit drew representation from a large number of heads of state and delegations of other African states. The summit announced a US\$60-billion African aid package, further strengthening Africa's very crucial economic ties and friendship with China.

Similarly, India's development partnership in Africa has acquired new energised momentum in recent years. Historically, India has developed a close partnership with African counterparts through its bilateral, regional and multilateral initiatives. Japan, on the other hand, has been engaged in various development projects in Africa as part of its Official Development Assistance, including the Tokyo International Conference on African Development.

Both India and Japan's development cooperation with Africa aligns with Agenda 2063, which aims to accelerate Africa's economic growth. Among those key areas of cooperation that Japan and India currently focus on in the framework of the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor are education, human resource development and skills enhancement, agriculture, infrastructure, information technology and health. This denotes that there are many parallels between India and Japan's approach towards establishing strong connection with African countries. Both India and Japan have also been forging strong development cooperation connections with African countries.

In July 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Ugandan Parliament during his visit. He outlined a vision for both bilateral and multilateral partnerships through “10 guiding principles for India-Africa engagement”. This came as a welcome development for Africa, as India had not articulated a clear vision or strategy for Africa until the IAFS 2015 and the announcement of the Guiding Principles for India-Africa engagement in 2018.

What is clear is that in order for these objectives to be realised through China, Japan, India or any other international partnership, reliant and durable infrastructure is crucial.

### **SDG 9: In a World Order dominated by Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity (VUCA)**

I must first point out that the world has always endured uncertainty and complexity. The initial spread of the COVID-19 virus was rapid, resulting in a threat of collapse for the current global architecture with states closing borders, restricting travel and confining citizens to their homes, at least during the hard lockdown. By October 2020, the world counted over 40 million cases, and 1.16 million deaths. The virus has dictated the way in which we live our lives and the methods we use to organise our communities, families, education, work and our most basic daily routines. The logistics and tourism sectors are critical job creators among developing nations. This sector has been hard hit as it is dependent on strong networks and connections. Future planning will require a more detailed look at risk mitigation. If we had to take an objective and scientific approach to analysing the current state of VUCA, we would understand that there has never been a decade that the world has not known this. However, what varies is the level of intensity and the response of the international community to a crisis.

In a recent Deloitte article, “Connectivity Resilience in a VUCA World – Enhancing Communication Infrastructure Amidst COVID-19”, the VUCA notion emerges as a means to describe the current environment in which the world is trying to recommit to rebuild our severely injured economies. This acronym captures the stark reality of these challenging, complex but also exciting times riddled with change and transformation globally. Connectivity and infrastructure development are central to the global development agenda and global development as supported by the report of the G20 Global Infrastructure Outlook,

forecasting infrastructure investment needs and gaps. The G20 report suggests that countries worldwide are on the verge of launching the biggest round of infrastructure investment since the post-2008 financial crisis and the stimulus measures adopted in the successive years. Improving global connectivity is fundamental, and modelling this connectivity as a public good is vital. In October 2020, President Ramaphosa announced the South African Economic Recovery Plan where he stated that infrastructure would be the “linchpin of South Africa’s economic reconstruction and recovery plan, aimed at helping South Africa come back from the devastation wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic.” President Ramaphosa announced that “a “huge” build programme was aimed at unlocking more than R1 trillion in infrastructure investment over the next four years, and would be one leg in the broader package that the State hoped would raise growth to about 3% on average over the coming decade.

### **Africa, Connectivity and the Pandemic: Agenda 2063 and the SDG 9**

The African Union’s (AU) Agenda 2063, “The Africa We Want”, is our initial reference point when defining Africa. Agenda 2063’s seven aspirations were launched at the AU’s 50th anniversary celebration in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in May 2013. In terms of the plan, African leaders made a pledge to accelerate growth, development and prosperity on the continent going forward to 2063.

Africa’s population of nearly 1.3 billion and growing, with people distributed through all 55 AU member states is indicative of Africa’s current position as being poised for growth and development.

Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, is expected to reach a GDP of US\$29 trillion by 2050, however, the further development of our economies is hampered by a lack of industrial capacity as well as massive infrastructure backlogs. The potential to be unleashed through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement will create the largest free trade area in the world. The AfCFTA connects 1.3 billion people across 55 countries with a combined GDP valued at US\$3.4 trillion. It is expected to lift 30 million people out of extreme poverty. However, realising its full potential will depend on a number of significant policy measures to ensure trade facilitation. Foremost will be the ability to boost intra-regional trade supported by a resilient and reliable infrastructure network to ensure connectivity.

Africa’s developmental vulnerabilities have been exposed by the economic crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the nature of any kind

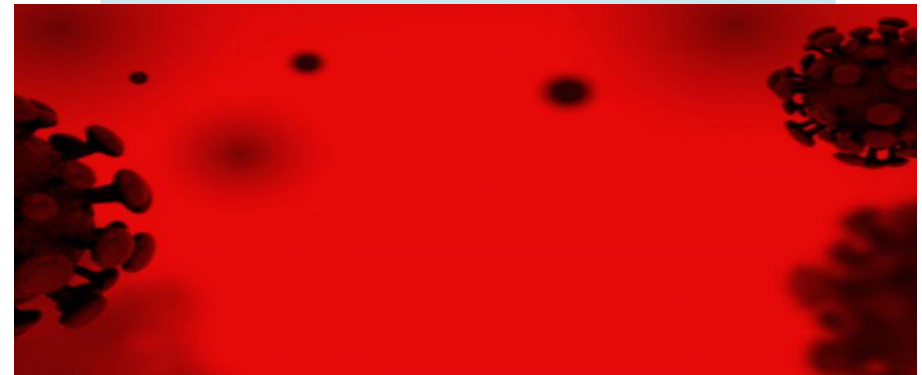
kind of crisis is such that where there is destruction there is creation.

