

SPECIAL WOMANDLA ISSUE

IT'S YOUR

VOICE

ubuntu diplomat

Internal Newsletter of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation



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Volume 7, 2017

EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor-In-Chief	Zengeziwe Msimang
Managing Editor	Mathapelo Monaisa
Editor	Kgopotso Rapakuana
Copy Editor	Delien Burger
Designer	Ithuteng Thonkha
Photographer	Jacoline Schoonees
Contributors	Missions across the world Tseliso Matlakeng
Publisher	The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) ©2016 Tel: +27 12 351 1000, www.dirco.gov.za Private Bag X152, PRETORIA, 0001 Republic of South Africa 460 Soutpansberg Road, Rietondale, Pretoria, 0084, Republic of South Africa

Editor's Letter

Dear Diplomats,



Welcome to Womandla!

Post the unbanning of political organisations in South Africa, the African National Congress Women's League held a conference on 9 August 1990 during which it was relaunched. South Africa's foremost diplomat, Oliver Reginald Tambo, sent a message to the rally that commended the women of South Africa for their incredible sacrifice and

commitment to the struggle: "The women of South Africa have played a vital part in the mass mobilisation, and in the armed struggle, which, together with the solidarity of the international community, made possible your meeting openly and 'legally' today. The struggle must now be taken forward to ensure that the gains which have been made lead to further advances.

Statements such as this bear testimony to his staunch advocacy for the emancipation of women. Tambo believed that a woman was not to be confined solely to the kitchen, but that we too, are effective enough to firmly stand together with the men at battle for the liberation of all South Africans.

As we commemorate this remarkable hero of South Africa, I would like to introduce you the Womandla issue of It's Your Voice. This volume is dedicated to all the women at DIRCO who work passionately towards the collective achievement of our objectives. There is no doubt that our female diplomats are extraordinary and do a sterling job of continually steering the department to greater heights. The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) boasts some of the most celebrated women in the country, who are featured

in the Womandla feature of this edition as they share their favourite moments and books that have made a significant difference in their careers. We salute them for their outstanding representation of our country.

Similarly, the Mediation Support Unit, the International School of the DIRCO Diplomatic Academy and the Chief Directorate: Transformation Programme and Organisational Development continued to advance women through a number of events hosted at the OR Tambo Building under the theme: "The Year of OR Tambo: Women United in Moving Africa Forward". These included a capacity-building programme during which women were armed with the rare skill of effective conflict resolution, a workshop on the Pan-African Women's Organisation and the third Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum.

DIRCO walks the talk as the spirit of Womandla is felt throughout the building; in all the branches. May we continue to ensure the sustained empowerment of women across the department. May we endeavour to deliver on OR Tambo's ideals of all people, men and women, regardless of race, being treated with respect and dignity.

Womandla! 🌍

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Retirement of Ms Maggie Majiza

On 29 October 1986, Maggie Majiza started working in the then Department of Foreign Affairs at the age of 33 years as a tea lady. She was placed in the Minister's Office at the Union Buildings.

In 1996, Maggie started with ABET classes that were introduced in the department through the Employee Wellness Centre.

She was able to read, write and speak English after attending these classes. Maggie successfully completed ABET Level 4 and was the best student in her class. Maggie was also exposed to sewing classes through

the assistance of the department. Later, she was admitted to computer training.

When the department moved into the new OR Tambo Building, Maggie was absorbed in the Diplomatic Bag Section. She is proud to have been provided with training on the work operations of diplomatic bags. She is also happy that she is now a Security Officer within the Diplomatic Bag Section. Maggie would like to thank the department, but would like to single out Ambassador Billy Modise, former Chief of State Protocol, for motivating her to study further. Her farewell was held on 31 August 2017. 🌍



FACT: 80% OF WORLD TRADE IS TRANSPORTED VIA OUR OCEANS



DIRCO THE YEAR OF OR TAMBO: WOMEN UNITED IN MOVING AFRICA FORWARD

The Mediation Support Unit (MSU), the International School of the DIRCO Diplomatic Academy and the Chief Directorate: Transformation Programme and Organisational Development hosted three important events during July and August 2017. Theme "The Year of OR Tambo: Women United in Moving Africa Forward", these events included a Capacity-Building Programme, a Workshop on the Pan-African Women's Organisation (PAWO) and the third Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum.

The Capacity-Building Programme on Conflict Resolution, Negotiation and Mediation was hosted from 28 July to 1 August 2017. Thirty-three female participants from all nine provinces, including representatives from organisations such as the South African Youth Council, provincial legislators, city metros, Progressive Women Movement South Africa and the Civilian Secretariat for Police. The main objectives of the Capacity-Building Programme were to ensure that the knowledge and expertise of the MSU and the International School of the DIRCO Diplomatic Academy, which have been shared with international diplomats through training and capacity-building programmes, are also transferred to South Africans in communities confronted with situations where conflict resolution, negotiations and mediation skills are required. In addition, South Africa is also delivering on its international commitments under the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325, which in 2000, formally acknowledged the changing nature of warfare, in which civilians are increasingly targeted, and women continue to be excluded from participation in peace processes.

UNSCR 1325 also addresses not only the inordinate impact of war on women, but also the pivotal role women should and do play in conflict management, conflict resolution and sustainable peace. Resolution 1325 calls for increased participation of women at all levels of decision-making, including in national, regional and international institutions; in mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict; in peace negotiations; in peace operations, as soldiers, police and civilians; and as special representatives of the UN Secretary-General. By providing women with the requisite training and capacity-building, the excuse that there are no trained or experienced women available, is being addressed.

On 31 July 2017, DIRCO hosted a workshop in honour of Pan-African Women's Day to commemorate the first Pan African Women's Conference, held in Dar es Salaam in 1962. It was on this occasion that PAWO was established. The workshop was furthermore hosted against the historic decision by the African heads of state and government, during the 28th African Union Summit, to grant PAWO the status of a specialised agency of the AU. PAWO was established to recognise and affirm the role of women organising for the political freedom of Africa and advancing the social and economic status of women on the continent. It offers a national, continental and global opportunity to recall and affirm the significant role of African women in the evolution of a strong Pan-African identity, with shared values, objectives and vision for the future. South Africa has played an important role in supporting POWA and continues in this regard with Ms Pinky Kekana, Member of Parliament, who has been appointed as the new Secretary-General of POWA.

The workshop on 31 July 2017 was hosted by DIRCO with Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane delivering the keynote address. She used the



By Andre Groenwald

opportunity to contribute to the development of the agenda of this new agency to ensure that it is relevant to the developmental needs of African women and girls, as defined in Agenda 2063 and the sustainable development goals 2030. Participants at the event included representatives from the Diplomatic Corps, senior government officials, senior women researchers and representatives from academia, opinion-makers and community leaders.

From 2 to 4 August 2017, DIRCO hosted the third Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum on Conflict Resolution and Peace-Making with Minister Nkoana-Mashabane delivering the opening address on 2 August 2017. The Minister also delivered the keynote address at the closing and graduation event of the 33 participants in the Capacity-Building Programme on 4 August 2017.


Mma Gertrude Shope also attended both the opening, closing and graduation events. An important objective of the Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum is to provide South African women with an annual high-level opportunity for discussions and policy inputs at national, regional and international level. It also provides opportunities for South African women to share their peace-building experiences, particularly at community level, with their international counterparts,

particularly with representatives from the Nordic Women's Mediation Network and other similar structures.

