

IT'S YOUR VOICE

Internal Newsletter of the Department of International
Relations and Cooperation

ubuntu diplomat



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Editor's Letter

Dear Diplomats,

Let me first introduce myself, I am a DIRCO intern and I am delighted to be given an opportunity to be the editor of this month's issue. Working on an internal newsletter is such a fulfilling and rewarding opportunity. July is a very special and important month as we celebrate the legacy of Nelson Mandela, so this gives me the opportunity to work on a special month when a day of humanity is celebrated internationally.

Nelson Mandela Day is celebrated on 18 July every year and is recognised as an annual international "day of humanitarian action". DIRCO hosted a number of public participation programmes for Mandela Month. This issue highlights Minister Dr Naledi Pandor, Deputy Minister Alvin Botes and heads of missions visiting Jan Kotlo Primary School at Nellmapius in Pretoria on Mandela Day where they were painting, cleaning the yard as well as donated money for the school to buy necessities. 2019 marks the tenth year of Nelson Mandela International Day and this year's theme was "Action against Poverty."

Mandela Day was also celebrated by various South African missions including Doha and Rome. South Africans need to embrace the chance to celebrate Nelson Mandela's life for the whole of July. This gives everyone the opportunity to heed the call for action and to recognise their individual power to make an imprint and change the world around them. A global movement for positive change begins with small actions. As each person acts, they fuel momentum towards positive change, raising awareness and expanding the reach of Mr Mandela's values of fighting injustice, helping people in need and practicing reconciliation.

South Africa, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and France were honoured in two ceremonies marking the 70th anniversary of the end of the Berlin Blockade. This special relationship between South Africa and Germany, which is sometimes forgotten, was also highlighted. This successful relief operation also contributed to the foundations for a future successful Germany. The South African Government and the South African Air Force were thanked for being part of the historic Berlin Airlift relief operation, which can be described as a true act of Ubuntu.

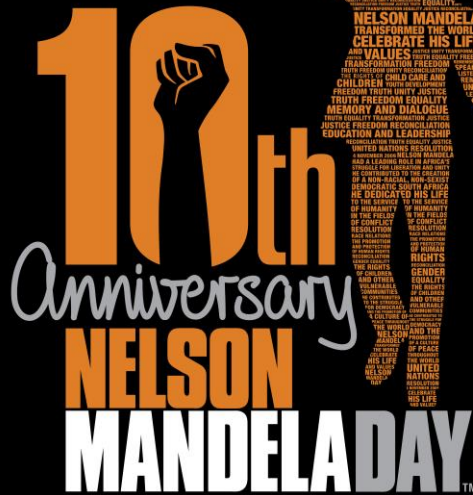


Not forgetting that DIRCO also hosted the National Model United Nations 2019 Conference in July 2019. A total of 105 participants from nine higher education institutions participated in this year's event. This event creates a platform for students to explore international relations and diplomacy. It is a space where they can enhance their confidence and develop skills in research, teamwork and communication.

I would like to close by congratulating the Ambassador of Mexico Mr Thokozani Dlomo, for presenting his credentials to the President of the United Mexican States, Mr Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador. Keep shining the South African flag.

MC
Mmakgotso Chuene

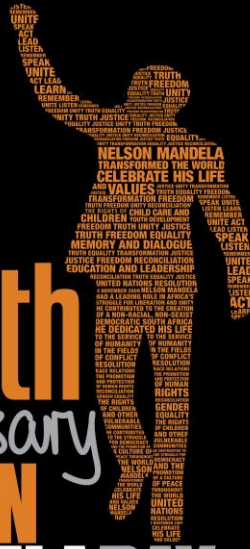
NELSON MANDELA DAY - THE NEXT CHAPTER



 A NELSON MANDELA FOUNDATION INITIATIVE

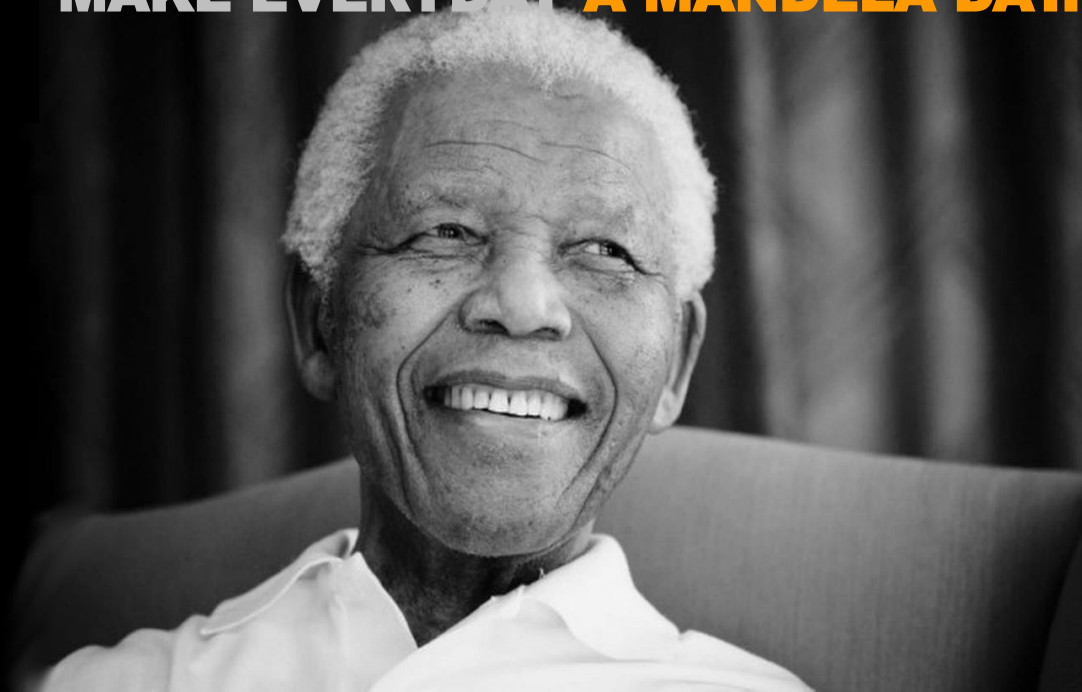
For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.