For Africa in particular, investment in technologically advanced, resilient and sustainable infrastructure will have a significantly positive impact on development and growth, thereby allowing for improved economic activity in the future. On a global scale, it is reported that low- and middle-income countries alone could see a net benefit of US\$4.2 trillion from investing in infrastructure that prioritises future-focussed resiliency. Integrating new technologies during the design, construction and operational phase of an infrastructure asset can significantly lower the cost while improving the functionality.

Artificial intelligence (AI), analytics, fintech, cloud computing, 5G, new materials, renewable energy technology and 3D printing are just a few of the innovations changing the global infrastructure landscape. When used, they can decrease project cost, compress construction time, reduce community disruption, minimise environmental harm and increase safety. Future planning on infrastructure should start incorporating such tech advances to prevent falling back.

The pandemic has disrupted the way in which we communicate and connect ourselves physically and virtually to the world. According to Deloitte, the communications technology industry has been confronted with unprecedented global demand, and this has concentrated demand on the need for fast, efficient communications and hence data. The battle against COVID-19 has exposed the inherent vulnerability of countries that do not have the infrastructure for widespread digital connectivity.

In sub-Saharan Africa, it is estimated that 60% of the population remains out of reach of 4G networks. In many parts of the world, mainly in Africa, Asia and Latin America, limited access remains the norm



and perpetuated by both financial and regulatory challenges. Reducing and relaxing of Internet costs, using technology such as balloons, drones or other mechanisms to create hotspots and open up much-needed spectrum to ensure faster and more efficient, reliable and affordable, communication are examples of policy interventions that have helped to alleviate some of the burden. As the crisis continues, and as pandemics of this kind become more common, some countries will be left behind. For a start, being able to deploy digital healthcare solutions for detecting COVID-19 can save lives, and this will also be important to protect countries against future pandemics.

### **Conclusion**

The COVID-19 pandemic presents us with a unique global challenge; the very foundations of a humane, interdependent world order seems to be threatened by an increasing trend toward unilateralism and the undermining of multilateral structures. The United Nations, the World Trade Organisation and the global financial and political architecture may well be experiencing the opportune moment in history where we can drive a new version of humanity in a relevant global architecture. Connectivity is directly linked to SDG 9 and this must be treated as such by all states.

Every thought leader has been clear, the world is due for a reset, we can no longer continue on the tradition of growth-led economic models. The time for a rethink is upon us and we should choose the path that serves the interests of humanity and not just growth.

Education, health, tourism, commerce, development and many other important sectors cannot be the victims of weak connectivity - the human cost will be devastating. The COVID pandemic has indeed given us a disaster, the question is how do we respond to that disaster?

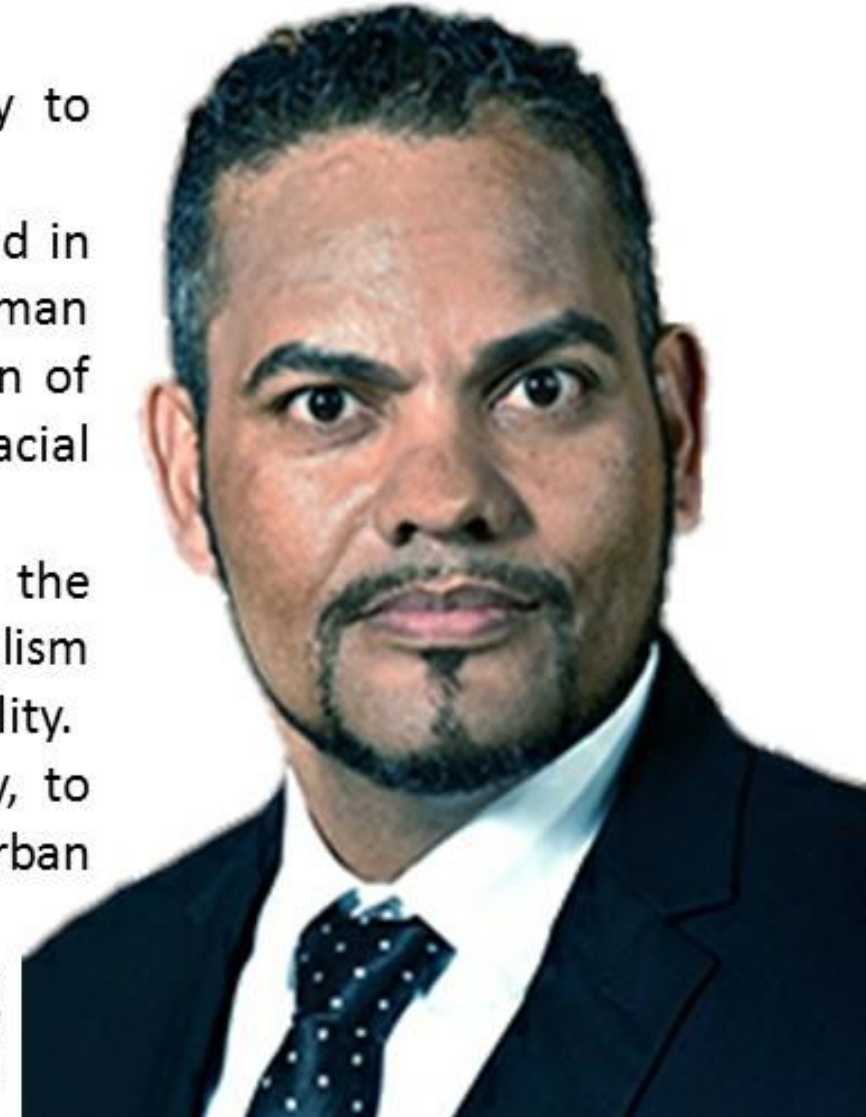
## Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