The third Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum consisted of four discussions panels. The first panel considered the experience of international mediation institutions and senior representatives from the UN, the Southern African Development Community, Norway and Finland who shared their particular approaches with participants. The second panel on Thursday, 3 August 2017, represented women from civil society involved in peace-building activities with Accord providing an overview of their activities in countries in conflict, particularly in Africa. Other presenters included representatives from the South African Congress of Non-Profit Organisation, Unity Centre of Love and Light: Seasons of Nonviolence, Transforming Women in Social Transition, Dream Team Foundation/Age of Hope Ministries and Umyeza. The panel provided participants with a number of successful and best-practice projects that could form the basis of a future database of South African projects for peace-building purposes. The third panel was dedicated to discussions on the agenda, PAWO's way forward and the South Africa Women Strategic Framework (or as it is called internationally, the National Action Plan for Women).

On Friday, 4 August 2017, participants agreed on the outcomes and way forward of the Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum. At the next forum, these outcomes will be measured and assessed to determine the progress. Areas that were highlighted and included in the outcomes are, among others, the conclusion of a South African Women's Strategic Framework, contributing to UNSC 1325 obligations and progress; linking with national, regional, continental and international women's institutions and organisations; support to PAWO; policy contributions; transfer of skills; and inputs on peace-building processes.

At the third Dialogue Forum, Minister Nkoana-Mashabane also launched the first publication of the Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum. This publication captured the discussions of the 2016 forum, but also includes information on the background to the establishment of the Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum, South African projects, initiatives and leaders from South African communities, as well as international peace processes.

Special mention is made of the partnership between South Africa and Norway in developing the capacity-building programmes for women, youth and international diplomats, as well as the Gertrude Shope Annual Forum. 



Q & A
A day in the life of...
Motshabi Modukanele

1. Tell us about yourself?

I am the Chief Risk Officer for DIRCO. I hail from the friendly province of Free State and the small town of Kutlwanong, Odendaalsrus. After completing Matric in 1999, I enrolled for my tertiary qualification in Internal Auditing at Vaal University of Technology at the tender age of 17.

I completed and received my qualification in 2002 and was fortunate enough to join the world of professionals in the same year. I served my auditing training at SizweNtsaluba VSP (now SizweGobodo). I grew within the ranks in the company, being groomed by powerful women around me, until I left in 2006 as an esteemed Programme Supervisor.

2. What is your daily routine?

Wow, call it a constant struggle. I'm a naturally organised person and like to live in an orderly manner, a life of a certain perfectionist (many like me will relate). I condition my mind and prepare for my day from the time I leave my house to come to work. When I get to the office,

I consult my daily schedule; this is a spreadsheet I usually prepare every Sunday in order to organise my week ahead. My day is usually filled with meetings, reviewing risk reports from my colleagues and writing reports, and advising on measures to put in place to mitigate key risk areas in the department.

3. How long have you been with DIRCO?

I joined DIRCO then (DFA) in July 2006; it's just over 10 years. I started as Assistant Director: Internal Audit and progressed until my current position of Chief Risk Officer.

4. What do you enjoy most about working for DIRCO?

I enjoy the professional environment that DIRCO affords to its employees. The passion for work that colleagues have fills the space when I engage them through risk management activities. Oh, and how can I forget, the opportunity to serve the people of South Africa through international platforms.

5. What do you like about your job?

My job provides me with the ability to engage broadly within and outside the department. I have unlimited access to colleagues at all levels. My job provides me with enormous responsibility to always have an inward and outward thinking capability. As some risk areas are perpetuated by external factors, I need to advise the department on ways to mitigate against the impact of such risks.

I enjoy the affirmation that I receive whenever a perceived problem gets resolved, especially when the solution came through the assistance provided by my office (Risk Management Unit). I get a sense of appreciation and value whenever I'm requested to provide an opinion on issues of strategic nature. As Chief Risk Officer, I am considered a strategic partner as I'm required to ensure that risk consideration forms the basis for effective decision-making.

6. Anything else you would like to tell us about yourself?

I am married to my childhood friend, Mr Serame Modukanele, and we're blessed with three children; our eldest son (Mokone) and two daughters (Reabetswe and Naledi). I believe so much that, without family behind me, I would not have achieved all that's attached to my name today; they are my number one cheerleaders. My husband is the centre that holds all together when I'm unable to attend to my mommy duties due to work commitments. 🌍



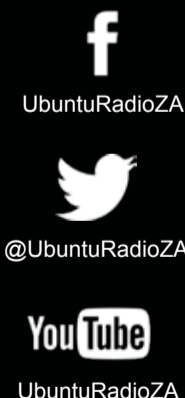
UBUNTU RADIO - THELMA NGOBENI

THE DIPLOMAT Monday-Friday 09:00-12:00

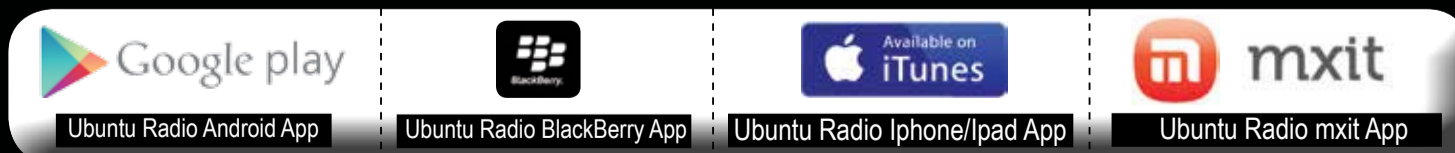
The Diplomat flights on weekdays between 09h00 and 12h00, hosted by Thelma Ngobeni. The show focuses on promoting tourism as well as South Africa's foreign policy and its diplomatic relations with its international partners.

The show features the following:

- **Travelogue:** This segment profiles local and international tourist destinations, highlighting tourist attractions in the area, best times to travel, health and other precautionary measures as well as any other important information that tourists need to know. The feature also covers events that have direct impact on tourism.
- **Touch Base:** South African citizens living abroad are interviewed on the show. They share their experiences while living in foreign countries, how they got to live in those countries, the lifestyle, coping mechanisms, among other things.
- **Diplomacy:** A focus on diplomatic relations between South Africa and international partners. It features the country's foreign policy and also touches on light-hearted content such as lifestyle, sport, culture, economic builders, music, transport system, etc. Diplomats are also interviewed about their normal day at work, sharing information on daily activities, challenges and highlights of their work. This feature also caters for South African embassies/high commissions abroad to share information about developments or activities that the missions are undertaking.
- **Open Visa –** Listeners interact with the presenter through SMS and social media platforms commenting on a set topic.



APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE ON SMARTPHONES





Doing business in Limpopo

Limpopo borders on South African commercial and industrial heartland in Gauteng and key Southern African Development Community (SADC) nations, thus providing easy access to South African and African markets.

These markets are linked by the N1 highway and adjacent main rail lines that bisect Limpopo. Covering 124 000 km² – about 10% of South Africa's surface area and with a population of 5,8 million, Limpopo is bounded to the south by Gauteng, and to the west, north and east by Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

Limpopo's capital, Polokwane, lies 300 km north of South Africa's main markets in the Johannesburg-Pretoria industrial complex, and 200 km south of the province's border with Zimbabwe.

Access to world markets. The upgrading of Maputo Port in neighbouring Mozambique means that Limpopo-based exporters and importers can use the facility with growing confidence. Maputo is much closer to Limpopo than more distant South African ports where congestion often hampers trade.

Limpopo exporters estimate they will save about one third of their transportation costs by using the facility. Linked to Limpopo by road and rail, Maputo port is situated 300 and 400 km from the main mining and agricultural centres of Limpopo. The traditional port of Durban, for example, is 1 000 km from these areas.

