

IT'S YOUR VOICE



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ubuntu diplomat

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EDITOR'S

LETTER

This year marks 22 years since South Africa started to commemorate 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children. It is a worldwide campaign that was launched at the inaugural Centre for Women's Global Leadership Institute in 1991 in honour of the role of the Mirabal sisters who were assassinated on 25 November 1960 under the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. In 1999 the United Nations General Assembly designated the 25th November as the International Day for no Violence against Women. The campaign starts on 25 November and runs until 10 December, which is International Human Rights Day.

The annual global campaign focuses on increasing awareness of the negative impact of violence against women and girls; in particular. Domestic violence has escalated during the lockdown which was instituted in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The world is experiencing an unprecedented global COVID-19 pandemic, with an alarming increase in multiple forms of violence against women and girls, especially physical, psychological, sexual and economic forms of domestic violence fueled by household economic and food insecurity, as well as confined living conditions due to lockdown and social isolation measures. The pandemic has underlined and exacerbated the continued deprivation and inequality faced by women and girls across the world.

In this month's edition, you will find a number of highlighted events that took place in November 2020.

Deputy Minister Alvin Botes delivered a key note address on the occasion of DIRCO's International Men's Day. The Webinar was part of the build-up programme activities towards beginning of the 16 Days of Activism for no Violence against Women and Children. The event was convened under the theme: #EachforEqual in line with the International Men's Day 2020 theme which underscores a point that gender equality is not only a women's issue. It also covered different viewpoints such as parenting, positive male role models, families and healthy life choices for men.

Deputy Minister Ms Candith Mashego-Dlamini led a Webinar on the importance of Cultural Diplomacy in SADC Integration. The webinar brought together highly esteemed people who have in one form or another been engaged in diplomacy. The day emphasised on the importance of culture and how it can be a catalyst for economic development and regional integration to achieve the objectives as set out for the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (2020-2030). The SADC Vision 2050 visualises a peaceful, inclusive, competitive, middle to high income industrialised region, where all citizens enjoy sustainable socio-economic well-being, justice and freedom.

In Mission Accomplished we feature Ambassador Ntsiki Mashimbye who visited the Western Amazon Region, Brazil. Turn the page to #AboutMe to read about Mr Bobby Moroe's compelling passion for the art and craft of diplomacy.

In addition, South African cabinet approved a National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide to guide our national



efforts to curb this scourge. The 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children campaign was commemorated under the theme: "Economic Justice for a Non-Violent and Non-Sexist South Africa".

In her closing remarks on the occasion of the Virtual Meeting on "Violence and Harassment in the World of Work", Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Dr. Naledi Pandor, called for us to make DIRCO safe for everyone to grow and showcase their talent without any fear of being violated or harassed. "Together, let us take action to support the fight against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide and make everyday a Day of Activism for no Violence against Women and Children. Together we can build a non-violent South Africa!"

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

MM

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Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Dr Naledi Pandor on the occasion of the Virtual Meeting on “Violence and Harassment in the World of Work”

On 30 November 2020, Minister Naledi Pandor led a dialogue on violence in and harassment in the workplace. The Webinar focused chiefly on gender-based violence (GBV) and abuse of the vulnerable in the world of work. Violence and harassment in the world of work deprives employees of their dignity and is a gross violation of human rights. It remains a widespread phenomenon in the public as well as in the private sector. One of the key high-level actions that President Ramaphosa identified in his AU Chairship Gender Agenda was the need to combat GBV as a barrier to development and gender equality.

Panel members included:

- Ms. Anne Githuku-Shongwe, UN Women;
- Ms. Tamara Mathebula, Chairperson of the Commission on Gender Equality
- Ms. Mary Makgaba, Chief Executive Officer of People Opposing Women Abuse;
- Dr. Joni Musabanyana, Director at the International Labour Organisation Southern African Multi-Country Office
- Ms. Lindelwe Dube, DIRCO Women’s Forum
- Mr. Ndumiso Mngadi, DIRCO Men for Change
- Ms. Yoliswa Makhasi, Director-General, Department of Public Service and Administration, (DPSA) on behalf of Mr Senzo Mchunu, Minister of DPSA

This year South Africa observes the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children campaign under the theme: “Economic Justice for a Non-Violent and Non-Sexist South Africa”. This theme signals our belief that women’s economic empowerment is integral to the achievement of gender equality and the eradication of Gender Based Violence and Femicide (GBV&F).

This year, 16 Days of activism for no Violence against Women and Children took place alongside the global battle against the COVID-19 pandemic. The outbreak of COVID-19 has ushered in an unprecedented health, social and economic crisis, that continues to have a profound impact on the lives of all in Africa, and very specific impacts on women. It has simultaneously ushered in new challenges in the world of work. In the context of lockdowns, it has reshaped where work happens

expanding where violence can take place in both the formal and informal economies.

The pandemic has exacerbated harmful gender stereotypes which coupled with financial challenges and unemployment have been contributory factors to increased levels of gender-based violence.

In the context of many working from home and using ICT, this has also increased the potential of cyber bullying. In the context of our continent wherein women constitute the majority of the informal sector, it has had a significant impact on livelihoods. We have read, heard and seen the increasing violence targeted at women in their homes during a time when homes were supposed to be places of safety under lockdown. This led to President Ramaphosa recognising the devastating increase in violence and femicide perpetuated against women and children and declaring it a national pandemic that is ravaging the South African society.

The Workplace is not immune from gender-based violence and harassment. The Report on the Status of Women in South Africa released by the International Women’s Forum - South Africa (2011) notes that women leave their jobs as a result of violence and harassment in the workplace or as a result of being abused by their partners. Sometimes they are forced to leave certain environments to escape abuse or run away from an abusive relationship or an abusive working environment.