- 9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and trans-border infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all
- 9.2 Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and by 2030 raise significantly industry's share of employment and GDP in line with national circumstances, and double its share in LDCs
- 9.3 Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, particularly in developing countries, to financial services including affordable credit and their integration into value chains and markets
- 9.4 By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities
- 9.5 Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, particularly developing countries, including by 2030 encouraging innovation and increasing the number of R&D workers per one million people by x% and public and private R&D spending
- 9.6 Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS
- 9.7 Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for inter alia industrial diversification and value addition to commodities
- 9.8 Significantly increase access to ICT and strive to provide universal and affordable access to internet in LDCs by 2020



# The High-Level segment of the 46th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC 46)

- The achievement of peace and stability in the Middle East, through a negotiated settlement between the Palestinians and Israelis is key.
- The fact that Palestinians, should also be allowed the opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination.
- The need of our commitment to the purpose and principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, whilst working towards the universal accession and ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).
- The contribution to humanity's collective response in confronting the myriad global challenges, through a firm commitment to multilateralism and promoting human rights, women's empowerment and gender equality.
- South Africa welcomes the decision taken by the General Assembly, to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA).



**Mr. Alvin Botes**

*Deputy Minister of International Relations and  
Cooperation*



# African Union



# MISSION ACCOMPLISHED



## Ambassador Ebrahim Saley's interview with Petra News Agency on the occasion of the 21 January 2021 centenary celebrations of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

South Africa and Jordan have significant levels of cooperation in the defence sector whereby the joint venture for the production of some military equipment in Jordan seems to be successful and ongoing. A notable feature of inward investment for Jordan is often driven by naturalised South Africans of Jordanian origin. A number of these South African Jordanians, who have established successful businesses in South Africa, return to Jordan as investors in the Jordanian economy.

**Q: What about cultural, scientific and tourism cooperation between Jordan and your country?**

**A:** As I said earlier, one of the key indicators of the close bilateral relationship is the freedom to travel between countries. In the case of South Africa and Jordan, there are no restrictions between the two countries. Just as South Africans are issued visas on arrival in Jordan so too are Jordanian nationals free to travel to South Africa without visa formalities prior to their departure – a 30-day visitor's visa is issued on arrival in South Africa as is the case for South Africans arriving in Jordan. I think that this positive factor needs to be developed further by both countries in seeking opportunities in their respective countries. Certainly, in the important tourism sector, which for both our countries is a key priority, much more can be done. South Africans are not fully aware of the historical and religious significance of Jordan's many touristic sites. Similarly, Jordanians need to be encouraged to visit South Africa for the accessible natural beauty and biodiversity that it has to offer.

South Africa was, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, attracting increasingly greater numbers of visitors, specifically for the well-developed niche sector of eco-tourism. I have met numerous Jordanian youth who had undertaken training in this niche market of tourism in South Africa.

As we begin to look at the light at the end of the Corona pandemic tunnel, I am very optimistic that eco-tourism can be an area for greater cooperation given the spectacular natural features in Jordan that undoubtedly can attract greater numbers of international travellers to Jordan.

Although there are as yet no direct air links to South Africa, it is not that difficult to fly to South Africa using the many transit routes via Egypt, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Turkey. While South Africa and Jordan have complementary seasons for tourism (i.e., summer in South Africa is winter in Jordan and vice versa), there is no time difference between our two countries - travelling north-south or the other way round is less disruptive to the body. It should also be noted that South Africa is regarded as a highly rated destination with respect to quality accommodation, food and access to pristine natural environments and wildlife.

Another of the attractive features about South Africa is the diversity of its people. The multi-cultural diversity of the South African population was stunted by the racist system of apartheid for many years. However, the first truly free democratic election of 1994 has allowed this diversity to flourish, resulting in a burst of creativity and excellence in the arts, music, sports, science and technology.

**Q: The Palestinian issue is the central issue in the region. What is your position on it, the Jordanian role in restoring momentum and focus on this issue and the Hashemite guardianship of the holy sites in Jerusalem?**

**A:** The position of South Africa on Palestine is well known and consistent with international legality as provided for in the applicable United Nations (UN) resolutions on Palestine. South Africa supports the two states solution within the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian State. South Africa has a fully accredited Ambassador from Palestine based in Pretoria and has an embassy in Ramallah



**Q: How do you view the Jordanian humanitarian role in receiving and sheltering refugees and providing them with different services: health, education and other fields, also the burden that Jordan bears in this aspect and the importance of international support for it?**

**A:** In an ideal world, there should not be any refugees in the 21st century. Unfortunately, conflict in many parts of the world, particularly in the Middle East, is a reality and refugees are one of the tragic outcomes. Jordan has stepped up to its humanitarian responsibilities and is hosting refugees from many parts of the region and beyond. According to the UN High Commission for Refugees, there were close to 750 000 documented refugees in Jordan. This obligation does place an enormous burden on any country, let alone a relatively small country like Jordan with limited resources.