Suggestions of places to visit this festive season in Limpopo

Welgevonden Private Game Reserve



Welgevonden Private Game Reserve comprises 37 000 hectares of diverse landscapes and geology and a plethora of South Africa's most stunning wildlife in the heart of the rich ecosystem of the Waterberg District in Limpopo. Apty, Welgevonden translates as "well found". The reserve first became a conservation area in 1993, consolidating a number of private farms, removing internal fences and returning this amazing area to its original natural state.

Welgevonden is entirely malaria free and just an easy two-and-a-half-hour drive or 45 minute flight from Johannesburg, making it one of the most accessible premier wilderness reserve in the country and a fast and unique means of escaping the hustle and bustle of the city. There are now a handful of spectacularly luxurious, secluded and sustainable lodges within the reserve, most of which are limited to a maximum of 10 guests and have been built with the strictest aesthetic attention to the surrounding environment.

All Welgevonden's lodges offer a range of game drives, activities, fabulous vistas and first-rate facilities and service, including the best food and wine that South Africa has to offer.

Eventieria Wildlife Park



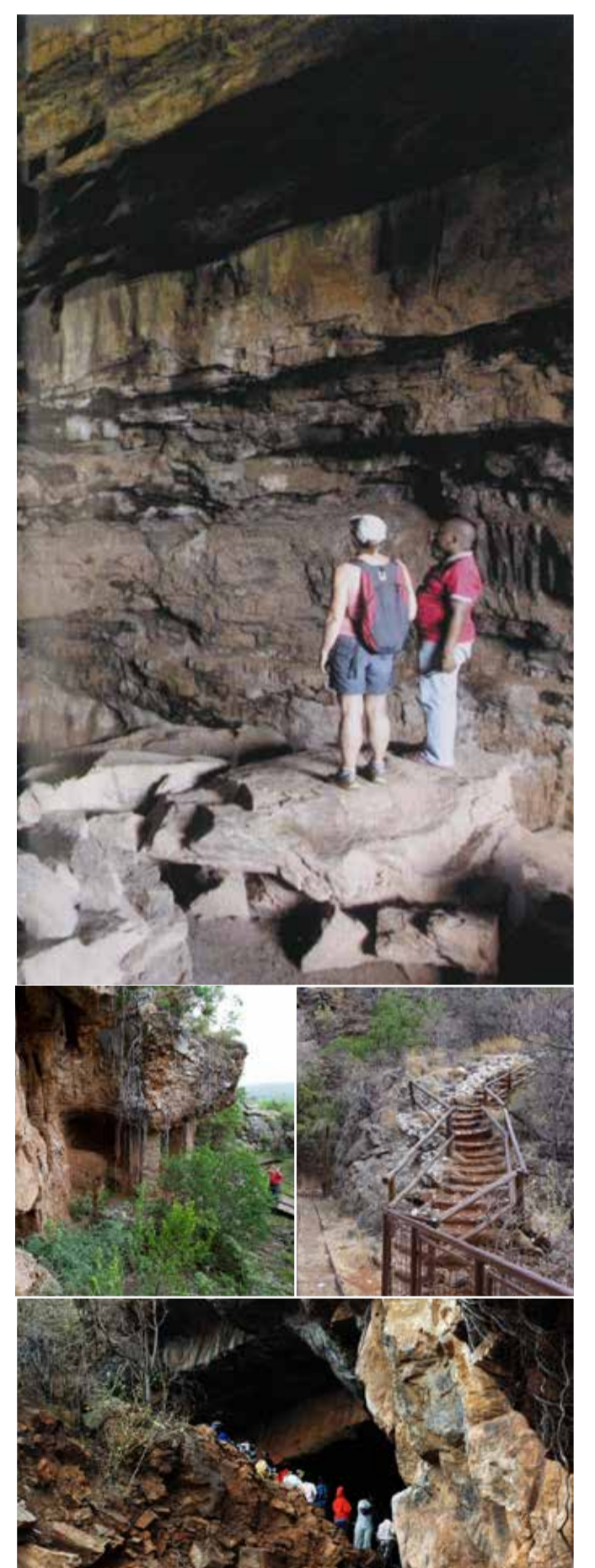
Deep in the African bushveld, Eventieria Wildlife Park is situated in the world-renowned Waterberg Biosphere. It all started out as a little boy's dream, when he said: "One day when I am big, I want a TIGER".

It remained a dream until 1 August 2009, when Erich Venter received a baby lion – named Simba – for his birthday. From there, his dream became a reality and continued to expand. It remains a dream in the making. In the past years, Eventieria Wild Life Park has rehabilitated a variety of orphaned or hurt animals. Most of the animals were rescued from Nigel Zoo and were given a second chance at Eventieria Wild Life Park.

Eventieria Wildlife Park is famed for its Siberian tigers, Bengal tigers, wild dogs, African lions, white lions, wolves, coati bears, alpacas and the abundance of endangered game species. It's just three-hours' drive from Johannesburg and 36 kilometres from Vaalwater. This unique wildlife park is ideally situated and most travellers are drawn to it by the promise of "an experience of a lifetime".

The park features a remarkable variety of birds and reptiles like the Burmese python, corn snakes, Boa constrictors and iguanas. The park is home to a remarkable number of indigenous and exotic animal species from all over the world.

Makapan Valley World Heritage Site



Makapan is a paleontological site of international significance and is also part of the World Heritage Site of the Cradle of Humankind. Situated in the Waterberg, north-east of Mokopane, the site plays an important role in our understanding of human evolution.

The network of limestone caves have yielded thousands of fossil bones, including a africanus and other mammals. It also contains a remarkable unbroken sequence of archaeological remains from the Early Stone Age through to the recent Iron Age, and some of the earliest evidence of the controlled use of fire by our ancestors.

The caves are also the site of the clash between the Boers and Kekana people in 1854. After attacks on the Voortrekkers at Moorsdrift, Chief Mokopane (Makapan) and his people, together with their herds of cattle, were surrounded in one of the caves. The blockade lasted almost a month with thousands dying from starvation and dehydration.

Throughout the years, It's your Voice has been featuring things our diplomats liked in other countries. I thought it was about time that we start talking about the things I like about our own country, South Africa, starting with Limpopo. If you're one of those people who think the Limpopo has nothing to offer, you're missing out on some of the best wildlife and nature experiences in the country. South Africa's northernmost province, Limpopo, borders onto Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Botswana, making it the ideal entrance to Africa. Limpopo is the link between South Africa and countries further afield in sub-Saharan Africa. Named after the great Limpopo River that flows along its northern border, this province is rich in wildlife, spectacular scenery and a wealth of historical and cultural treasures.

The people and cultures



Limpopo is the fifth-largest of South Africa's nine provinces with a population of 5,8 million people. As a large majority of the population is black, native black languages are predominately spoken at home. Sepedi is spoken by more than half the population, which is followed by Xitsonga and Tshivenda.

Also known as "The Eden of Africa", Limpopo is rich in culture and heritage. Limpopo cultural sites, rock art, shelters, people, burial grounds and historical buildings remain loyal to complement Limpopo as the province of culture and heritage.