-Nelson Mandela



The world celebrates former President Nelson Mandela's birthday on 18 July, which has been declared as the Nelson Mandela International Day. On this day as South Africans, we embrace the chance to celebrate Nelson Mandela's life for the whole of July. This gives everyone the opportunity to heed the call to action for people to recognise their individual power to make an imprint and change the world around them. A global movement for positive change begins with small actions. As each person acts, they fuel momentum towards positive change, raising awareness and expanding the reach of Mr Mandela's values – fighting injustice, helping people in need and practising reconciliation.

**TAKE ACTION. INSPIRE CHANGE,
MAKE EVERYDAY A MANDELA DAY.**



BUDGET VOTE 2019



BUDGET VOTE 2019

11 July 2019
14:00

National Assembly, Parliament, Cape Town



“This year we celebrate 25 years of freedom. We recall too that Rwanda is commemorating 25 years since the genocide of 1994. We reaffirm our friendship and solidarity with the people and government of Rwanda and salute them for their determined efforts to achieve reconciliation and a nation at peace with itself. The search for social cohesion and reconciliation have been put to good effect in both our countries and we should use this common experience to forge greater links.”
– Minister Naledi Pandor



BUDGET VOTE 2019

11 July 2019
14:00

National Assembly, Parliament, Cape Town



“We have to use our extensive network and limited resources to support the emergence of a world where all enjoy freedom and democracy, increased human security and peace. Our relationships with the world must be centred on achieving these outcomes.”
– Minister Naledi Pandor





BUDGET VOTE 2019

11 July 2019
14:00

National Assembly, Parliament, Cape Town



“Now that the ACFTA has come into force, immense opportunity for trade within Africa has come into being...

Once the agreement is fully operationalised Africa will be one of the world's largest single markets encompassing 55 countries, a population of 1,2 billion people and a combined GDP of 3.2 trillion U.S. dollars.”

– Minister Naledi Pandor



BUDGET VOTE 2019

11 July 2019
14:00

National Assembly, Parliament, Cape Town



“We will promote action to realise the seven priorities

announced by the President:

- economic transformation and job creation
- education, skills and health;
- consolidating the social wage through reliable and quality basic services
- spatial Integration, human settlements and local government
- social cohesion and safe communities;
- a capable, ethical and developmental state; a better Africa and world.

These priorities are global, they are in the NDP, the SDGs (Agenda 2030) and in our Africa Agenda 2063.”

– Minister Naledi Pandor









Deputy Minister
Cassioth Maseko-Dlamini

Minister
Naledi Pandor

Deputy Minister
Alvin Botse

BUDGET VOTE 2019

11 July 2019
14:00

National Assembly, Parliament, Cape Town

“Minerals beneficiation, advanced manufacturing and wider use of digital technologies could place us at the leading edge of economic innovation support in Africa.”

– Minister Naledi Pandor







Deputy Minister
Cassioth Maseko-Dlamini

Minister
Naledi Pandor

Deputy Minister
Alvin Botse

BUDGET VOTE 2019

11 July 2019
14:00

National Assembly, Parliament, Cape Town

“Our capacity for innovation must become part of our diplomatic interactions and be utilised to advance our continent’s interests.

We should promote the creation of hundreds of research institutes all over Africa and support them to be innovative, productive and responsive. We have the capacity, let us use it strategically.”

– Minister Naledi Pandor

MINISTER PANDOR HOLDS BILATERAL MEETING WITH HER KOREAN COUNTERPART

By Jordaan Pierre



The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Dr Naledi Pandor, meeting with the Korean Foreign Minister, Dr Kang Kyung-wha, at the OR Tambo International Airport.

The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Dr Naledi Pandor, had fruitful discussions on Monday, 15 July 2019, with the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea (ROK), Dr Kang Kyung-wha, who concluded a two-day Working Visit to South Africa as part of her tour of three African countries, including Ethiopia and Ghana.

While in South Africa, Minister Kang also participated in a ROK Regional Heads of Mission Conference. She also addressed the Korea-Africa Economic Forum, a public-private international economic forum, jointly hosted by the Korea-Africa Foundation and the South African Institute of International Affairs in Johannesburg.