This year the global community celebrates the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action which is a blueprint for achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment. The Beijing Declaration states that:

“The experience of sexual harassment is an affront to a worker’s dignity and prevents women from making a contribution commensurate with their abilities”, said Minister. “To address this, the Declaration calls on “Governments, employers, trade unions, community and youth organisations and non-governmental organisations to take action, as appropriate, to develop programmes and procedures to eliminate sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women in all educational institutions, workplaces and elsewhere.”

Violence and harassment in the world of work



Dr. Naledi Pandor
Minister: International Relations and Cooperation

16 Days of Activism for
No Violence Against
Women and Children
2020
#16Days2020



“ This is an opportune time for South Africa to vigorously drive ratification and implementation of the International Labour Organisation Convention No. 190 (ILO C190) and Recommendation No. 206. This Convention recognises the right of everyone to a world free from violence and harassment, including gender based violence.

Violence and harassment in the world of work



Ms. Lindelwe Dube
DIRCO Women’s Forum

“ If you are not dealing with sexism, misogyny and harassment or patriarchy, you’re dealing with its gatekeepers.”



16 Days of Activism for
No Violence Against
Women and Children
2020
#16Days2020

#16Days2020



It is also important to note that 16 Days of Activism this year takes place under the umbrella of the UN global campaign of Generation Equality. This provides an opportune time for South Africa to vigorously drive ratification and implementation of the International Labour Organisation Convention No. 190 (ILO C190) and Recommendation No. 206. This Convention recognises the right of everyone to a world free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence. It recommends that national governments adopt laws, regulations and policies to ensure equality and non-discrimination in the work place including workplace policies on violence and harassment. It also includes how intimate-partner violence affects women's employment and employability, productivity, health and safety. On 20 August 2020 the Minister of Labour and Employment, Mr. Thulas Nxesi,, published the Draft Code of Good Practice on the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work. This draft is aimed at giving effect to the ILO 190, the process of finalising this code is currently underway.

For the continent as a whole, ILO C190 is a historic opportunity to shape a future of work based on dignity and respect for human rights in the context of Africa Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want. The continent has been plagued by brutality and violence over many centuries, notably through the multi-layered ways in which colonialism and conquest have continued to shape the experience and response of our peoples. As we have embraced the centrality of human rights, human dignity and national sovereignty in the ways in which we have crafted our collective agenda and future, we have recognised the importance of the foundation for development as that of building peaceful and secure societies, and ones in which we respond decisively to violence.

The burden of preventing violence and harassment in the work place rests with the employer who has an obligation of creating a safe and conducive working environment for all. In order to achieve this and effectively deal with violence and harassment in the world of work, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation has a Policy on Sexual Harassment aimed at maintaining a working environment in which the dignity of employees is respected. The policy is also aimed at ensuring that a conducive environment is created wherein victims of sexual harassment do not feel that their grievances are ignored or trivialised.

Our efforts towards creating an enabling working environment are supported by the Employment equity Act, 1998 (act 55 of 1998) with amendments to the Code of Good Practice on the Handling of Sexual Harassment Cases in the Workplace. The code encourages and promotes the development and implementation of policies and procedures that will lead to the creation of workplaces that are free of sexual harassment, where employers and employees respect one another's integrity and dignity, their privacy, and their right to equity in the workplace.

The Department has also adopted a T-Shirt methodology in the fight against gender based violence. T-Shirts methodology is not about wearing T-Shirts but embracing a new approach of breaking silence, taking action and being counted-in against GBV. We encourage our employees to:

- T:** Talk – about ways to fight GBVF (we must break the silence and stop stigmatising GBVF)
- S:** Share – experiences about GBVF (Learn from each other's experiences on how to fight GBVF)
- H:** Help – those who are affected by GBVF (Do not look away, offer help)
- I:** Inform – others not to fall victims of GBVF (Be an agent of change, assist others with information)
- R:** Raise – awareness about GBVF (Initiate awareness programmes)
- T:** Take – action against GBVF (Be the change you want to see, act and be counted in)

Together, let us take action to support the fight against GBVF 365 Days a year and make everyday a Day of Activism for no Violence against Women and Children. During this 16 Days let us consolidate our efforts to fight violence and harassment in the world of work. Let us make DIRCO safe for everyone to grow and showcase their talent without any fear of being violated or harassed. Stand up and be counted, let us embrace our T-SHIRT methodology and make sure that we talk, share information, offer help, inform, raise awareness and take action now. Together we can build a non-violent South Africa!

Violence and harassment in the world of work



Dr J Musabanyana, Director at the International Labour Organisation Southern African Multi-Country Office

“Economic injustice is a form of discrimination. It is a symptom of underlying causes of historical discrimination, of gender inequality that emanates from our societal gender dynamics.”



**16 Days of Activism for
No Violence Against
Women and Children
2020**

#16Days2020



Violence and harassment in the world of work



Ms Tamara Mathebula,
Chairperson of the Commission on Gender Equality

“We have a responsibility not to look away. We must offer help to victims of violence and harassment in our various spaces.”



**16 Days of Activism for
No Violence Against
Women and Children
2020**

#16Days2020



No Woman Is Immune From GBVF: Let Us Step Up The Fight

- By Ms. Charlotte Lobe
Acting Chief Operations Officer

The unprecedented high levels of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide in our society means that no woman is immune from these heinous crimes. Our usual goodbyes have been replaced by "be safe". We even check and call or text others as often as we can and our hellos have now become: "are you still safe?". Unfortunately, perpetrators of GBVF have officially taken over our lives, our space and our time whether we like it or not.