The traditional food

This lush and lively province is a one-stop shop for some of the most intriguing rustic delicacies you could ever hope to find in any corner of the globe. These are a few of the most legendary treats:

- Mopani worms
- Maize meal pap
- Umqombothi
- Chicken feet and cow heels

WOMEN IN DIPLOMACY

Ambassador Thami XN Ngwevela—High Commissioner of South Africa to Trinidad and Tobago

ABOUT AMBASSADOR XOLISWA NGWEVELA



Ambassador Xoliswa Nomthamsanza Ngwevela served as a member of the African National Congress (ANC) in exile, and worked in the ANC Department of International Affairs, on the North American and European desks while in Zambia. She acquired a Diploma in Political Science at the Pushkin International Institute in Moscow in October 1980, while in exile. Ambassador Ngwevela went on to obtain a graduate Postgraduate Diploma in Administrative Studies in 1988. As a devout academic, Ms Ngwevela continued her studies and graduated with a Master's Degree in Public Administration at the University of Liverpool, England. She also attended courses on International Relations at the Institute of International Relations, Potsdam, East Germany (former GDR) from January to June 1989.

Ms Ngwevela was also the Administrative Secretary of the ANC Women Executive Committee, while in exile in Zambia. As part of her portfolio at the time, she was required to consolidate contacts and liaise with women's groups in South Africa and the global Anti-Apartheid Movement.

In addition, Ambassador Ngwevela was tasked with the responsibility of representing ANC women's issues at international forums and conferences at the United Nations, Organisation of African Unity subregional meetings, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Pan-African Women's Organisation (PAWO). She also served as Information Officer at the Luanda Office of the Information Bureau of the PAWO in Angola.

Ambassador Ngwevela returned from exile in the early 1990s and immediately embarked on two projects between 1991 and 1994. These were namely as a Community Development Adviser in the Community and Urban Services Support, a USAID funded project dealing with housing and urban development and as Project Coordinator at UMZAMO Development Project, a Cape Town-based hostel-to-housing development project. As part of the UMZAMO Development Project, she was assigned to plan and raise funds to upgrade and convert former migrant labour hostels into suitable accommodation. Ambassador Ngwevela has a very rich career in the Public Service. She also worked for the Department of Local and Provincial Government

as a Coordinator for the Local Government Transition Policy Project.

The responsibility of the unit was to facilitate verbal engagements between statutory and non-statutory institutions during the initial phase of the transition in 1994 under the Local Government Transition Act.

Ambassador Ngwevela then moved to Diplomacy and joined the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1995, where she began as private secretary to Mr Alfred Nzo, the then Minister of the department. Ambassador Ngwevela travelled extensively while in exile and also as secretary to the Minister.

She visited countries in Africa, Europe, Australia, Cuba, Canada and Asia. In 1998, she was appointed to head the Foreign Service Institute (FSI)—the training academy for the department's Diplomatic Corps. Ambassador Ngwevela was appointed SA Consul General to New York in 1999. At that time, Ambassador Ngwevela was also serving as the Secretary of the South African International Diplomatic Association.

IN CONVERSATION

- **What would you say are the highlights of your diplomatic career?**

I have enjoyed my life tremendously in international relations and diplomacy to the extent that it is hard to find one particular episode as a highlight. However, I will have to say, my five-year tenure as Consul General to New York was the most engaging and enriching experience and it tested all levels of my mental faculties I did not know exist. That's not because it was New York but because that was a nascent period of our democracy when South Africa was the "flavour of the month", to use that euphemism.

I was appointed in 1999 when Nelson Mandela was still President, until May that year. The United States of America (USA) had one of the largest anti-apartheid movements in the world and therefore a lot of inherent goodwill and enthusiasm to engage us as a new democracy. Bill Clinton was still President as well, until January 2000.

Then we went into a second administration under President Thabo Mbeki and the world, including the USA, was having a difficult time with the departure of Madiba. As a diplomat, coming from a history of disinvestment with the USA and redirecting our message to re-investment, that was a hard slog but an enjoyable challenge, which we did overcome. The USA quickly became a top three trading partner and investor at that time. I was in New York City when the twin towers, the World Trade Centre, came down on 11 September 2001; a witness to the change in the cause of international relations as we knew it.

You asked for one highlight but I cannot resist mentioning that working in the Ministry post-1994 and prior to 1999 exposed me to a much wider world of diplomacy. I visited more than 50 capitals in three years. At that time, South Africa negotiated and concluded many bilateral and multilateral agreements. As you could imagine, that meant attending international conferences, summits and receiving many heads of state and foreign ministers on our shores.

- **What is your country of accreditation and what is your favourite thing about it?**

I am accredited to Trinidad and Tobago and six other countries in the Caribbean. We also have observer accreditation to CARICOM, the Caribbean Community organisation. The Caribbean is a region of small island states. People are very friendly, laid-back and there is always something to celebrate. I join the celebrations when invited. The warm waters, wonderful beaches and carnivals are a way of life here but I must say I only envy the locals as I never seem to get around to assimilating that part of life.

- **Has it been difficult to balance family and a career in the Public Service and, if so, how have you managed?**

I had to make some conscious decisions very early on in my working life that I should never put myself in a position where I had to choose between career and family. I was a single mother but I made it a point that my children came first as much as my job did. That's been my motto and it worked out just fine. It sounds easy in hindsight but it wasn't, you constantly have to juggle work and family priorities evenly.

Having close family and extended family support helps and I was very lucky in that regard and of course, additional hired help. My other motto was that receiving support is no substitute for parenting. I am still the parent. I tried to do my best to plan my work and parenting responsibilities. I did homework with the kids, I went to school meetings, and I dropped the kids off at school and picked them up. I would be across the oceans, in Indonesia perhaps, and I would call home to check if the kids did wake up to get ready for school. I made it a point that the kids never felt my absence by calling home to talk to them about their day, their chores and to say good morning or good night.

- **What words of wisdom would you give to young female diplomats starting their career?**

Know what you want and go for it. Sometimes you may not know any better but being



exposed to new things in the work environment will challenge you to do things you have not done before. Do not doubt yourself, follow your instincts, take initiatives and see where things lead you. We care a lot about a representative workplace that is balanced demographically and government attempts to implement that, however, it takes hard work, not demographic quotas, to get ahead. You can't demand to be included or be promoted because you are female. Make yourself the automatic choice because you have proven credentials that you are a person who does what it takes to get the job done and done right. Life is a journey, so is work experience. Make work your passion, your hobby, then, you will do it right all of the time and enjoy it. Dress the part, act the part. Dress code is important in diplomacy; it denotes respect for your interlocutors.

- **What are the greatest obstacles you have faced as a female Ambassador?**

As a representative of the State and the Republic of South Africa, you have the honour of having been selected to serve. The honour ends right there and the hard work begins. South Africa enjoys good to excellent relations and therefore we face minimal challenges in that regard.

The greatest obstacles sometimes come with achieving the longer-term goals that have been set in our foreign policy. Even in those good relations, projects we engage in with host governments require patience and perseverance.

An ambassador, at a personal level, also wants to achieve goals. You want to do better than your predecessor. You want to improve the trajectory of trade, investment, cultural relations, tourism and other areas of cooperation so that South Africa's economic development can be advanced. Increasingly, we need more imagination and ingenuity as we have lesser and lesser financial resources to do diplomacy.

- **Which female figure do you draw inspiration from?**

I could name a few, but to make my point,

I will choose one who has been overlooked so far by history in this country. Ambassador Lindiwe Mabuzza is the greatest unsung hero of women leaders in our struggle for democracy.

She was always an outstanding diplomat who has served our country exceptionally well before and after Freedom Day.

It is not about the number of missions she served in, but, prior to being a diplomat and a parliamentarian, she was a freedom fighter who made a lot of friends for our cause in places we never expected: Scandinavia and the Benelux countries. Not only did she build the anti-apartheid movement there, she got the governments to support us materially.

She looked after the material needs of all the young women and children in exile. She looked after the African National Congress in general and mobilised enormous resources for the day-to-day livelihood and survival of the movement.