The meeting between the two foreign ministers covered several bilateral and multilateral issues of mutual interest, among others, the status of bilateral relations between the two countries, trade and investment, technical cooperation, Korea-Africa trade and development cooperation and other international issues of importance.

The engagement took place against the background of the high-level, first meeting last year, on the margins of the G20 Summit in Argentina, between Presidents Cyril Ramaphosa and Moon Jae-in from the ROK.

South Africa and the ROK used the opportunity of Minister Kang's visit to South Africa to take stock of the countries' bilateral ties, spanning many areas of cooperation, including to discuss how trade and investment relations could be further strengthened, expanded and deepened. The ROK, as the 12th-largest global economy and South Africa's fourth-largest trading partner in Asia, offers valuable lessons in terms of its rapid economic development since the end of the Korean War in the 1950s.

As far as the African continent is concerned, the two ministers exchanged views on partnerships and development initiatives within the framework of the Africa-Korea Forum, as well as discussed the vast economic opportunities that the African Continental Free Trade Agreement present to industrialised countries such as the ROK. Being already the ROK's largest trading partner in Africa, South Africa is ideally positioned to serve as a regional hub from which Korean companies could further venture, economically, into the continent.

Ministers Pandor and Kang also discussed enhanced bilateral cooperation in the fields of skills development and education, cultural exchange, immigration and other sectoral fields, and agreed to co-chair the next Ministerial Meeting of the joint structured bilateral mechanism at the earliest, mutually convenient opportunity.

As far as multilateral issues of mutual interest are concerned, the two ministers, among others, briefed each other on regional developments of importance and exchanged views on several prominent global issues, including to continue to seek multilateral solutions to global challenges.

Minister Pandor further acknowledged the role that the ROK was playing internationally, including on the African continent, through its contributions to peacekeeping efforts in South Sudan; and in terms of the ROK's successful admission last year as the Indian Ocean Rim Association's (IORA) ninth Dialogue Partner (at the 18th IORA Council of Ministers' Meeting held in Durban on 2 November 2018). Minister Pandor expressed South Africa's confidence that the ROK would play a pivotal role in advancing the objectives of IORA, as the apex body in the Indian Ocean region.

It is with great pleasure that the Embassy of the Republic of South Africa in Mexico City wishes to inform you that Ambassador Dennis Thokozani Dlomo presented his credentials to the President of the United Mexican States on Monday, 12 August 2019, Mr Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador. The Ambassadors of Indonesia, Nicaragua, and China also presented their Credentials. Congratulations, Ambassador Dlomo. It was a special occasion.



DIRCO HOSTS THE NATMUN 2019 CONFERENCE

By Albert Geldenhuys



The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) hosted the National Model United Nations (NATMUN) 2019 Conference from Wednesday, 10 July, to Friday, 12 July 2019. A total of 105 participants from nine higher education institutions (universities and colleges) participated in this year's event.

DIRCO and the United Nations Association of South Africa (UNASA - Pretoria Chapter), formed a partnership in 2011 and ever since co-facilitate eight NATMUN conferences for university and college students. This year's theme was Movement and Mobilisation and focussed on migration matters. It was a more practical theme compared to previous conferences that focussed on the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 Agenda and the transition to the Sustainable Development Goals.

In essence, NATMUN is a debating competition between South African tertiary students. This event undoubtedly creates a platform for students to explore international relations and diplomacy. It is a space where they can enhance their confidence and develop skills in research, teamwork and communication.

The Directorate: Human Resource Development and Performance Management (HRD & PM) has facilitated the NATMUN and Model United Nations South African Universities (MUNSAU) Conference on behalf of the DIRCO. The Branch: Global Governance and Continental Agenda played an instrumental part in terms of content direction, adjudication and delivering numerous key addresses during these events. Keynote addresses were delivered by Ms Shange-Buthane and Messrs Laher and Bengu.

The outcome of the conference was the announcement of category winners in the four conference committees of the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Security Council (UNSC), UN Development Committee (UNDP), UN Environmental Programme, as well as best positions papers and overall best tertiary institution winner. This year, as with the previous year's event, the winners will embark on an experiential learning programme that was developed by the Directorate: HRD & PM in collaboration with colleagues from the Branch: Diplomatic Training, Research and Development.

MINISTER PANDOR PARTICIPATES IN MANDELA MONTH ACTIVITIES AT JAN KOTLOLO PRIMARY SCHOOL

By Mercia Monaki



Nelson Mandela Day is celebrated on 18 July every year and is recognised as an annual international “day of humanitarian action”. This year’s Nelson Mandela Day was held under the theme: “Action against Poverty”.

The year 2019 marks the fifth Nelson Mandela Day after the passing of the former statesman. The Department of International Relations and Cooperation participated in the celebrations by hosting an event at Jan Kotlolo Primary School in Nellmapius Township, Gauteng.

Minister Naledi Pandor and heads of missions accredited to South Africa, accompanied by the DIRCO staff, visited Jan Kotlolo Primary School to participate and render services such as painting, cleaning and gardening. The Minister and the Ambassadors also donated necessities to assist the school in making the learning environment more conducive.