In South Africa, we are also confronted with a similar obligation due to the various conflicts on the African continent and elsewhere. This is not an easy task even for South Africa where the backlog of domestic needs are often equally or more pressing than that of the asylum seekers. The Hashemite Kingdom should be commended for announcing that the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines, as of 13 January, will include the refugees in the Kingdom. This gesture of human solidarity should be an example to countries where "vaccine hoarding" is rearing its myopic head. The COVID-19 pandemic can only be overcome through the wise leadership like that exercised by Jordan.

The international community has a duty to step up and assist countries like Jordan and South Africa in dealing with this obligation. We also have to increase the global efforts to resolve the problems that are responsible for the displacement of the many millions of people all over the world by redoubling efforts to end conflicts. Conflicts, civil strife and wars must give way to diplomacy, moderation and dialogue. South Africa remains firm in the belief that military solutions do not solve problems. On the contrary, military options tend to always spiral into cycles of violence, death and destruction with the concomitant destruction of lives and livelihoods forcing people to seek refuge across borders.

As pointed out above, South Africa puts a lot of weight on multilateralism, international legality, and a rules-based international order. It is therefore consistent with the Hashemite Kingdom's undertaking to act as custodians of the Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. His Majesty's King Abdullah's efforts to preserve and maintain the holy sites under his custodianship is well appreciated.

**Q: How do you see Jordan's participation in the international peacekeeping forces, and the significance of that in strengthening international peace and security?**

## Jordan celebrates its centenary, the 100th anniversary of its independence, and the two decades of King Abdullah's reign

**A:** The Jordanian armed security forces have an excellent reputation of professionalism. Presently, Jordan contributes several hundred personnel in various capacities in peacekeeping missions worldwide. However, I wish to commend Jordan specifically for the inclusion of women in UN peacekeeping mission. I believe that women peacekeepers can play a vital complementary role to the growing call for women mediators when it comes to resolving conflicts. In most conflicts, it's the civilian population, especially women and children, that are most affected. In South Africa, the role of women in peace is gaining ground as government provides training to women in conflict mediation.

**Q: Is there any cooperation between the two countries in combatting terrorism ... and how do you see Jordan's role in this field, especially His Majesty King Abdullah II's initiative represented by the Aqaba meetings and Jordan's participation in the international coalition against the terrorist ISIS gang?**

**A:** His Majesty King Abdullah II, as the initiator of the Aqaba Process, through a globally coordinated "holistic" approach to the scourge of "terrorism", has made a profound contribution towards making the world a safer place. The phenomenon of violent extremism is a threat to all regions in the world and there isn't any country, regardless of strength, development, size, wealth, military might or form of government, that can claim to be immune from violent extremism and "terrorism". I am glad to say that South Africa is a participant in the Aqaba Process rounds of discussion and looks forward to the next round of meetings. In the African context, the Aqaba Process becomes a high priority for the continent.

**Q. How do you view Jordan's foreign policy during the era of His Majesty King Abdullah II and its implications for the relations and partnership between Jordan and your country?**

**A:** Since the founding of Jordan in April 1921, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has progressed from achieving full independence to becoming a regional oasis of stability and peace in the Levant.

Despite the various challenges that the Hashemite Kingdom has faced since independence, Jordanians can feel proud to have achieved a high level of stability and progress that, in no small measure, can be attributed to the wise leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah II and his forebears. Similarly, the Republic of South Africa gained its liberation from apartheid in April 1994 to become the non-racial, non-sexist "new" South Africa. It was in the same year, 1994, that South Africa and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan opened their respective embassies in their capitals of Pretoria and Amman. In the nearly three decades of diplomatic relations, South Africa and Jordan have developed a relationship that continues to strengthen and deepen each successive year. South Africa sees the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan as a friendly country that espouses the principles of moderation, tolerance, stability and development due largely to the efforts of its leadership. His Majesty King Abdullah II has continued to steer Jordan on the course set by his late father, King Hussein (may Allah have mercy on his soul), who was renowned for his wise stewardship of the Kingdom during turbulent times in the region. King Abdullah's progressive path is very familiar to the leadership in South Africa as we try to overcome our unfortunate 300 years long legacy of colonisation and institutionalised racism under apartheid. Despite South Africa's liberation in 1994, the struggle against poverty, inequality and underdevelopment still continues.

**Q: How do you see Jordan's role under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah II and his efforts at various levels to achieve peace and stability in the region and the world?**

**A:** His Majesty King Abdullah II is internationally respected and highly regarded for his tireless efforts to promote peace and dialogue in a world rife with tensions, insecurity and conflict. The message that His Majesty conveyed to the UN General Assembly, calling for a truly global, inclusive system that leaves nobody behind, is the same message that His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa continues to advocate inside South Africa and internationally.



The promotion of "a better South Africa in a better Africa for a better World" is the core value embedded in South Africa's foreign policy.