I hope there will be time to pause and recognise her contribution to the new South Africa. She was a role model to many young women of the 16 June generation, like me. She is a renowned poet and prolific writer. I love her to bits.

- **Name a book that changed the way you see the world?**

One among many that stays with me is a book called "*I am right, you are wrong*", by Dr Edward de Bono. That was the evolution of my pragmatic thinking.

In his book, he advances some arguments about lateral thinking. I will not go into it but essentially it explores what he calls "rock logic", which is rigid thinking where you are married to a certain set of ideology/ideas as the correct path.

It was important to me because I read it during the early 1990s and it was critical in opening my mind to other parties thinking about the future of our country. We all had noble ideas about the future but we did not have a monopoly of ideas as a dominant party. That was a lesson. 🌍

Womandla
— celebrating the power of women —



ABOUT AMBASSADOR THANINGA SHOPE-LINNEY

November 2001 to August 2008. Her primary responsibility was to communicate the NEPAD message, primarily to the African continent and to the entire world, through the usage of television, radio, social media, print media as well as public presentations. All in all, her primary responsibility was to use advocacy, as a means, to promote the developmental agenda of the African continent.

Daughter of South African veteran freedom fighters Mark and Gertrude Shope, she and her siblings, Lyndall and Lenin, left South Africa at a very tender age, when their parents had to flee South Africa for being persecuted because of their involvement in the struggle for liberation of South Africa. Ambassador Shope-Linney started her primary schooling in the then Czechoslovakia (Czech Republic today) in 1967, when her father, one of the founding fathers of trade unionism in South Africa (South African Congress of Trade Unions), was sent to work at the World Federation of Trade Unions. She left Czechoslovakia with her family and travelled to Tanzania in 1971, where she continued her primary studies at the Bungo Primary school. She completed her primary education at Lusaka Girls in Zambia (1973) and went on to start her secondary education at Kamwala Secondary School. She left Zambia in 1976, leaving at form three level, and completed her secondary studies at the Republica Popular del Congo Pre University in Artemisa, Havana, Cuba.

She did her university studies at the Jose Antonio Echeverria Engineering Institute in Havana, where she obtained her MSc in Systems Analysis and Design in July 1985.

Ambassador Shope-Linney taught Mathematics to high school students at the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College in Morogoro, Tanzania, upon her return to Africa from Cuba, from 1986 to 1988. During that period, she was actively involved in politics, being elected the Head of the African National Congress Women's Section for all of East Africa (Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda).

She left for the United Kingdom in October 1988, where she obtained her postgraduate degree in Engineering from the East Warwickshire College of Engineering in Rugby, after which she worked for Cummins Engine Company, an American engine-producing company, as a computer programmer, from 1989 until November 1991, when she finally returned to South Africa.

Ambassador Shope-Linney joined Unilever South Africa in August 1992, where she changed her career to join the Marketing Division of the company, because she felt the need to be in a profession that had direct daily interaction with people.

She joined the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) in early 1994 as Head of the Marketing Division of the then CCV Television. Ambassador Shope-Linney became the first black woman in South Africa, and the second South African woman, to head up a television channel, when she was appointed Head of the Television channel, SABC2, in 1996. Together with a group of colleagues and under the leadership of then Chairperson of the SABC board and CEO of the SABC, Dr Ivy Matsepe Casaburri and Mr Zwelakhe Sisulu respectfully, she participated in the transformation of the SABC.

She stayed with the SABC for six years, and served on a number of boards. At the time of leaving

the SABC in 2000, Ambassador Shope-Linney was the Executive Head, Corporate Communications and Marketing. Ambassador Shope-Linney also co-founded the MACUFE international festival while working for the SABC. Ambassador Shope-Linney joined the NEPAD Secretariat as General Manager Communications and Outreach in November 2001, a position she held, until 2008, when she was appointed Ambassador Designate, to Gabon and São Tomé and Príncipe. She served in Gabon and São Tomé and Príncipe as Ambassador from 2009 until 2012, when she was appointed Ambassador Designate to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Colombia. Ambassador Shope-Linney served these two nations as Ambassador from January 2013 until 30 June 2017. She has recently been appointed Ambassador Designate to Cuba.

The greatest determination that Ambassador Shope-Linney has is to reverse the deliberate and constant negative portrayal by many in the international media of the African continent, and to lift its image to the heights it deserves.

Ambassador Shope-Linney interacts with diplomatic representatives of many countries of the international world. She interacts with African and international heads of state and government, African and international ministers, international and African business leaders as well as civil-society organisations. Through this platform, Ambassador Shope-Linney aims to achieve her resolve of placing Africa in its rightful place, continentally and internationally. Ambassador Shope-Linney is a mother of two, a son, Molefe, born in Cuba in 1985, and a daughter, Sibongile, born in South Africa in 1992.

IN CONVERSATION

- **What would you say are the highlights of your diplomatic career?**

I started my diplomacy career in 2009, when I served as Ambassador of South Africa to Gabon and São Tomé and Príncipe. The challenge at this time, was the language, because Gabon is French-speaking and São Tomé and Príncipe Portuguese-speaking. Being fluent in Spanish, I managed to get by in both countries, doing much better of course in São Tomé and Príncipe. My second posting was as Ambassador to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. This posting was great, because of, among other things, my dominance of the Spanish language.

Venezuela being a very multicultural and multiracial society, much like South Africa, presented an opportunity to get engaged in a lot of activities. Most of my activities centred on promoting South Africa in particular and Africa in general. Being the Dean of the African Group of Diplomats, the task became much simpler. It was the South African Embassy that hosted the Africa Day celebrations, year on year, at the Official Residence. These celebrations soon became one of the "calendar activities of the year", which were looked forward to year after year. In these celebrations, the South African Embassy always included the Caribbean countries, as these form part of the African Diaspora and the sixth region of the African Union (AU).

It was the South African Embassy that was first approached by Foreign Affairs and ROA (*Red de Organizaciones Afrodescendientes*), a network of Afrodescendant organisations in Venezuela, when visits to Afrodescendant communities in Venezuela were arranged. This practice was then spread to other resident African and Caribbean embassies in Caracas. These visits would

reach even the remotest of places, where Afrodescendants of Venezuela are found. They served to forge much closer relations, between the network of Afrodescendant organisations of Venezuela and the African and Caribbean diplomatic community in Venezuela.

In my new posting in Cuba, I feel very blessed, because this is the country to which I came as part of the first group of South African students (agreement between Cuban Government and the African National Congress) in 1976. I was at the time a 16-year-old girl. I graduated as an Engineer on 15 July 1985 and gave birth to my first-born, Molefe, on 28 December, 1985. I stayed in Cuba, with a Cuban family, until my son was four months old.

I came to Cuba as a 16-year-old girl in 1976 and left 10 years later, as a 26-year-old woman, engineer and mother, in 1986. Time will tell what the highlights of my new posting in Cuba will bring.

To date, I have many moments that I can consider as highlights in my diplomatic career. However, the one that really stands out, is when I was awarded the Francisco de Miranda Medal of the Highest Order by the Venezuelan Government. This is an order given to foreign nationals who are considered to have gone the extra mile in the building and strengthening of good relations with the people of Venezuela.