As women, we now live with a constant fear of being attacked, violated, raped or being murdered. No place is safe, perpetrators are everywhere and unfortunately they look as decent as any other person you know. Let me rephrase and say, perpetrators are people we know, people who live amongst us, sometimes they are the people we do not want to expose because they are our relatives, friends, church leaders, political leaders etc. They do not carry a special tag that says: "be scared, be very scared". They have the most welcoming personalities and reassuring smiles. This is how they pry on unsuspecting victims. Most of them are the people known very well to their victims like their partners, family members, acquaintances, colleagues, pastors, church elders, neighbours, teachers etc. They are the people we sometimes entrust with the lives of our children, like in the case of a 3-year old girl who was raped by a taxi driver that usually transports her to school, or a family member in a case of an 11 year old raped in the comfort of her home at the age of nine by a 57 year old uncle she referred to as Papa.

With events of the recent past it is now very clear that it can also be people we do not know from a bar of soap. I recall the incident of the young girl who was raped by Nicholas Ninow in the bathroom of a Dros restaurant, in Pretoria, or a teller at a post office like in the case of Uyinene Mrwetyana who just wanted to collect a parcel. We are now even afraid to send our children on small errands across the street like buying a loaf of bread at the nearest tuck shop without fear of them being violated, kidnapped or even sold as sex slaves, home or abroad. In one case young girls between the ages of 13 and 14 were kidnapped, drugged, used as sex slaves and sometimes kept in a dungeon. All of these occurred

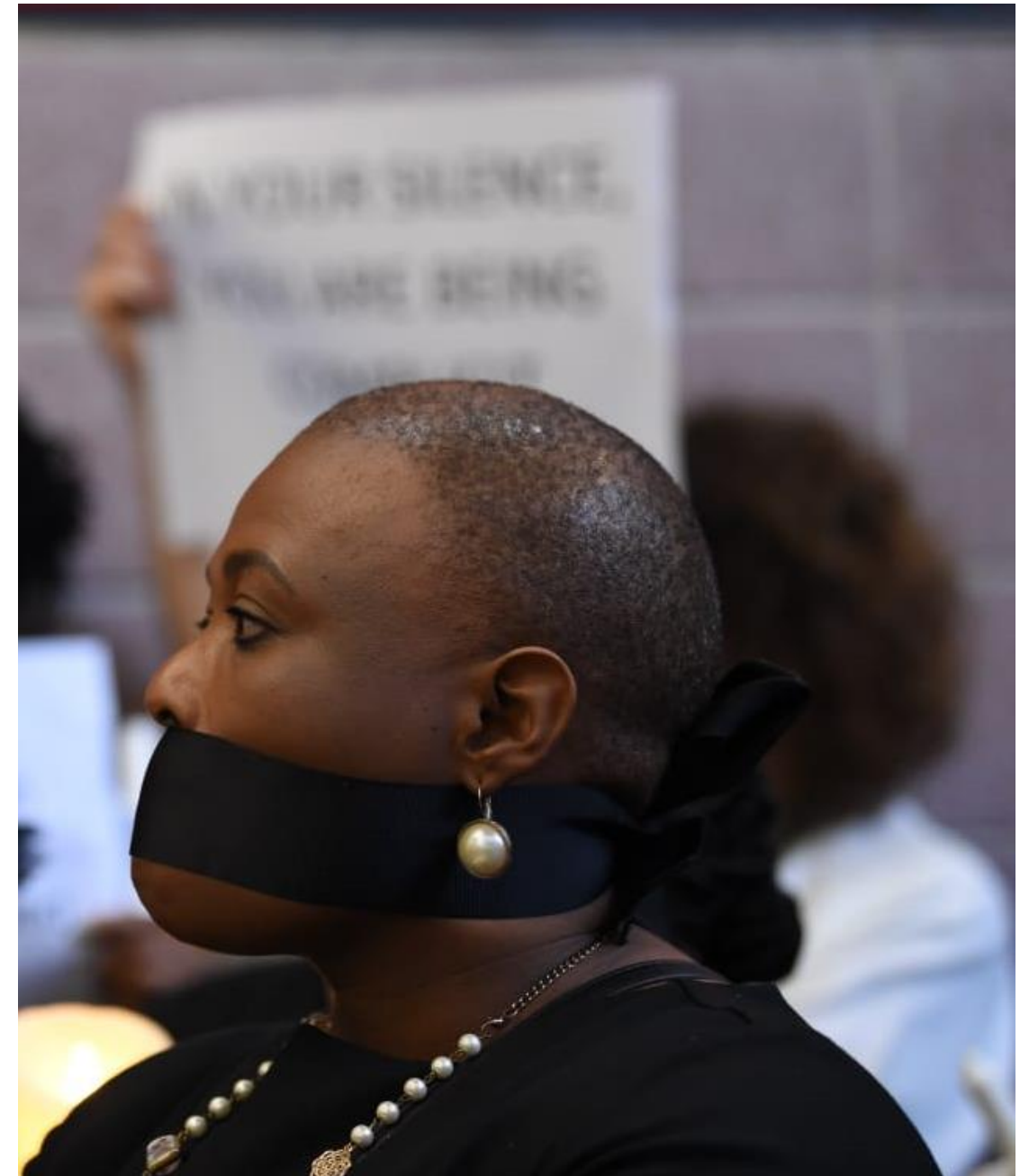
at a brothel masquerading as a barbershop and tuckshop in Pretoria.

I am encouraged by the fact that the perpetrator, one Ediozi Odi, a human trafficking kingpin was apprehended, convicted and duly sentenced to six life sentences and additional 129 years of imprisonment in the Gauteng High Court in Pretoria a year ago. This sentence is sending a good message to people like Odi out there. The situation was further compounded by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has underlined and exacerbated the continued deprivation and inequality faced by women and girls across the world.