“When he came out of prison, what he wanted to do was to draw everyone together, whether you have done wrong or good towards him. And because of his work, he will live to unite everyone.” – Minister Naledi Pandor



DIRCO'S DEPUTY MINISTERS PARTICIPATE IN MANDELA DAY ACTIVITIES

By Mmakgotso Chuene

"There can be no greater gift than that of giving one's time and energy to helping others without expecting anything in return." – Nelson Mandela

Both the Deputy Ministers of International Relations and Cooperation, Ms Candith Mashego-Dlamini, and Mr Alvin Botes participated in activities to mark Mandela Month.

Deputy Minister Mashego-Dlamini visited Manzini Primary School in Mpumalanga on 2 August 2019, where she also attended during her primary school years. She gave a motivation to the grade 10 learners, assuring them that no matter what their background was, it would all work out in the end only if they kept on learning.

The Deputy Minister spent some of her 67 minutes dishing up a warm meal for the Grade 1 learners.



Deputy Minister Alvin visited the Laingsburg community in the Northern Cape, where he paid a special visit to Hendrik and Margriet Horn's house in Ward 1, and Jacoba Volmik's house in Ward 4. The Deputy Minister spent his 67 minutes painting Ms Volmik's house.



SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY IN ROME CELEBRATES THE TENTH MANDELA DAY ANNIVERSARY

by Mpho Ndimande



The Mission collaborated with the Community of Sant'Egidio to commemorate Nelson Mandela International Day at the Città Ecosolidale Centre on 18 July 2019.

The Città Ecosolidale Centre, is an affiliate of the Community of Sant'Egidio which coordinates a project for the collection and distribution of second-hand clothing, shoes, bags, toys, furniture, old paintings and other useful items from charities and individuals for distribution to disadvantaged Italians, former prisoners and refugees, through a distribution centre in Rome. The centre, which was formally used as an army barracks, receives between 300 to 400 donations from individuals and organisations in the form of second-hand items on a daily basis.

On 18 July 2019, the task of the Mission and invited stakeholders was to assist in unpacking donated second-hand clothing items and sorting them according to age, size and gender, in order for them to be sterilised and washed.



During the planning phase, Mission staff and stakeholders were encouraged to donate good second-hand items, which were taken to the centre in the spirit of goodwill to others in need. Activities of the day were widely covered in local print and online media as well as on the Mission's social media pages.

Italy's National Athletics Federation (FIDAL) also played a role in commemorating International Nelson Mandela Day by getting various well-known Italian athletes to record Nelson Mandela quotes in videos which were streamed on its website. The recordings were kept on a loop throughout the day, until 19 July 2019.

SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY IN DOHA MANDELA DAY CELEBRATIONS

by: Sybil Matlhako



In honour of the South African struggle icon, the late former President Nelson Mandela, and in celebration of the Nelson Mandela International Day as declared by the United Nations for worldwide commemorations on 18 July, the Embassy rallied the support of the South African community living in Qatar towards donating clothes and toys for a charitable cause that would benefit the Syrian refugees and the needy African communities. The initiative was done in collaboration with Qatar Charity as part of the global partnerships and focussed on the impoverished communities. In handing over the donated items to Mr Abdullah Al-Dosari, Director of the General Services Department: Qatar Charity, Ambassador Moosa emphasised that the 67 minutes did not require that people spent more money, however they had to be creative enough to undertake initiatives for the greater good of humanity.

The Embassy further distributed to the children user-friendly diabetes activity book, interactive diabetes games to raise awareness and teach children about diabetes and to support families and children with diabetes at the Sidra Hospital in collaboration with SASOL Qatar and Qatar Diabetes Association on 22 July 2019.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador Moosa expressed the Embassy's appreciation in collaborating with SASOL and the Qatar Diabetes Association. He highlighted the importance of spending the 67 minutes of dedicated significant actions that would change and positively impact the livelihoods of others. Mr Jack Saba underlined the importance of contributing to the global movement inspired by the core values that the late Nelson Mandela espoused. Mr Saba further highlighted the commitment of SASOL to nurture a healthy population by increasing the levels of awareness and knowledge about diabetes in the country in partnership with the Qatar Diabetes Association.



COMMEMORATION OF 70 YEARS OF THE END THE OF BERLIN AIRLIFT

By Mike Basson

During a two-day commemoration event in Berlin, which took place on 11 and 12 May 2019 in Berlin, the South African Government and the South African Air Force were thanked for being part of the historic Berlin Airlift relief operation, which can be described as a true act of Ubuntu.

South Africa, together with the United States, the United Kingdom (UK), Canada and France, were honoured in two ceremonies marking the 70 anniversary of the end of the Berlin Blockade. This special relationship between South Africa and Germany, which is sometimes forgotten, was also highlighted. This successful relief operation also contributed to the foundations for a future successful Germany.

Between 1948 and 1949, the aircrews of the United States Air Force, the Royal Canadian Air Force, the Royal Australian Air Force, the Royal New Zealand Air Force and the South African Air Force (SAAF), flew essential supplies to the people of West Berlin, as railway, road and canal access to the sectors of Berlin under Western control was not possible.



Minister Plenipotentiary Adv MA Cassimjee and Captain Thulasizwe Mkhwanazi greet the Federal Minister of Defence, Dr Ursula von der Leyen

Over a period of 11 months, from June 1948 to May 1949, 2.3 million tons of supplies were moved on 277 500 flights. On record day, nearly 1 400 flights were recorded, landing and taking off in close to one minute intervals in West Berlin. Nearly every aspect of the airlift broke an aviation record of some sort.