- **What is your country of accreditation, and what is your favourite thing about it?**

As I write this, I have just arrived in Havana, Cuba, as Ambassador Designate. Because as previously mentioned, I have already lived in this country as a student, from 1976 to 1986, what I can say is my favourite thing about Cuba, is the human character of the Cuban people. Much like Venezuela, Cubans are very friendly and warm people. They are people who do not spend

time moaning about what they do not have, or what challenges they face. The experience I have of Cuban people, is of a very positive outlook on life. It is the pride of being Cuban, of being survivors, of being unbeatable. Cubans are very upbeat and make life work for them. Life is a perpetual celebration, no matter what challenges they encounter in their daily lives. Having come back, this time no longer as a student, but as a diplomat, I am sure that there are going to be many other favourite things that I will find about being back in Cuba.

- **Has it been difficult to balance family and career in the Public Service and if so, how have you managed?**

Having been born into a family of two very busy parents, balancing family and work has been something we as children grew up with. Our mother and our father, both politicians, were very busy people. They always, though, managed to have time to fulfil their responsibilities as parents, of guiding and advising my siblings and I, to always try to do the right thing and be responsible. This they managed to do, even from a distance, when the three of us were in Cuba, and they were far away from us. "Finding it difficult to balance family and career" has never been an option. One just coped, and it became part of life.

- **What words of wisdom would you give young female diplomats starting their career?**

My humble advice is that they should always know that diplomacy can at times be a bit overrated. It is not all glamour and opportunity to travel and see the world. Diplomacy first and foremost, is about representing one's country in a foreign nation. At times, we are called upon to represent our

country in a nation that is very different to ours, in terms of religion, culture, norms, beliefs, food, etc. Respecting at all times that we are different nations, with our own way of doing things, is always the best route to take. Many times, young people tend to be very publicly opinionated and critical, when they find themselves in situations that they do not like or do not understand in their countries of posting.

I have on a number of occasions, found myself in a situation of embarrassment, when younger diplomats express their sheer dislike of one thing or another, using very unfortunate language. This is a very great and big NO, NO; totally unacceptable behaviour for a diplomat. Many times also, the criticism is of issues, which we as South Africa have not as yet managed to overcome back home either. So, my humble advice is: The countries where we serve, have their own issues and challenges, just like South Africa, our own dear country.

We should at all times remember that. When we leave South Africa on a posting, we are being sent to represent our country, not ourselves. This means that we should at all times remember that our country and the country that we are being posted to, have friendly relations. To this effect, our personal opinions, most especially if they are negative, should be left at being just that, personal. They should never be expressed in public, and much less in the presence of locals.

Postings abroad can also be very lonely. When on a posting away from home, young diplomats should be psychologically prepared, to at times be homesick and to try to deal with it in the best manner possible. Making acquaintances with fellow diplomats from other countries and making friends with locals have worked for me. In that way, one learns cultures of other nations, makes new friends and lessens the boredom and homesickness.

- **What are the greatest obstacles you have faced as a female Ambassador?**

I joined the diplomatic world at an already mature age. I guess this is the reason that I can say that I do not have a recollection of having faced any particular obstacles as a female Ambassador.

- **Which female figure do you draw inspiration from?**

In my much more than half a century of life, I have met many women from many different countries. Women of different fields of expertise, of all races, all religions, different sexual

orientation and different political thinking. I have met women intellectuals, and women who have never had the opportunity of going to school. I have met women artists, politicians, farmers, teachers, home economists, activists, actors, home help, presidents, etc.

All these women come from the various countries that I have had the blessing of having visited, or having worked in. Each woman has her own story to tell.

Stories of survival, of pain and/or glory. Each woman has a lesson to give, because we all teach one another and learn from one another. I do not personally believe that we can be inspired by one particular

person in our journey of life.

Just like we know that people come into our lives (women in this case) for particular seasons; each time that season comes to an end and they leave us, they leave behind one inspiration or another.

While I draw inspiration from so many women that I have met in my life, my constant, all seasons inspirational women have been my mother, Gertrude Shope, my sister Lyndall, and my daughter, Sibongile. These are the constant sources of energy for me, the women I turn to when I need to be uplifted, as well as when I have something very good to share.

- **Name a book that changed the way you see the world.**

The one book that really made an impact on me, was *Poisoned Wells* by Nicholas Shaxson. I guess this is because I read it at the right time. I had just been posted to Gabon as Ambassador.

The book is about oil politics in African countries (Gabon is the number four oil producer in Africa today, after Nigeria, Angola and Equatorial Guinea), and it made a lot of reference to people I had met already, or had as yet to meet. It is written in a very simple, "easy to understand the politics of oil" way.

It really opened up my eyes to the reality of the complexities and dangers of oil politics. 🌍

Ambassador Nomathemba Tambo_South African Ambassador to Italy

Womandla
— celebrating the power of women —

ABOUT AMBASSADOR NOMATEMBA TAMBO



Born on 19 October 1957, Ms Nomathemba Tambo is the daughter of apartheid struggle hero Oliver Reginald Tambo and heroine Adelaide Tambo, who both served as central figures of the African National Congress (ANC).

Prior to being appointed South African Ambassador to Italy and non-residential Ambassador and High Commissioner to Malta, Albania and San Marino as well as Permanent Representative to the Rome-based United Nations agencies, Ms Tambo acquired a BA Honours combined degree in History and English from Roehampton Institute in London, LLB in Post-Graduate Law

from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg and a Diplomatic Training Diploma from the Department of International Relations and Cooperation. She is also co-founder and Chair of the South African Women's Chamber of Commerce (Hong Kong, Director/Founding Member of Women in Capital Growth (a black empowerment company), contributing editor for *Fair Lady* Magazine, director for Webnet Solutions, Chief Executive for Evening Star Manufacturing, and director for the Resilient Income Property Fund. Ambassador Tambo is a trustee of the Oliver and Adelaide Tambo Foundation; councillor of Diplomatia, Rome;

a member of the International Women's Forum; director of Charity Girls on a Mission; and president of Charity People First.

Before Rome, her last diplomatic post was serving as Consul General to Hong Kong. She presented her credentials to President Giorgio Napolitano on 10 April 2013, as non-residential High Commissioner to Malta on 13 June 2013; as non-residential Ambassador to San Marino on 26 June 2013; and as non-residential Ambassador to Albania on 29 July 2013. Ambassador Tambo has four children: three sons and a daughter; and a granddaughter.

IN CONVERSATION

- **What would you say are the highlights of your diplomatic career?**

One of the things that I'm happy about is watching the growth and development of our officials, both in Italy and in Hong Kong. I believe that throwing people in at the deep end, with support, is a wonderful way to build confidence and remove the fear of failure.

I'm also grateful that I have had the opportunity to hold very high-level conferences promoting various aspects of South Africa, from our Constitution, to the work of social development, financial matters and health, to name a few.

- **What is your country of accreditation and what is your favourite thing about it?**

I am resident in Rome, Italy, but I'm also accredited to Malta, Albania and San Marino, a country with only 30 000 citizens – a few years ago the tiny country recorded the birth of only one child!

- **Has it been difficult to balance family and a career in the Public Service and, if so, how have you managed?**

My children are all grown and have left home. The youngest two moved out this year, which was heartbreaking, but an important step for them. Previously, while they were at university, it was very easy to balance family and career, because they would come and stay with me during their holidays and we would always spend Christmas together. Now it's definitely more challenging, as one has a



baby and the other a new job, so they don't visit anymore. I'm the one running up and down to South Africa to see them!

- **What words of wisdom would you give to young female diplomats starting their career?**

Firstly, you can do more than you think you are capable of and be brave enough to risk making mistakes. Secondly, make sure every day is fun and approach your work with humour and humility.

- **What are the greatest obstacles you have faced as a female Ambassador?**

There are no obstacles that one faces as a

female Ambassador. For the first time in eight years on the job, however, on 5 July at a function I was hosting, a gentleman came up to me and asked me which of the black men the Ambassador was. I couldn't answer, because I burst out laughing!