During this period, lockdown regulations in most countries led to women sharing the same space with the perpetrators of GBVF, with no place to run to or limited opportunities to report cases. South Africa has also seen a spike in incidents of these horrendous crimes, which have been characterised by H.E President Cyril Ramaphosa as another pandemic facing South Africa.

GBVF directly and indirectly affects development and has a huge impact on the economy. A report released by the Department of Women in August 2015 attempted to analyse the causal link between GBV and the participation of women in the economy. It underlined the cost of GBV on the economic activities of women. The report among others notes that whenever a woman is assaulted or raped she is unlikely to go to work until she is healed or out of potential danger thereby putting strain on productivity in that specific workplace as well as on the health services of the country. Numerous international studies focusing on the economic impact and costs of GBV also demonstrate a worrying reality that GBV has a significant negative impact on GDP and on national economic well-being of any country.

In 2016 UN Women estimated that in both developed and developing countries, the cost of violence can be between 1-2% of GDP due to lost output and decreased productivity. This means that GBV is an obstacle to development as it denies women their full participation in the economy.





The UN has repeatedly identified it as the most extreme expression of unequal gender relations in society. It is first and foremost a violation of human rights, and a global health issue that cuts across boundaries of economic wealth, culture, religion, age, and sexual orientation. This is reflected in international protocols such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and emphasised in the Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action.

I do not know about other people, but everytime I hear of new cases of a missing, raped and murdered woman and girl, my entire system becomes totally paralysed as I ask myself "Am I next?" or "Who is next?". The frequency of these cases has shaken all of us to the core. I am terrified thinking of the safety of my own daughter and many daughters I am raising in my various capacities as an aunt, mentor, church leader etc. Where can we raise our children without this fear? The reality is that we cannot live on behalf of our daughters, unfortunately we cannot accompany them everywhere they go,. Every time I hear of a murdered wife or girlfriend I think of my sisters, my comrades, my friends, my colleagues, my fellow church women and that lady who works at a grocery store with a friendly smile. I think about their safety at work, places of worship, school, the store and at home. Even more concerning is the fact that I must now worry about women even when they enter places such as the post office or a tuck shop. Enough is enough! It cannot be business as usual, something has to give. The vexing question is "what?", what is it that has to give?

Acts of GBVF are not isolated incidents, they are linked to structural inequalities, making them an issue of broader societal concern and a matter of social justice. We need a paradigm shift and the starting point is eliminating patriarchy as a system of social construct that determines power relations in our society. We can achieve this by intensifying our civic education but also ensuring that we raise our children differently from how we were raised. So, it starts with me and my immediate environment. We must also ensure that gender studies become part of our education curriculum from an early age. This will translate in changing the gender narrative thereby changing the gender stereotypes that promote abuse of women and also changing the social construct of our society. In order to achieve this we must be intentional in our approach and create systems that break gender barriers in education and in all sectors of the economy.

We also need to seriously and urgently improve the status of women and ensure a gender equal society not only in our laws and policies but in our everyday lives. It is my view that gender equality is a development multiplier because it contributes to other development outcomes. Over and above this, gender equality promotes development by leveling the playing field and facilitating more representative and inclusive institutions.

This is an opportune time for South Africa to use this ugliest of situations to confront one of the most critical issues of the subordination of women. The time to build a gender equal society is now. The safety of women and girls has taken a firm grip of the national agenda. Let us confront the issue head on. In spite of the many issues we are not agreeing on, this is one thing that unites all of us. We all agree that enough is enough, ro netha, ho lekane, kwanele, genoeg is genoeg!

The importance of Cultural Diplomacy in SADC Integration

On Friday, 20 November 2020, Deputy Minister Candith Mashego-Dlamini led a webinar on “The Importance of Cultural Diplomacy in SADC Integration”.

The panelists included, members of the Diplomatic Corps; Ms Jane Mufamadi, Chief Executive Officer of Freedom Park; Ms Tando Sangwevu, The South African Heritage Ambassador; Mr Tshepo Mashiane, Secretary-General: Economic, Social and Cultural Council, South Africa Chapter.

The webinar brought together highly esteemed people who have in one form or another been engaged in diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy has somewhat been relegated to the periphery of diplomacy. While the term cultural diplomacy has only been recently established, it remains an area of interest for researchers, scholars and those in the field of international relations.

Cultural diplomacy has existed as a practice for centuries. There has been a systematic engagement of people in our region through trade, art, and education. This owes its existence, and as such has been the case, during the precolonial period in our region where people were interfacing with each other even before the discovery of minerals. This interaction was further deepened by the liberation struggle that ensued during the colonial period, where liberation movements were formed by the people of our region.

South Africa’s role in the enhancement of cultural diplomacy and integration in our region is yet to be told. There is more work that is yet to be done by researchers and to tell the stories of cultural integration. For example, the role played by the discovery of minerals and mines, and establishment of institutions of higher learning such as Fort Hare University, continues to highlight the role that South Africa has had as a glue in the expression of cultural diplomacy and integration of Southern Africa region.

It is no exaggeration to say that our region has strong historical relations and that we also share common values, cultures and languages. Therefore our regional economic, political and cultural aspirations depend on these shared aspects of culture to be realised in order for us to achieve regional integration and sustainable development.

Aptly described by Milton C. Cummings, Jr. as “the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples to foster mutual understanding”, cultural diplomacy has always been at the core of our regional integration programme.

Furthermore, the majority of SADC countries formed part of the front line states, which played a key role in the liberation struggle of South Africa and other neighbouring countries, from colonialism and Apartheid.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Treaty, which came into existence in 1992, remains our beacon of hope and a strong foundation through which SADC member states and citizens in the region act.