**Q: How do you view the importance of visits at the leadership level of the two countries to enhance bilateral and international relations and cooperation?**

**A:** The exchange of high-level visits has traditionally symbolised the expression of importance and high regard between nations. In 1996, late King Hussein paid an official State Visit to South Africa and was received by late President Nelson Mandela. In October 1999, the late President Mandela visited the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. President Mandela was received by His Majesty King Abdullah II after the tragic demise of his late father King Hussein (may his soul rest in peace) earlier the same year. That visit sealed the importance of the Hashemite Kingdom and its people to the sisterly "newly" liberated South Africa. His Majesty King Abdullah II visited South Africa in 2005 during which Palestine and expanding trade relations were discussed. One of the great achievements resulting from that has endured until today: the ease of movement of Jordanians and South Africans for business and tourism purposes without having to apply for a visa prior to departure for entry into either country for a period of 30 days.

Last year, the newly appointed South African Deputy Minister, Her Excellency Candith Mashego-Dlamini, was in the final stages of preparation for officially visiting Jordan to, among other things, sign the Agreement on Diplomatic Consultations

Unfortunately, the visit had to be postponed in view of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is a great pity that these days official visits are becoming more difficult to undertake as we continue to collectively battle the scourge of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we should look for alternative means to showcase the strength of our bilateral relations. Perhaps technology could help bridge the temporary hurdle but I am confident that our diplomatic work will continue soon in the familiar traditional manner that we have come to know prior to the pandemic. In sha Allah.

**Q:** What about coordination and consultation between the two countries on bilateral issues and issues of common interest? Is there congruence on the visions? Do the two countries support each other in international forums?

**A:** Both South Africa and the Hashemite Kingdom have always sought common purpose on the international stage. The process of coordination and consultation has become routine. Mutual positions are regularly reinforced whether through multilateral congruence or speaking out in solidarity on a number of issues, be it climate change or human rights. South-South cooperation remains one of the cornerstones of South Africa's Foreign Policy. It is in the collective interest of the global South that we all strive for a rules-based global order. In that respect, it is vitally important for Jordan and South Africa to call for the necessary reforms of the UN and its institutions to ensure a much more equitable and representative international order than what it has been since it came into existence in October 1947.

It is also in accordance with the terms of the Wadi Araba Peace Agreements of 1994, specifically Article 9,

that the State of Israel commits fully with this Peace Treaty between Jordan and Israel.

**Q: *hat about economic and trade cooperation, what is the volume of trade exchange between the two countries, the major exports and imports and the possibility of increasing cooperation in this aspect?***

**A:** The potential for bilateral trade between South Africa and the Hashemite Kingdom is high even though the actual trade exchanges are significantly modest. There is a vast range of products that were traded in 2019 that accounted for just under R1 billion (not including the defence sector). Apart from the well-regarded South African meat and foodstuff in the Jordanian market, I was pleasantly surprised to have met a young entrepreneurial couple who informed me that they wished to start up their own exotic bird breeding facility in South Africa. They informed me that they had been importing hand-reared parrot and other exotic birds from South African breeders to the value of hundred and twenty thousand Jordanian dinars monthly. The birds arrive in Jordan fully CITES-certified and are then mostly re-exported to countries in the region. I mention this example to highlight the inexhaustible number of possibilities that exist for entrepreneurship in both countries.

**Q: *Are there any investments between the two countries, what is the size of these investments and in which sectors mainly?***

**A:** There are numerous instances of cooperation between the business sectors in the two countries. As Africans aspire to “silence the guns” that have raged at the hands of violent extremists of every persuasion, the Aqaba Process is a brilliant initiative that goes much further than simply a military solution. Not only has the Jordanian initiative been timeous and relevant in dealing with neutralising terrorist groups conventionally, but it also seeks to find alternate solutions to the myriad of reasons that contribute to the radicalisation and extremism of individuals. Combatting all forms of violent extremists is a priority for all peace-loving nations of the world.

**Q: *The Developments of the situation in the region, especially in the Syrian arena?***

**A:** South Africa has close and friendly diplomatic relations with Syria. Throughout the conflict, the South African Embassy remained functional. South Africa believes that it is only the Syrian people that can resolve the problems of Syria.

In our own experience, South Africa at a time was confronted with the terrifying prospect of a civil conflict that many believed would be a blood-bath. Despite the bitter racially polarised internal situation in the country, South Africans were able to step back from the bloody prospect of a racial war due to the foresight of the leadership who opted to enter into a national dialogue rather than descend into the abyss of violence.

South Africa has stated on numerous occasions that the policy of “regime change” anywhere, as proposed by some foreign powers, can achieve nothing except more regional instability, death and destruction.

In Syria’s case, more than 10 years of severe violence have only achieved greater misery for the people of Syria and an intractable conflict that negatively affects regional peace and security.

Countries like the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which shares a border with Syria, has to contend with the security fall-out and the loss of revenue that should naturally result in cross-border trade. Instead, there is the burden of Syrian refugees and the disruption of trade and commerce because of the sanctions. I have read a UN study on the estimated economical cost to a country, if its immediate neighbour was experiencing internal conflict. The estimated figure given is in the tens of billions of dollars. I believe that this is no exaggeration when one stops to think of the loss of opportunities for Jordan due to the prolonged conflict in Syria and even the ongoing crisis in Iraq. Peace in Syria is important just as it is in the region’s interest to end the conflicts in Libya and Yemen; the crisis in Lebanon and Iraq; and the ongoing occupation of Palestine. In this regard, South Africa is willing to contribute the experiences of its own example in bringing about a peaceful transition as it was done from apartheid to the new, non-racial, non-sexist free South Africa, through national dialogue.