- **Which female figure do you draw inspiration from?**

My wonderful incredible late mother, followed by my sweet, funny and beautiful daughter.

- **Name a book that changed the way you see the world?**

The Bible. 🌍

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SPOTLIGHT ON WOMEN'S HEALTH

STAY STRONG WITH THESE PREVENTATIVE CARE MEASURES

August is Women's month when we celebrate National Women's Day. What better way to mark this occasion than by gaining greater awareness of leading women's health issues and proactive ways of keeping healthy? Mothers, daughters and grandmothers can all work towards a healthier tomorrow with these tips from the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS).

Many women are extremely busy with work commitments and caring for their children and families, and may often prioritise the needs of others ahead of their own wellness. GEMS encourages women to invest some time in themselves by having routine health screenings for the conditions associated with their particular life stage. The leading natural underlying cause of death for women highlighted in the most recent *Statistics SA Mortality and Causes of Death* study is diabetes. Like so many potentially life-threatening health conditions, early testing and healthy lifestyle changes may help to ensure that type 2 diabetes can be more effectively managed or even avoided. Preventative health screenings are some of

the best allies we have against diseases, including cervical and breast cancers, diabetes, diseases of the heart and circulatory system, among others. With regular testing, these and other potential health concerns can be detected and treated early, and this is often associated with better outcomes.

Some of the most important health checks for women to have from early adulthood include pap smears, breast examinations and blood glucose tests. A pap smear is a test that checks for abnormal cells and the human papillomavirus (HPV), which can lead to cervical cancer. The test involves your doctor taking a swab to test the cells from the cervix, which is the entrance to the uterus or womb.

Once the test has been performed, the sample of cells will be tested in a laboratory and your doctor will let you know when the results are received. The test is meant to give early warning of any medical issues that may be starting and allow for them to be dealt with before a serious problem develops. This is why pap tests should be performed regularly. One of the greatest preventative healthcare developments in our time for women in particular is

the HPV vaccination, which significantly reduces the risk of cervical cancer. GEMS strongly encourages parents with girl children aged nine or older to have them vaccinated against HPV.

Breast examinations and mammograms can help to detect changes in breast tissue, which may be an indication of breast cancer.

Women of any age should know how to perform their own breast examination. This simple technique should be practised often so that the woman becomes familiar with the texture of her breast tissue, and therefore be better placed to recognise any changes. Blood glucose testing Diabetes, or diabetes mellitus, is becoming more common in South Africa and the world over. Approximately three-and-a-half million South Africans are affected by either type 1 diabetes, which is often an inherited condition, or type 2 diabetes, which is when not enough insulin hormone is produced, or the body fails to react to it.

Diabetics who have not yet been diagnosed are at particular risk, as they are not receiving the treatment that can prevent further damage to their bodies, including visual impairment or kidney failure,

among others. A glucose tolerance test (GTT) is used to test how effectively the body is producing or using insulin to detect diabetes or insulin resistance, which may lead to type 2 diabetes.

In order to assist diabetic GEMS members to manage their condition, the scheme has a Diabetic Care Management Programme in place. It aims to forge closer links between the diabetic, general practitioner and healthcare service providers, which will help affected individuals to learn more about how to control the condition better. Bone density scans. Women over the age of 65 years of age should speak to their general practitioner about having a bone density scan for the detection of osteoporosis.

This is a condition whereby the bones become weakened and are more vulnerable to breaking. Women tend to lose bone density more quickly than men, particularly after menopause.

GEMS has allocated a benefit for preventative care services to cover these types of proactive health screenings. Why not take advantage of this benefit this Women's Month?

According to CANSA, there are three steps for a basic self-examination:

1. Look at your breasts in a mirror and check for any changes such as the skin dimpling, one breast being unusually larger than the other or unexpected discharge from the nipple.

2. Lie on your back and use your left hand to check your right breast, then your right hand to check your left breast. With your fingers pressed together to make a flat surface, rub firmly over your breast, armpit and chest to the shoulder bone in small circles.

3. Repeat step two while showering or seated upright in the bath using a soapy hand. If you detect any firm or solid lumps, which may feel like a firm round pea or be more irregular in shape, or if you notice any changes in your breast tissue, make an appointment with your general practitioner for a checkup.

Remember that the texture of your breast tissue may feel more lumpy or knotty just before or around the time of your menstrual period.



From the age of 40 onwards, women are encouraged to have mammograms, which are a type of x-ray that shows even small areas of

potentially problematic tissue. Women who have a family history that could place them at greater risk of developing breast cancer may need mammograms from an earlier age. 🌐





The Dialogue on Women Empowerment and Gender Equality in the Workplace Elegance with a Touch of Pink

#DialoguewithatouchofPink
By Caron Kgombo

Womandla

— celebrating the power of women —

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) was hyped up with the buzz words, "A touch of pink", and joined together as women of DIRCO on the 31st of August celebrating Women's Month 2017 in dialogue and elegance. The mood was filled with vibrance and a sense of appreciation that women of this beautiful organisation MATTERED!

Malibongwe was our salutation!

Wathintaabafazi, wathint 'imbokodo!

We gathered together, knowing and believing that we deserve to be celebrated during Women's Month. We have a right to be given a special focus for our struggles for equality and recognition; we have a million reasons why we are celebrating, for each one of us has a story as unsung heroines of the liberation struggle as we follow in the footsteps of giant leaders who paved the way for our freedom!

Team Transformation and Transversal Programme in partnership with Team Strategic Communication and Marketing were all out to ensure that the women of DIRCO were celebrated. Team work is always the glue that holds all departmental work together. Our Chief Director, Ms Charlotte Lobe, creates an enabling environment for all her colleagues to have a role and shine in their occupied corner.

Why are we celebrating Women's Month?

On 9 August 1956, 20 000 brave women marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to fight for women's freedom and to petition against the country's pass laws. These laws required black people to carry the "dom pass".

Women have bravely fought for the liberation of our country. Women have also fought against gender oppression, poverty and inequality. The likes of the late Charlotte Maxeke, who was one of the founder members of the African National Congress Women's League, led the growth of the women's movement. Dora Tamana, Sophie de Bruyn, Albertina Sisulu, Gertrude Shope, Helen Joseph and many others are the epitome of women's struggle for and contribution to the liberation of our nation.

They held the sharpest edge of the knives in those dark days. Their efforts created an enabling environment for us women of today to thrive and shine in the echelons of power:

- Women as equal citizens, with equal rights and responsibilities.
- The Government has made progress in empowering women in the political, public and educational spheres.
- The current women leaders know that they have to open doors for future young women to continue with the struggle to empower, liberate and educate one another.
- Our struggle now is focused on the implementation of women's right to access opportunities.
- Women have gained ownership and benefit from financial resources, including access to public procurement processes in education.
- Women have gained access to information and skills in innovative technologies and practices.
- Our struggle is also focused on the development of women's economic

empowerment.

- We must continue to fight so that the remaining barriers to access are broken. For example, there are less than 45% of women representation in senior management levels both in the public and the private sector. Women need to break the barriers for access to financial and material resources, development platforms and higher offices. Gone are the days when privileges were reserved for a particular racial group, or a particular gender!

That is why we have to take this moment and celebrate the milestones achieved. The Dialogue on Women Empowerment and Gender Equality in the Workplace was our way of celebrating Women's Month with Elegance.