A critical objective as encapsulated in the SADC Treaty is to strengthen and consolidate the long standing historical, social and cultural affinities and links among the people of the Region.

To supplement the Treaty, SADC adopted in 2001 the Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport to, among others, cooperate in the formulation and harmonisation of cultural policies, create a socio-cultural environment within which regional integration ideals can be realised as well as to develop and promote institutions of cultural heritage, such as libraries, museums and archives.

Currently, even though the concept of culture continues to be amongst the core priorities of the SADC work programme. It constitutes the pillar on which industrialisation is centred. As such there are a number of projects and programmes that are endorsed by the SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government that the SADC Secretariat is driving, aimed at enhancing our shared common agenda.

These are:

1. The Southern Africa Liberation Day, celebrated on the 23rd March. The SADC Summit has approved that Southern African Liberation history be included in school syllabi to ensure that the younger generations in the SADC region have an opportunity to learn the history of the liberation struggles.
2. The SADC Awards for Media and Secondary Schools Essay Competitions, is an annual event which contributes towards the promotion and awareness of SADC programmes and success. This initiative seeks to encourage participants from SADC Member States to continue contributing to the promotion and awareness of SADC programmes and success. In 2019 SADC South Africa took the second position in the Media Awards – Television Category. The story that won “Follow the Guns” was a co-production between Carte Blanche and Ms. Sasha Maria Schwendenwein. By way of background, Ms Sasha Maria Schwendenwein is a South African and a producer of the television programme, Carte Blanche. She is an investigative journalist and television producer who joined the show in 2012, and has since won several awards for her human rights, politics and environmental stories.
3. The SADC Intra-Regional Sports Tournament brings together Member States to participate in varying sporting activities with different member states having an opportunity to host the event and, therefore, deepening cultural relations in the region.



Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation; Ms Candith Mashego-Dlamini

THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN REGIONAL INTEGRATION

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) invites you to join Ms Candith Mashego-Dlamini, the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, for a webinar on the importance of Cultural Diplomacy in regional integration of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).



Mr Tshepo Mashiane
Secretary-General:
Economic, Social and
Cultural Council, South
Africa Chapter



Ms Candith Mashego-
Dlamini
Deputy Minister of
International Relations
and Cooperation



Ms Tando Sangwevu
SA Heritage Ambassador



Ms Jane Mufamadi
Chief Executive
Officer of Freedom
Park

4. The Mechanism in Honour of the Founders of SADC, some of the planned activities on this mechanism will include commissioning research leading to publications focusing on all SADC founders, funding scholarships and research grants in honour of the founders and naming Government buildings and Parliaments offices after the founders of SADC in member states.

Recognising that Kiswahili is one of the widely spoken languages, the SADC Summit held in Tanzania in 2019, adopted Kiswahili as the fourth working language of SADC for gradual implementation, other official SADC languages being English, Portuguese and French.

It is one of the greatest milestones to have one of the indigenous languages gaining recognition in terms of the agenda of the Region. The recent Southern African Development Community (SADC) Summit of Heads of States and Government hosted by the Republic of Mozambique and held virtually on 17 August 2020 approved the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030 and the SADC Vision 2050. This is an important milestone as the RISDP 2020-2030 clearly sets out guidelines and targets on SADC's priorities and policies for our regional integration and developmental agenda.

Culture can, without doubt, be a catalyst for economic development and regional integration for us to achieve the objectives as set out in our Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (2020-2030). The SADC Vision 2050 visualises a peaceful, inclusive, competitive, middle to high income industrialised region, where all citizens enjoy sustainable socio-economic well-being, justice and freedom.

I am certain that culture has an important role to play in the achievement of this audacious vision as it will put at the disposal of all different Member States the kind of soft power that is needed to navigate through negotiations that are often directed by the politics of hard power.

Driving cultural integration and relations can no longer be regarded as the responsibility of government alone. It requires all our citizens to be involved. Cultural diplomacy can be utilised to build international bridges, networks and be an instrument for reciprocal exchanges between our peoples in the region.

It is necessary to note that the importance of cultural diplomacy should not be underestimated as it has been proven world-wide that it continues to be a common denominator that brings people together, a catalyst that strengthens friendship and enhance solidarity amongst the different peoples of the world.

A diligent African professional with unparalleled passion and vast experience working within the international relations and cooperation environment.

Mr. Mashiane holds a strong view that Cultural Diplomacy can serve as a powerful diplomatic tenet to advance and strengthen South Africa's soft power to influence and improve socio-economic cooperation and friendly relations with ordinary citizens of the World.



Secretary-General: Economic, Social and Cultural Council, South Africa Chapter

Visit to South Africa by Mr Frank Riester, the Minister Delegate for Foreign Trade and Economic Attractiveness at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of France

- By: Ms Candy Moyo, Mediterranean Europe I

Mr Franck Riester, the Minister Delegate for Foreign Trade and Economic Attractiveness at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of France, paid an official visit to South Africa from 2 to 4 November 2020. During the visit, Minister-delegate Riester met with Mr Ebrahim Patel, the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition and with Mr Alvin Botes, the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation. Accompanied by a business delegation of twelve people, Mr Riester also held separate meetings with the French community in South Africa as well as some members within the private sector.

The visit, in support of and as reconfirmation of a growing bilateral relationship between South Africa and France, also took place as a follow up to the 2nd Investment Conference, held in November 2019, where France pledged a total of R20 billion of new investments into South Africa. Subsequently, Minister Riester during this visit announced that France, during the 3rd Investment Conference, to be held from 17-18 November 2020, will commit itself to a further investment of R14 billion. During the meeting with Minister Patel, a Declaration of Intent between Business France and Invest South Africa was also signed. The primary objectives of the Declaration of Intent are to strengthen and assist bilateral cooperation aimed at enhancing investment and trade activities, and to foster favourable conditions for sustainable growth and cooperation between South Africa and France.