**Q: *Your Excellency, what do you like to add?***

**A:** Thank you for giving me this opportunity. We have covered a lot of ground in this interview. There is of course much more that we can talk about.

The one thing I would like to end with is my wish to reiterate my heartfelt congratulations to His Majesty King Abdullah II, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hussein and the other members of the Hashemite Royal Family, the Hashemite Royal Court,

and the Government and People of Jordan for the upcoming celebration of 100 years of the founding of the Hashemite Kingdom. Please accept my country’s highest regard and profound respect for all the achievements Jordan has achieved in the last 100 years. His Majesty’s vision for the future is on course and will lead the Kingdom and its people to greater progress, prosperity, well-being and safety. May the Almighty guide His Majesty in his noble endeavour. God bless Jordan.

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**IT'S  
YOUR VOICE**

# Voices from DIRCO

## Ambassador Beryl Rose Sisulu on the remembrance of the "7<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Former President Nelson Mandela's Death

Seven years ago, on 5 December 2013, Nelson Mandela passed away. An iconic figure in the struggle to eliminate inequalities and discrimination, imprisoned for 27 years before becoming South Africa's first black President in the first racially segregated elections, Nelson Mandela has a special place in 20th century history as a fighter against the last racist regime in the Western world.

He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993, along with then-President FW de Klerk. In the following year's election, the African National Congress won by an absolute majority, and on 9 May 1994, Mandela was elected South Africa's first President by the new Parliament.

After the end of his term in 1999, he took part as a mediator in various peace negotiations in Africa. Eventually, he was permanently withdrawn from the public in 2004 due to health problems. His public appearances became fewer and fewer.

The journalists of Athens Municipality Radio Station, Athena Korlira and Alexandra Voudouri, in the show "Round the World in 1 hour" talked with the Ambassador of South Africa to Athens, Mrs Beryl Rose Sisulu, who also maintained family ties with the Mandela family.

**Q: How important is the legacy that Nelson Mandela left in his homeland and in the rest of the world?**

**A:** Nelson Mandela's legacy will live on in our memory forever. It is now part of our history, but for me, a South African, the mention of Nelson Mandela's name reminds me of "the dawn of our democracy" in 1994. Mandela remains an idol for the world. He is considered the man who took South Africa out of apartheid, although he always stressed that he did not succeed alone. We knew that many concessions had to be made in order to achieve democracy. People admire South Africa, which transitioned to a peaceful democracy in 1994, with Mandela and his South African supporters, as well as Walter Sisulu, who happened to be my father, and many others.

**Q: Your father, Walter Sisulu, was in the same prison as Nelson Mandela. Do you want to share this personal experience with us?**

**A:** My father spent 26 years in prison. He was arrested along with his team and initially sentenced to life in prison. But he was finally released after 26 years, on 15 October 1989, and Mandela shortly after, on 11 February 1990. These men spent almost all their lives in prison. Mandela's first wife, Evelyn, was also my father's first cousin. I grew up with the Mandela family and my parents.

**Q: How is Mandela's memory kept "alive" in South Africa, in what ways?**

**A:** His memory will always be alive for many years to come, although many South Africans still do not enjoy democracy, we still have a long way to go. Mandela's legacy is alive not only in South Africa but also in the rest of the world. The United Nations honoured Mandela in 2009, designating Mandela's birthday, 18 July, as Nelson Mandela International Day. Every year with 67 minutes of silence we honour the 67 years that Nelson Mandela was the leader of our country.

Statues of Mandela can be found in many parts of the world, such as at the Union Building in Pretoria, which is 9 metres high. In South Africa, we have given his name to streets, public buildings, so yes, his heritage is alive in many ways. It is ideal, for example, in the case of South Africans who have not yet felt that we are a democracy and in cases where the previous government has left an indelible mark on the lives of some black people in South Africa. Many still face inequalities. South Africa is still one of the leading countries in the world. We know that apartheid divided the country according to race, education, money, etc. So it is still difficult for us all to coexist, we have a way to go.

**Q: How would you describe South Africa's relations with Greece and how can they be further improved?**



**A:** Greece has historical ties with many countries of the African Union, including South Africa. The presence of many Greek people in the Diaspora in South Africa led to the establishment of diplomatic relations and are currently at the best level.

South Africa, at the beginning of the 20th century, was the largest immigrant centre of the time. There is an agreement between Greece and South Africa on a cultural level as well. I mention this specifically because I personally find many cultural similarities between the two countries, such as the culture of the Greeks who sing and dance; something that is common in the culture of South Africa and Africa in general.

I find Greek people very hospitable and this reminds me of the people of South Africa and their habit of Ubuntu, which means "hospitality", so I find many similarities with the Greeks. Unfortunately, 2020 was a year with many challenges due to the Coronavirus, but the close ties between Greece and South Africa will always be maintained, as the ties between the two peoples are historic and we will always look for ways to expand them. But I would especially like to mention that Mandela's lawyer, George Bizos, was also Greek and I knew him personally, so, I have many wonderful stories about Greek people in South Africa.



The South African Ambassador to Belgium, H.E Thokozile Xasa seeing off the crew and second batch of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The second batch arrived on Saturday morning, 27 February 2021 at OR Tambo International Airport.