On 22 and 23 September 1948, 131 SAAF pilots were deployed to Bassingbourn Airbase, in the UK, where they were trained to fly the Royal Air Force aircraft.

After one month, they were transferred to Lübeck and began their humanitarian missions. In April 1949, the first group of South African soldiers was replaced by a second group, which was also deployed to Lübeck.

In September 1949, the South Africans returned home after they had successfully completed 1 240 flights between Western Germany and West Berlin. The Commander of the airlift summarised the South African contribution as follows: *"The South African Squadron has impressed all of us. They fulfilled their task in the endeavour 'Airlift' with such devotion and selflessness, that they were an inspiring role model for all of us"*.

For his bravery, South African pilot Joe Joubert was also awarded a medal of honour after the Berlin Airlift. In the service of humanity, one South African flying officer lost his life during the humanitarian relief operation.

In understanding the difficult circumstances of the Berliners, Ms Ruth Andries–Federich kept a diary of her young life in the city.



Minister Plenipotentiary Adv MA Cassimjee and Captain Mkhwanazi preparing to lay South Africa's wreath.



Lieutenant Gail Halverson from the United States Air Force, who became known as "Der Schokoladen Flieger"

In the diary, she described Berlin as having: "No electricity, no water, (little food) and no coal. And still with temperatures of between minus 15 and 20 degrees below zero every night. People are freezing to death in their beds."

A heart -warming story of hope was that of Lieutenant Gail Halverson from the United States Air Force, who became known as "Der Schokoladen Flieger" (The Chocolate Flier), because he would drop chocolates by miniature parachutes made from handkerchiefs for the children below.

In commemorating 70 years of the end of the blockade, two separate services were held to honour the contribution of the participating countries. During a function hosted on 11 May 2019 by the German Minister of Defence, Dr Ursula von der Leyen, the Minister paid specific tribute to the nations that assisted in the relief operation, and lead a military ceremony to honour the five countries involved.

In a subsequent event hosted on 12 May 2019 at Tempelhof, one of the main airports used for the relief operations, the Minister of Justice, Dr Katarina Barley, under the auspices of the Mayor of Berlin, Dr Michael Müller, hosted a wreath-laying ceremony to commemorate the end of the airlift, and to thank the countries involved for their contribution to this unique humanitarian act, with a formal ceremony and a public event. The Mayor of Berlin, Federal Ministers, high-ranking politicians, representatives of the Diplomatic Corps as well as military veterans, also stood in silence for a brief moment and remembered the immense contribution of all the pilots, their incredible service, their heroic selflessness and sacrifice.