During the meeting with Deputy Minister Botes, Mr Riester affirmed French President, Mr Emmanuel Macron's intention to visit South Africa in 2021 following the postponement, due to COVID-19, of the State visit that was scheduled to take place earlier this year. Discussions, furthermore, focused on the international fight against the COVID-19 epidemic.

Following Deputy Minister Botes' prompt on the importance of Africa's access to research, production, distribution and receipt of future vaccines against the disease, French Minister Riester reaffirmed France's commitment to "defend the necessity" for African countries to have access to treatment and vaccines. South Africa's role in the search for COVID-19 vaccines, its interests in COVAX and the development of the Africa Medical Supplies Platform were highlighted by Deputy Minister Botes.

France is part of the World Health Organisation's COVAX Initiative, which aims to deliver two billion doses of the vaccine across the world by the end of 2021. Minister Riester, in this regard, informed that France was making significant investment in COVID-19. As such, French company Sanofi recently announced that it would make 200 million doses available to COVAX. In Cape Town, Minister Franck Riester visited the South African Biovac Institute, that works on the development and production of vaccines and has a partnership with the French company, Sanofi.

Finally, French Minister delegate Riester witnessed the signing of another Declaration of Intent between the Technology Innovation Agency and the French Embassy in South Africa. Through this declaration, the two parties aim among others to accelerate the growth of innovative young enterprises, to exchange experiences and best practices, as well as to facilitate the establishment of partnerships and business networks between young enterprises in South Africa and France.

South Africa is said to be the only country on the African continent that houses the largest number of French structures supporting the development of young innovative companies and technologies. This commitment will further focus cooperation between South Africa and France in digital technology on the development of the technology sectors in the context of the digital revolution and its globalization.



Bilateral engagement between Deputy Minister Alvin Botes and Minister delegate Franck Riester to support and reconfirm the growing bilateral relationship between South Africa and France



Mr Riester's visit to the Tshimologong Precinct to witness the signing of the Declaration of Intent between the Technology Innovation Agency and the French Embassy in South Africa



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MISSION ACCOMPLISHED



Ambassador Ntsiki Mashimbye visit to Western Amazon Region, Brazil

- Denisha Reddy, Counsellor Political, Brasilia, Brazil

The visit took place from the 4th to 6th November 2020 by the invitation of General Antônio Hamilton Martins Mourão, the Vice President of Brazil.

The trip was organised after eight European countries transmitted a letter to Mr. Mourão, who presides over the Amazon Council, stating that the increase in deforestation could make it difficult to import Brazilian products.

Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Republic of South Africa, Mr. Ntsiki Mashimbye, was among the delegation which includes 12 ambassadors of diplomatic missions accredited to Brazil. In attendance was Spain; Peru; Colombia; Canada; Sweden; Germany; United Kingdom; France; Portugal; the European Union and the Organization of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty (OTCA). Business leaders and representatives of international organisations are also in attendance. The government delegation includes Ministers Ernesto Araújo (Foreign Relations), Ricardo Salles (Environment), General Eduardo Pazuello (Health) and Tereza Cristina (Agriculture). Other senior officials from the Brazilian Police and Intelligence, as well as the Head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff will also join the visit.

The two important Brazilian foreign policy goals: The implementation of a Mercosur trade deal with the EU and its ambition to join the OECD. Both of these require Brazil to meet baseline standards on labour and environmental policies (the Mercosur/EU deal specifically includes commitments to uphold the Paris Climate Agreement and fight deforestation). Before embarking on the visit, Mr. Mourão commented that “the great objective of our trip was to show that the Brazilian government has nothing to hide and that we are open to any and all dialogue necessary to demonstrate our commitments to the international community. We are going to take a

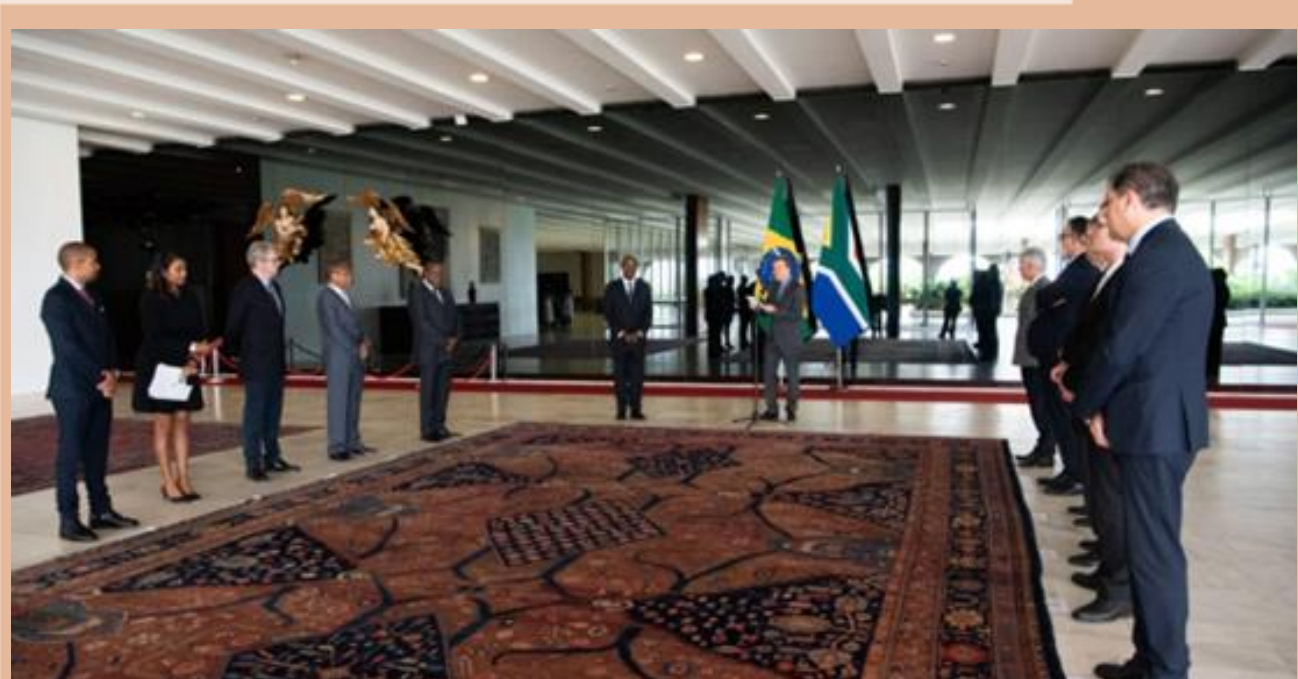
trip that will cover part of the Amazon that is anthropised and part that is not. So that, at the end of this journey, these diplomats will be able to draw their own conclusions”. Ambassador Mashimbye is the most senior foreign representative in the Ambassadorial delegation and delivered a speech at the reception hosted by the vice-president of Brazil, General Antonio Hamilton Martins Mourão.