**STAY  
SAFE**

**PROTECT SOUTH AFRICA**

TOGETHER WE CAN BEAT CORONAVIRUS

## **Nurse Zoliswa Gidi-Dyosi** is the first healthcare worker to receive the Coronavirus vaccine in South Africa



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# RESILIENCE

By: Ncedisa Mayeko  
Employee Health and Wellness

The COVID-19 pandemic brought significant changes and challenges in our lives. Travel, worship, exercise, education, hygiene and etiquette, are just some of the activities that we may have taken for granted before. Circumstances have forced us to knowingly and unknowingly adjust. As governments continue to navigate the lockdown conditions, DIRCO's Employee Health and Wellness (EHW) would like to share information on resilience in an attempt to equip you with the necessary skills to cope with the many challenges of the extraordinary times within which we find ourselves.

Resilience is "the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress" according to the American Psychological Association.

## Characteristics of resilient people:

- Internal locus of control (the extent to which an individual believes he or she has control of what happens in his or her life over external factors).
- Emotional Intelligence (the ability to recognise and understand one's own emotions and the emotions of others).
- Mindfulness (the extent to which an individual allows oneself to fully experience the moment).
- Confidence in one's own skills and abilities.
- The ability to take the time for self-care.
- Having a strong social support system.

## Building personal resilience

- Be cognisant of your strengths and weaknesses.
- Learn to reframe your negative thoughts to positive ones.
- Accept change as part of positive living.
- Build strong social networks.
- Ask for help from family, friends, colleagues and professionals when in need.
- Work toward unwavering belief in yourself.
- Take care of yourself.

## Resilience during COVID-19

- Understand that COVID-19 may not be permanent.
- Follow all the COVID-19 health protocols.
- Characterise yourself as a potential survivor and not a victim of COVID-19.
- Believe in yourself.
- Develop a strong sense of self-control.
- Learn to become independent



INVEST IN YOUR WELLBEING

Developing resilience to cope  
with work and life issues



- Use your support structure to prevent crises and also when things go wrong.
- Connect with your mentors, role models and coaches for guidance.
- Prioritise taking care of yourself. Self-care and resilience are entangled.

## Attaining resilience through self-care

Through resilience, we find our ability to renounce life's challenges. Self-care is a set of tools that we utilise to master life's difficult challenges. The World Health Organisation defines self-care as "the ability of individuals, families and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and to cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a healthcare provider".

## Employees working remotely

- Let go of any feelings of guilt regarding working remotely.
- Establish strong communication with your colleagues at the office.
- Establish a routine and stick to it (working times, lunch and knock-off times).
- Whenever possible, create permanent work space for yourself in the house.

## All employees

- Personal (goal setting, hobbies, mindfulness, etc.)
- Space (hygiene, safety, etc.)
- Financial (budgeting, paying debt, etc.)
- Work (time management, meeting deadlines, non-toxic work environment, etc.)
- Social (support system, family, healthy boundaries)
- Physical (exercise, healthy eating habits, prevention and management of disease)
- Spiritual (prayer, meditation).

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken so much from many of us. While the techniques mentioned above may be helpful for many, it is possible that you may find that even after attempts to take care of yourself you may continue to feel overwhelmed.

Please note that professional help is always available. EHW is available to render counselling, therapy, care and support to employees who need assistance.



## Information Security Tips for Remote Working

ONCE UPON A TIME, WORKING FROM HOME WAS A LUXURY. NOW, IT HAS BECOME A NECESSITY FOR EMPLOYEES TO LIMIT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19.

DURING THESE UNPRECEDENTED TIMES, YOU MAY START TO BE EXPOSED TO NEW FORMS OF CYBERSECURITY RISKS AS CRIMINALS ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION, WHILE YOU WORK FROM HOME. IT IS NOW MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER BEFORE THAT YOU START TO THINK ABOUT YOUR HOME OFFICE SECURITY.

WORKING FROM HOME PRESENTS A NUMBER OF SECURITY CHALLENGES YOU SHOULD BE AWARE OF. THE GOOD NEWS IS, BY FOLLOWING BEST PRACTICES FOR WORKING REMOTELY, MOST OF THESE THREATS CAN BE MITIGATED QUITE EASILY.

HERE ARE THE TOP FIVE THINGS YOU SHOULD BE AWARE OF TO ENSURE YOU ARE STICKING TO A SENSIBLE WORK FROM HOME SECURITY POLICY.

### BE CAUTIOUS WHEN CLICKING EMAIL LINKS AND ATTACHMENT

Emails remains number one attack vector by cybercriminals for the Department. We are seeing a sharp increase in phishing email (social engineering) related attacks. These attacks are aimed at luring the unsuspecting users mainly through embedded malicious email links or attachments.

The motive behind is to steal sensitive information such passwords, bank pins etc. These attacks are becoming sophisticated in scale and complexity. Therefore, we would like to sensitize our users to be cautious with suspicious emails. If you are unsure, please contact ICT.

### INVEST IN COMPREHENSIVE ANTIVIRUS SOFTWARE (WHEN USING PERSONAL DEVICES)

Antivirus suites takes the hard work off your hands by offering automatic remote working security against a host of threats, e.g. ransomware attacks, DDoS attacks, malware, spyware and other types of breaches.

### KEEP FAMILY MEMBERS AWAY FROM WORK DEVICES

It is worth remembering that during these times official devices are more likely to be exposed to young children and other members of employee's families.