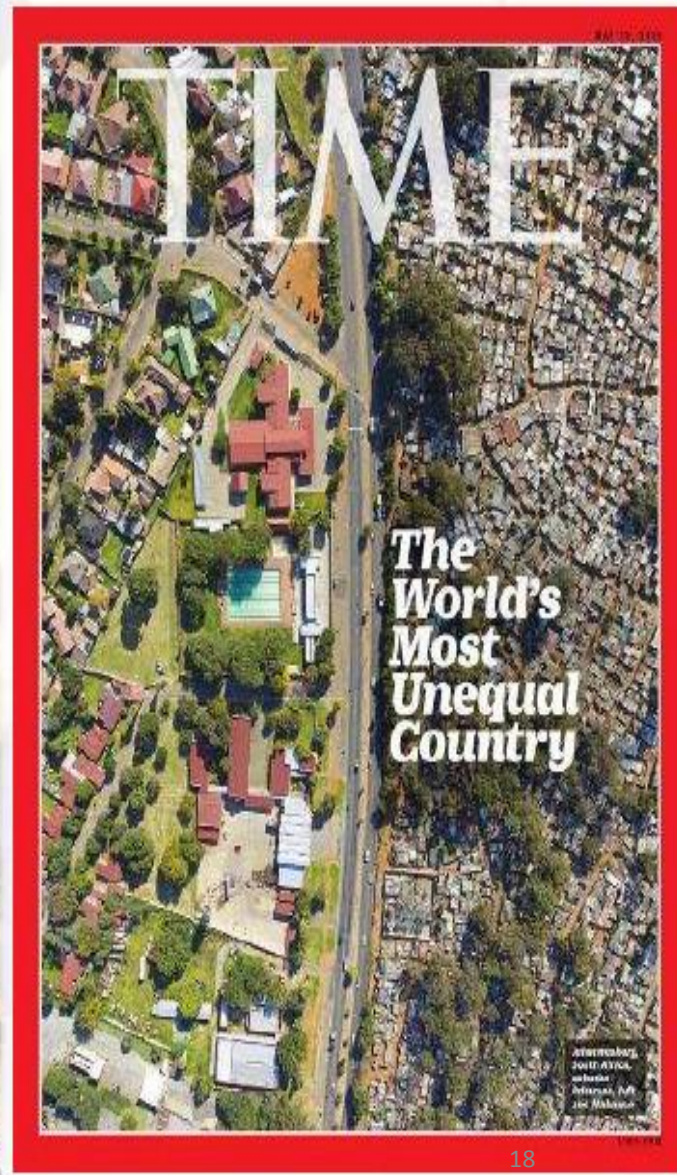
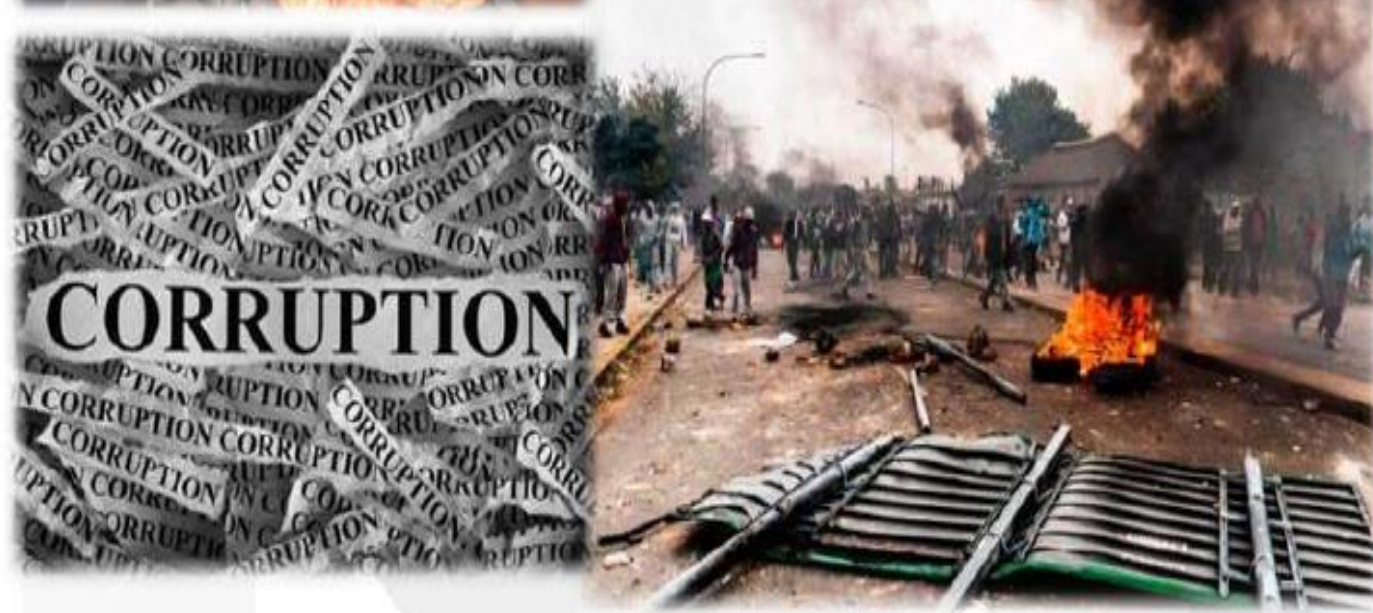
Even today, the Germans' hearts still go out to the South African pilots who flew during the airlift to support the people of Berlin and Germany during these desperate times.

Under the leadership of Ambassador Stone Sizani, South Africa constantly strives towards the fostering of these deep ties of friendship with Germany and the further enhancement of broad-based cooperation through the Bi-National Commission, which was initiated by former President Nelson Mandela and Chancellor Helmut Kohl in 1996.

Put your best foot forward



But 'Leave no one behind'



BASED ON A TRUE STORY:

A different kind of black

by Ruby Marks



She drank poisonous pesticide. Meant for killing the pests that fed on the rice paddy field, and that stopped the seeds in the fields from growing into crops that could feed the village. Crops that were tended over with hope and faith. But drunk by humans, it becomes the type that kills. And so she died.

Her story started in an informal settlement in South Africa, and ended on the edge of a rice paddy field in rural Bangladesh. She was an unemployed woman with a young daughter, who lived with her granny in a mkhukhu shared by two siblings, a sister and a brother. He ran a spaza shop with his brother from an old, battered container with a metal grille crudely cut out of its centre on the side that was reserved for serving customers. They met when she came to buy candles, and they fell into a shy kind of like with each other.

He had a different style of wooing, one that she was not used to. She marvelled at the fact that they shared the same skin colour, and yet his hair was as straight and as smooth as the weaves she would buy at Diskem when she could. Only hers had gone stiff and hard with age and use, like the bristles of her granny's garden broom. He asked her how she was whenever she came to buy items. Seemed to really listen when she responded shyly that she was fine. Sometimes, he gave her a sweet with her change through the iron bars that separated them. And everytime he handed her small change, his thumb would stroke softly across the crease where her hand joined her wrist.

Gently, and with none of the crass harshness of sharp fingernails scraped across her soft inner palm with which the local boys announced their intentions. This excited her, filled her with curiosity at this gentleness. She started looking for opportunities to go to the shop, often splitting her purchases into two just so that she could see his dark berry eyes light up with a smile when he saw her. She felt special. Chosen. Seen. And she liked it. And she could see that he did too. Sometimes, he handed her a Cadbury slab chocolate, because he said it reminded him of her - dark and sweet. Or he would somehow forget to ring up an item that she had bought.