In his remarks Ambassador Mashimbye acknowledged the excellent work that the Head of the National Council of the Legal Amazon, Vice-President Mourão, have done, in particular through Operation Green Brazil 2 (Operação Verde Brasil 2) to combat deforestation, prevent fires and fight environmental crimes and other illegal activities. Climate change is the biggest peril facing humanity this century. Globally, natural assets are under an unprecedented threat due to land degradation, deforestation, desertification, loss of biodiversity and drought, thus causing environmental destruction but also significant social and economic disruption. Scientists tell us this planet and all its life forms have reached a tipping point. Tropical forests matter in the fight against climate change and therefore they must be conserved and sustainably managed for present and future generations.

The African Continent is well placed to understand the challenges Brazil faces in relation to the Amazon as it is home to around 18% of the world’s tropical forests, including the second largest tropical forest on the planet, the Congo Rainforest. Although the Congo Rainforest is larger than the entire land mass of Argentina, it is still some two million square kilometres smaller than the Amazon, underscoring the enormous challenges and difficulties of monitoring and policing in vast expanses of dense forests. South Africa is the current President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), an organisation established 35-years ago in Cairo to facilitate the broadening of the political and public policy debate regarding Africa’s environmental priorities and concerns.



Ambassador Ntsiki Mashimbye's farewell luncheon hosted by the Foreign Ministry of Brazil



Ambassador Kenneth Nóbrega, Secretary for Bilateral Negotiations with the Middle East, Europe and Africa, delivering remarks at Ambassador Mashimbye's farewell luncheon at Itamaraty (the Foreign Ministry of Brazil)

Core to the work of AMCEN is the promotion of value-addition of natural resources for sustainable industrialisation and trade in Africa, preventing illegal trade in species, while addressing the impacts on the environment by adopting concrete resolutions and action. As responsible global citizens, African countries are committed to strive to make a fair contribution to the global climate change effort in a manner that simultaneously addresses our national priorities to eradicate poverty, as well as reduce inequality and unemployment. In simple terms, conservation of our natural resources does not equal non-development.

These two concepts are not mutually exclusive, in the same manner that the assertion that governments had to choose between saving lives or saving livelihoods, during the height of the coronavirus pandemic, proved to be a false dichotomy. Rebuilding the local economy and business environment by legal means, creating of jobs and income from the commodities of this area, developing of innovative eco systems, enhancing of the industrial hubs to ensure that the local community benefits through beneficiation and up-skilling and creating sustainable agriculture goes hand-in-hand with environmental initiatives.

We respect the sovereign rights of countries over their own biological resources, and the need for countries to address the overriding priorities of socio-economic development and the eradication of poverty. Climate change will affect different nations and different communities within nations, in different ways, the same can also be said of biodiversity loss, and the ways in which it will manifest differently according to local conditions. This means that we cannot put the issues of gender and local specificities to one side. We therefore support Brazilian solutions to Brazilian problems, as much as we have supported African solutions for African problems. At that same time, a total retreat from multilateralism threatens our collective global responsibility and ability to tackle shared and critical global risks to biodiversity.

South Africa has consistently espoused the need to build strategic and cooperative global partnerships to assist countries, regions and the world to advance and mobilize both human and financial resources needed to confront the challenges of climate change. International financing is a key component of many developing countries' adaptation strategies, and opportunities need to be leveraged for the countries of the global south to take advantage of the blended finance options that are available to them.

South Africa therefore welcomed the signing of Project Forest Plus between the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Environment and the United National Development Programme (UNDP) wherein an amount of US\$96.4 million will be allocated, from the Green Climate Fund, in support of my country has also taken note of the engagements that you continue to have with the local communities and business associations, civil society and NGOs on issues affecting the economy of this State, but also to address the challenges faced by the indigenous people of the Amazon. Law enforcement efforts alone cannot address the complex social and economic drivers involved in the protection of the Amazon. What is required is a commitment to a holistic approach which considers the attitudes, opportunities and safety of people living around protected areas. The role of corruption, inevitably associated with organized crime syndicates, must also be addressed.

Climate change and its associated consequences can only be addressed when we engage in direct, inclusive and transparent interaction, and when we honour our mutual commitments and our differentiated responsibilities, as both developing and developed countries.. Inclusivity means that we integrate all stakeholders, including women, indigenous people, local communities, youth and civil society. We must leave no one behind! As the well-known African Proverb goes: "If you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far, go together."