A Touch of Pink was a great platform for women to express themselves. The work of the department is guided by the Gender Equality Strategic Framework (GESF), which emphasises systematic attention to gender equality in departmental policies and programmes. The aim of the GESF is to achieve gender equality in compliance with the Constitution, equal representation of and participation by women in all workplace activities and to also increase access to opportunities for employment, skills development and upward mobility in the workplace. The strategic framework further encourages the removal and elimination of all barriers to entry, advancement and development of women in the department.

To this end, Ms Delores Kotze, Chief Director: Strategic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation,

facilitated a dialogue on Women Empowerment and Gender Equality in the Workplace, targeting all women in DIRCO. Through this dialogue, DIRCO women had an opportunity to interact with one another on progress realised. They also expressed their frustration in other areas of their work as well as suggested ways in which DIRCO could manage work on women empowerment better. The following were some of the issues that found expression in the dialogue:

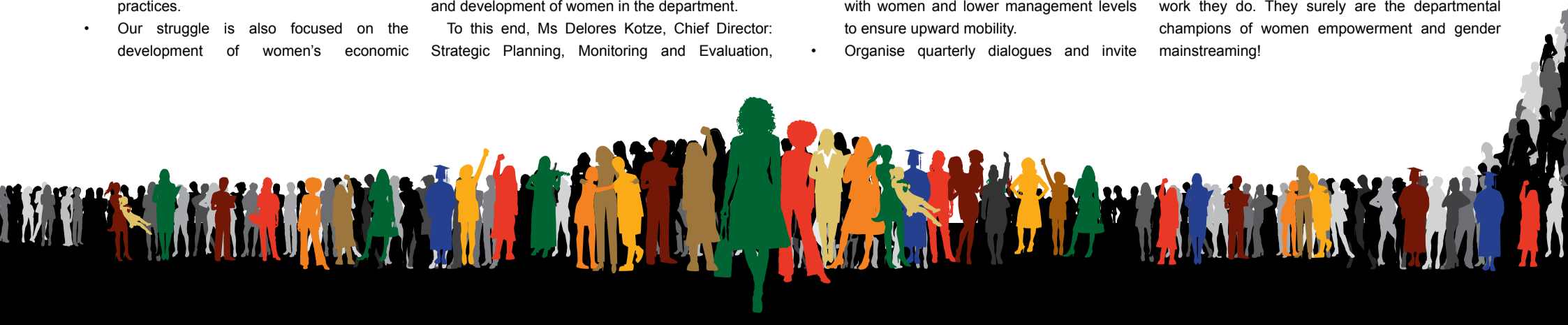
- A sustainable mentorship programme through which women leaders and all senior management can lift others as they rise up the ladder.
- Women empowerment means knowing what your rights are, what your responsibilities are, what you are entitled to and being informed on a continuous basis.
- Taking the initiative and starting with self.
- Putting in place departmental gender management systems that would ensure safe spaces for women to work, perform and achieve.
- Organised conversation forums that seek to empower women.
- Expanded networks with inclusion of services that cater for the social needs of society. This means working closely with the Department of Social Development on issues of maintenance, social security, etc;
- Shake up the bottom bulge that is saturated with women and lower management levels to ensure upward mobility.
- Organise quarterly dialogues and invite

external partners on identified topics.

- Create a better learning environment where staff can enhance their careers, have space to grow and are sure to leave the department as better and more educated persons.
- Organise a Sisterhood Pledge on Women Empowerment and Gender Equality.

The GESF also emphasises the issue of empowerment and building capacity for women in order for them to compete in all facets of society. Focussing on this area during the dialogue, we invited one of our former graduates from of the Capacity Training programme on Conflict Resolution, Negotiation and Mediation, Ms Nontobeko Sibisi, the founder & CEO of Bhubesikazi Investment Holdings and winner of the 2014 Gold Award for the most promising Young Entrepreneur with Roodepoort Chamber of Commerce This young dynamite has featured in several local newspapers, television and radio shows; and is the author of the book titled "Isithunzi Sami". She aroused the lioness roar in the room as she mingled and charged all the women to reckon with "who they really are?" She left an indomitable footprint on the DIRCO path!

Mainstreaming gender in the department is beginning to show progress. Our training branch, Diplomatic Training, Research and Development, has embraced putting on a gender lens in all their work. They pay a keen interest to gender imperatives and women advancement into all the work they do. They surely are the departmental champions of women empowerment and gender mainstreaming!





EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLNESS (EHW) DIRECTORATE

Clinic Extension number: 11909



Our Vision is a healthy, motivated and productive DIRCO workforce.

Mission: EHW is committed to rendering a professional and confidential psychosocial support services to DIRCO employees and their families and empower them to take charge of their health and well-being.

The EHW Programme is based on the following principles:

- confidentiality
- professionalism
- accessibility
- neutrality
- timely interventions
- Batho Pele.

EHW PERSONNEL:

- Psychologists, social workers and a professional nurse (stationed at the DIRCO's On-site Clinic next to the cafeteria). All EHW practitioners are registered with the respective professional bodies e.g. Health Professions Council of South Africa and SA Council of Social Workers.
- Sports Coordinator and Admin Officers.

FOUR PILLARS OF THE EHW PROGRAMME AND SERVICES:

- **Wellness Management:** Psycho-social support - counselling psychotherapy; crisis interventions; debriefing; management support services; or productivity management. EHW officials assist employees and managers to deal with issues that are affecting employees' moral and/or well being, leading to distress, reduced productivity or causing absenteeism.
- **Sports (Physical Wellness Promotion):** EWC in partnership with the DIRCO's sports council, invite DIRCO employees to join any of the following sporting codes: aerobics, athletics, chess, golf, ladies soccer, men soccer, netball and volleyball.
- **Health and productivity management:** provision of primary health services and disease management through DIRCO's On-site Clinic; health promotion (health screenings campaigns, workshop and articles).
- **HIV & AIDS, STI and TB Management:** Provision of counselling and psychotherapeutic service for employees and family members affected and infected by HIV/AIDS; HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns and Voluntary HIV Testing at the On-site Clinic and during health screening events.
- **Safety health environment risk and quality management (occupational health and safety):** To ensure a healthy and safe work environment; identify and manage environmental hazards as well as occupational health and safety related risks; and as far as reasonably



possible prevent injuries on duty and occupational diseases.

Mission Support Programme:

Pre-posting: Group training/workshop in all diplomatic classes, mission preparation workshop, group pre-posting workshop for spouses and individual and/or family pre-posting counselling.

During posting: The EHW provides telephonic and face-to-face psychotherapy and counselling; facilitates alcohol or drug treatment when necessary; provides trauma debriefing; crises intervention; management support; and team-building interventions in cases of intra or intergroup challenges.

Post-posting: Group and individual or family debriefing; counselling for

employees and family members.

Processes to follow if employees need EHW assistance

- **Self-referral** – An employee can voluntarily contact an EHW consultant for help. All employees are entitled to confidential EHW services.
- **Informal referral** – Based on concerns, a colleague, supervisor, family member or shop steward may encourage or advise an employee to consult the EHW. A concerned employee may contact EWC for advice on how to approach and to refer a fellow colleague.
- **Formal referral** – The supervisor can make

a formal referral when an employee's work performance shows a pattern of decline due to behavioural, emotional, health and/or psycho-social problems. Managers are advised to contact EHW for guidelines on how or when to make a formal referral.

It is vitally important to note that referral to EHW is a remedial intervention and not a punitive measure. EHW offices are at: CORE4-01. Our telephone number is: 012 351 1400

Please check the Functional List for EHW practitioners' contact numbers

Primary Health Service (at the Sick-bay next to Cafeteria)
Professional Nurse – email Mahlangumv@dirco.gov.za

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