And she was grateful for these small mercies of kindness. And she hoped that the feelings she felt growing inside of her would also come with the mercy of love and caring and support for her and her baby. She hoped. She hoped.

And he said he was from Bangladesh. Bangladesh! Even the name sounded strange and deliciously intoxicating.

She would roll it around her tongue at night when she was lying in bed at night with the sounds of the township all around her ... dogs barking, someone drunkenly cursing as he stumbled over a pothole, a baby crying plaintively next door. He treated her gently. Asked if they could see each other. She said no. She wasn't ready yet. He was too strange, this man from a different country. And this, for her, was a new experience.

At home, her granny was pleased and surprised at the eagerness with which she would agree to go and buy candles or bread. Before, this was one of the main reasons for the angry muttering from her granny, because she would always complain about the daily trip to the spaza shop. Why couldn't enough food be bought for the month from the pension and SASSA grant? Why was she always the one who had to go to the shop? She was already 25 years old and therefore an adult, why couldn't her younger brother or sister go instead? And then she would march off angrily, trying to side step the rubble and puddles on the dirt road between the shacks that led to the Safmarine container that announced its purpose with a carefully painted name in big green letters: *Ali's Spaza Shop*, where the two brothers ran the shop, and slept on the floor at the back. At first, when the neighbourhood saw the two brothers with their dark skin and straight black hair and strange attempts to speak their own version of the local language, people were suspicious and concerned. The old men muttered that this was not a good thing, who were these strangers with their shop and funny hair? The young men looked at them with envy - they had a shop of their own, and was running their own business. How did they manage that? Only the woman were pleased - the prices were lower compared to town and they allowed credit! In these times, that means a lot. ➡

But still, acceptance was grudging and the two brothers knew that they were not completely accepted, and so a transactional peace of a kind existed. But the peace was uneasy. Some of the young men looked at the brothers sullenly, and would sometimes make remarks that said they didn't belong there. Other times, they would make barely concealed threats. Still, the two brothers stood behind the metal rails with its metal barrier through which money and items were exchanged and they just smiled nervously. And then one day she came to see the brother she liked, and told him that there were people in the community who were angry, and who said that the brothers were trying to take away their women and that they should go back where they came from. That they were not wanted.

She told him that trouble was coming. But he said they were part of the community, and wanted to remain. She went home. The next day she woke up, and walked outside. There was a strange, nervous, excited atmosphere, the type that always signalled that something bad had happened. A neighbour told her that the shop had been burned down, and the brothers were attacked with knives and panga's. One of the brothers were killed and the other one got away. Frantically, she walked up and down the street trying to find out who survived. Was Ali still alive? And then her mobile phone rang. It was Ali.

He sounded sad and scared. He described how the last time he saw his brother was when he was stabbed by a few young people who sometimes hung around the shop. He told her that he couldn't see a future for him in the country anymore, and that he was going to return home.

He told her he loved her, and that he wanted to marry her and take her back to his beautiful Bangladesh, where the lands were green and fertile, and you could live off the land. Where all you needed was a strong buffalo for ploughing the paddy field and provide milk, and fruit trees with strange names like jackfruit and 20 types of mangoes! She hesitated, thought of the drab sameness of the shanty town where she was living, and tried to imagine living elsewhere where the sky was wide and the country peaceful and green. She thought of his soft black eyes, and said yes.

We don't know what happened to her after she arrived in Bangladesh and moved with her husband to a small village where they moved in with his family. She left her daughter at home with her granny. We were told that she converted to Islam, and that she was daily seen in a black hijab working in the paddy field with other members of the family. We were told that she became a devout Muslim, and prayed five times a day. Often, she could be seen walking down the street to the shops alone. Always alone. She couldn't speak the language and struggled to adapt. Her husband's family was also not happy with her presence, and thought that their brother would've been better off with a local woman in an arranged marriage. Her husband was quieter in his homeland and seldom spoke up for her.

All we do know is that one day she was discovered lying dead in a paddy field, a half empty jerrycan of poisonous pesticide lying next to her. It was clear that she had died in agony because she was curled up in a fetal position, still clutching her stomach and with foam around her mouth.

We were informed about her passing and contacted her granny to tell her the sad news. She screamed when she was told. We called her again to enquire gently about the remains, whether there was money to bring her home for burial. There was none.

We requested a full enquiry but could not find answers. And so, she was cremated along with the other unclaimed bodies that relatives were too poor to bury or whose relatives could not be found. I don't know what happened to the ashes, tried to find out but no-one could tell me. And by then, the husband had already married another girl. Later, instead of flying,

I undertook the long journey by road from Dhaka to Chittagong, in the hope that we might feel her spirit and so that I could pray for her. I asked our Honorary Consul to show me where her ashes might be because I wanted to lay some flowers there. She could be anywhere and everywhere, he responded. And that had to do. So, I laid the flowers on the ground, between anywhere and everywhere, because that is where she rested.

May her soul Rest In Peace. May she knows that someone cared enough to look for her.

August: The Month of Queens

by: Lebohang Mosupa



As we have approached the month of August, it is essential to reflect on the achievements of women, and the imperative role that women of all races and denominations play in South Africa. On the 9 August 1956, over 20 000 women marched to the Union buildings in Pretoria to present a petition against the carrying of passes by women. This protest was led by Lillian Ngoyi-, a political activist at the time.