### BE AWARE OF VIDEOCONFERENCING SECURITY RISKS

As you may have heard that certain videoconferencing services have recently experienced security breaches. The popular videoconferencing platform Zoom has admitted that security flaws in its software are being urgently addressed, and the company's CEO has pooled all resources to concentrate on improving privacy and security. This is due to a spate of so-called "Zoom-bombing".

Where an uncited person gains access to another person's video conference and enters it to intimidate and harass the other user (this has already happened to a number of users). If you and your company are utilizing Zoom as you primary videoconferencing tool, be aware of these potential breaches. It is expected that officials should make use of MS Teams for official meetings and engagements.

### MAKE SURE YOUR PASSWORDS ARE STRONG AND SECURE

One of the simplest but often most overlooked ways to protect yourself when working from home is to strengthen your passwords and ensure that you have maximized password protection across your devices.

- Use passwords on all your devices and apps.
- Make sure the passwords are long, strong and unique: at least 12 characters that are a mix of numbers, symbols and capital and lowercase letters."
- Avoid using the same password for different (work and personal) accounts.
- Ensure passwords are changed regularly at least once a month. It is also recommended to add a password screen every time you access your laptop and other devices, so that if your device is breached or falls into the wrong hands, it will be harder for a third-party to access your sensitive files.
- Where possible, users are encouraged to use two factor authentication when logging onto the devices or accessing sensitive information in their devices. Two factor authentication can be a combination of password/passcode and either fingerprint/ facial recognition/ One Time Pin (OTP), etc.



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Paulus, Lerato, Louis, Zithulele, Mn  
Dimpho, Thabane, Tafazhi  
Thanyani, Muzi, Kg  
Tumelo,  
Bal  
wani, Derr  
Gab  
Lw  
Melile, Lw  
Maanda, Xol  
Flo  
Mediso, Thobile, Susan, Khathu, Goitsemedi



## #We RememberSA

## In memory of our colleagues who passed on during the lockdown.

1. Mr Nkosinathi Michael Mlanga on 12 January 2021.
2. Ms Lillian Kekana on 14 January 2021.
3. Mr Amos Selaelo Ranoto on 20 January 2021.
4. Ms Pamela Mmathapelo Lebotse on 4 February 2021.
5. Ms Ntuthu Bawuti Masere on 5 February 2021.
6. Mr Mxolisi Mdletshe on 9 February 2021.



Robin, Makhadzi, Dan,  
Ipiwa, Duduzile, Sam,

#WeRememberSA



## TOP 10

## COVID-19

## Myths

1

**Myth: Vaccines are unsafe and normal safety protocols have been circumvented to fast track their authorisation for use**

**Fact:** The world was able to develop vaccines fast because scientists and governments around the world collaborated in a manner that has never been achieved before and pooled resources and information to ensure that everyone can contribute to the knowledge.

2

**Myth: The vaccine will change my DNA**

**Fact:** The vaccine does not work on the DNA of the body. Some people think that because some of the vaccines are made using RNA technology, that means the RNA will interact with the DNA. That is not how it works. The technology is simply the way the vaccine is made - not what it will do to the body.

3

**Myth: Vaccines contain a form of microchip that will be used to track and control an individual**

**Fact:** There is no vaccine "microchip" and there is no evidence to support claims that such a move is planned. Receiving a vaccine will not allow people to be tracked and personal information will not be entered into a database.

4

**Myth: Big businesses are pushing vaccines to improve profits**

**Fact:** The COVID-19 crisis has caused massive upheaval across the globe and no nation has been spared. A vaccine represents the best hope to save lives and to restore our way of life, many governments have therefore entered into direct talks with vaccine makers to ensure a timeous supply of vaccines.

5

**Myth: Government is complicit with big businesses in pushing vaccines despite the risks**

**Fact:** Government is committed to saving lives and livelihoods. The fastest way to return to our way of life is through ensuring that the majority of the population are protected from the virus. Vaccines are the simplest and most effective way to do this.

6

**Myth: The vaccines have the mark of the Beast – 666**

**Fact:** Vaccines have no connection with any religious organisations and cannot be infused with spirits, demons or other abstract ingredients.

7

**Myth: Why must bodies be wrapped in plastic bags?**

**Fact:** To ensure everyone's safety, the human remains of a person who has died from Coronavirus are considered contagious and should be kept only in designated mortuaries. Under no circumstances will the human remains be directly handled, whether for aesthetic, hygiene preparation, cultural or religious reasons.

8

**Myth: Does the long-term wearing of masks have any negative impact on one's health?**

**Fact:** Prolonged use of any mask has not been shown to cause carbon dioxide toxicity or lack of adequate oxygen in healthy people. Healthcare workers wear masks for prolonged periods while performing their duties. Wearing a mask reduces the risk that someone will be exposed to the virus.

9

**Myth: 5G networks cause the Coronavirus through radiation emissions.**

**Fact:** COVID-19 spreads through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or speaks. People can also be infected by touching a contaminated surface and then eyes, mouth or nose.

10

**Myth: Lockdown measures deprive people of their freedoms and are in keeping with an authoritarian regime.**

**Fact:** The current measures are temporary and have been enacted to protect our nation and people. Our freedoms will never be at risk and are protected by the Constitution, Bill of Rights and our commitment to the rule of law and democracy and freedom.

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