August month gives us the platform and the urge to reflect on the true heritage and meaning of Women's Day and Women's Month, and to appreciate the journey South African women have achieved and still are achieving.

Let's take the time this month to recognise and appreciate all that our women do for us, both personally and for South Africa as a whole. In the last couple of years, we have seen the first female-owned airline in South Africa, the first black woman in South Africa to become a pilot and a South African woman appointed as the head of Facebook Africa (just to name a few). "Ubuntu" represents a quality that includes essential human virtues: compassion and humanity. South African people are well known for practising Ubuntu. Ubuntu also means "I am what I am because of who we all are." This sense of community prompts women to let the achievements of others inspire and unlock their own strengths and potential to make a difference, within their families, society and our country.



Looking at the women in the public service, I am fortunate enough to work with strong women whom exude leadership qualities, professionalism, integrity and passion for what they do. Women who go out of their way to share their knowledge and empower other women to be great masters of their own destinies.

In a world where women are categorized to be pulling each other down and competing against one another, it is refreshing as an intern and a young woman to be in a work environment where women are working together, supporting each other, empowering each other and uplifting each other, while coming together and using each other's strengths to get work done. Looking at women in entrepreneurship, there is a great spirit of entrepreneurship in South Africa, and the government has implemented campaigns aimed specifically at empowering women and allowing them to reach their full potential.

For instance, South African Woman entrepreneurs (SAWEN), an initiative by the Department of Trade and Industry, aims to empower and motivate women by urging them to talk about the challenges they face in the business world, and how these can be overcome.

As an intern at the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, I am in awe at the sisterhood I have come to experience in the field of work where I am placed. Not only am I learning from the women that I am working with, but I am also inspired, I am lead and empowered, I am amazed at the exceptional quality of work that they produce every time, the projects and initiatives that they lead, their sense of style, the way they carry themselves and their humility and kindness towards one another while sharing laughter in between, it is because of my experience working with women that I felt the need to write a piece that acknowledges the month of August. So while many might think the ideal thing to do is to buy an expensive gift for women's day, I propose that one rather reflects on the real meaning and heritage of women's day and the whole month, and think of more meaningful ways one can celebrate and express your gratitude for all the women in South Africa. Whether that is by showing appreciation for a particular achievement or introducing someone to an organisation that will allow them to pursue their entrepreneurial aspirations, it all forms part of what Women's Day represents and stands for.

EMPLOYEE HEALTH & WELLNESS (EHW)

Vision: A healthy, motivated and productive workforce

Mission: Committed to rendering professional and confidential psychosocial support to DIRCO employees and their families and empowering them to take charge of their health and wellbeing.

WHILE NOT EXCLUSIVE, THE DIRECTORATE: EHW ASSISTS EMPLOYEES AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS WITH:

- Personal, family and work-related problems
- Health-related issues such as HIV and AIDS, incapacity due to ill health and other chronic illnesses.

EHW SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Confidential face-to-face and telephonic counselling/psychotherapy
- Psycho-educational workshops e.g. financial management, stress management, etc.
- Trauma debriefing and crisis intervention
- Consultation and training for managers and supervisors
- Mission support
- Health screening through the GEMS
- Promoting physical activity through different sports and recreational activities.

ON-SITE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH CLINIC

The on-site clinic is fully operational, weekdays from 8h30 to 16h00. The clinic provides the following health services:

- primary health assessments/screenings e.g. blood pressure, glucose, cholesterol and HIV testing and basic medication such as Panado
- follow-up and monitor employees with chronic illnesses
- on-duty injuries
- pre-travel vaccines and prophylaxis to employees and family members before transfer or visits abroad.

CONTACT DETAILS:

Telephone: 012 351 1400
Cell phones: 073 612 9623 / 066 473 8810 / 083 468 5630 / 060 560 3380 / 071 680 6697
On-site clinic 012 351 1909

EHW SERVICES ARE RENDERED BY PROFESSIONALLY TRAINED AND REGISTERED SOCIAL WORKERS/PSYCHOLOGISTS/NURSES

MISSION SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Pre-posting

- Training for officials and families on culture shock, coping with change, etc.
- Pre-posting individual and/or family counselling.

During posting

- Follow-up calls
- Telephone counselling and psychosocial support
- Support during medical evacuations.

After posting

- Participate in the reorientation process
- Debriefing and counselling for employees and family.

SPOUSAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME

- Pre-posting preparation and counselling
- Psychosocial support during posting
- After-posting debriefing and counselling.

HOW TO CONTACT US

• Self-referral:

An employee may voluntarily contact EHW practitioners for help.

• Informal referral:

Based on concerns, a supervisor, colleague, friend, family member or shop steward may encourage or advise an employee to consult EHW. An employee may accept or reject the referral proposal.

• Formal referral:

The supervisor can make a formal referral when an employee's work performance shows a pattern of declining due to behavioural, emotional and/or psychosocial problems.



NB: Confidentiality is our number one guiding ethical principle. Information obtained during consultations will be treated as confidential and will not be transferred to personnel files or discussed with anyone without written consent.



**international relations
& cooperation**

Department:
International Relations and Cooperation



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International Relations and Cooperation
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