The Vice President of Brazil, General Antonio Hamilton Mourão and selected Heads of Mission in Brasilia pay a visit to the Military Zoo at the Centre for Jungle Warfare Training (CIGS) in the Amazon. Ambassador Mashimbye led the 12-member Head of Mission delegation



Vice-President Mourão, Heads of Mission and Brazilian Navy Commanders from the Flotilla do Amazonas (District force of the Brazilian Navy) at the Encontro das Aguas or the "Meeting of the Waters" in the Amazon. Here the cooler, denser, and faster waters of the Solimões and the warmer, slower waters of the Rio Negro meet, forming a boundary visible from space.

Voices from DIRCO

Ending Gender Based Violence in the Workplace

- By: **Ndumiso Mngadi**

On Thursday, 19 November 2020 DIRCO men for change commemorated International Men's Day 2020, under the theme #EachforEqual. The theme underscores a point that gender equality is not only a women's issue.

In attendance were:

- Moderator, DDG Clayson Monyela;
- DIRCO's Deputy Minister Alvin Botes;
- Commission of Gender Equality, Commissioner Mbuyiselo Botha;
- Ambassador of Goodwill for the fight against gender-based violence, Mr Hlomla Dandala;
- Sonke Gender Justice Representative, Mr Given Sigauqwe;
- Not In My Name Movement Representative, Mr Themba Masango;
- National Youth Development Agency Representative, Mr Walter Bango and the
- Director for Gender and Diversity, Mr Edwin Munengwane.

DIRCO Men Champions for Change is an idea that was born out of witnessing the alarming rate of increase in gender-based violence incidents. It got to a point where we could no longer stand by as men and allow our collective identity to be associated with slogans such as #MenAreTrash.

We found ourselves defending ourselves against such slogans but we don't defend our image from those amongst our ranks who deliberately and daily tarnish it. We believed enough was enough!

It became clear to us from what we were witnessing that men of our country had declared war on women and children, and that through our silence, these criminals have become more emboldened. Through our silence we have inadvertently stood in solidarity with these men as we have tacitly given them the right to commit these heinous crimes under the banner of our name, our identity. It must be reiterated that gender-based violence is not a women issue alone.

Gender-based violence is our issue as men because it is

our behaviour that is the problem, whether you are guilty as the perpetrator or guilty as the peer who harbours the perpetrator. We have created a culture amongst ourselves as men that makes perpetrators feel safe and comfortable amongst us and this needs to change!

The year 2019 saw the men in DIRCO standing side by side with their women compatriots in partnership with the Not In My Name Movement to intensify our fight against gender-based violence in our society and the workplace.

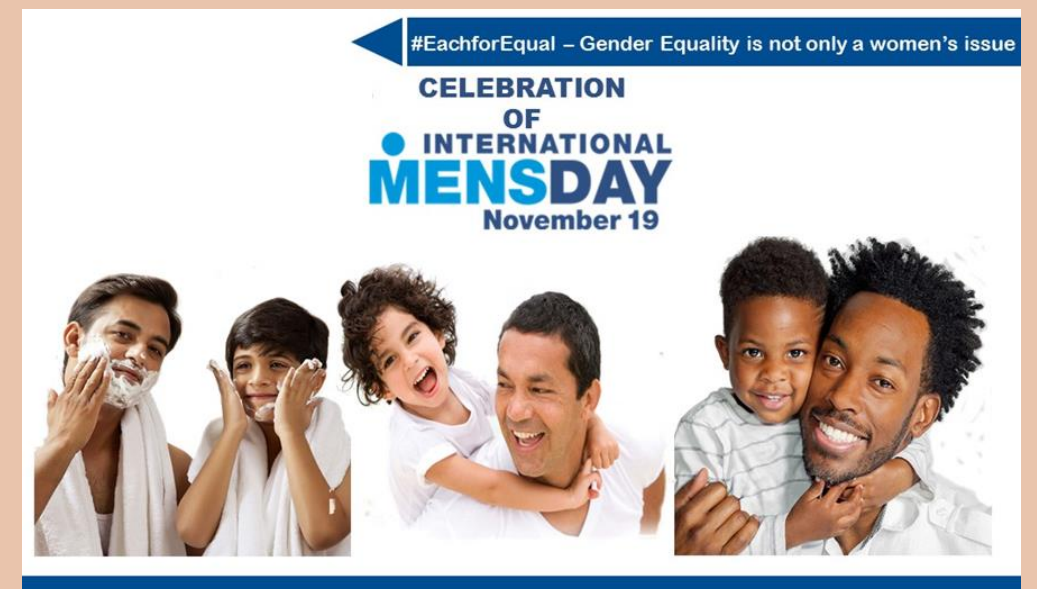
The importance of creating such awareness in the workplace, is precisely because the workplace is not immune to gender-based violence and various forms of harassment.

Gender-based violence in the workplace takes various forms such as sexual violence including rape and sexual assault; sexual harassment; verbal and sexist abuse; stalking; bullying; psychological abuse, intimidation and threats of violence amongst others. As men, we all should not be too quick to absolve ourselves. Often when we think of GBV, we reduce it to physically hitting a woman. We tend to not consider any inappropriate behaviour or advances towards female colleagues as part of the bigger problem.

We therefore have a duty to ensure that our workplaces are not breeding grounds for gender-based violence in any form.

The International Labour Organisation defines the term **"gender-based violence and harassment"** to mean **"violence and harassment directed at persons because of their sex or gender or affecting persons of a particular sex or gender disproportionately, and includes sexual harassment."**

In essence Gender-based violence reflects the unequal power relations that exist between women and men in our societies and indeed at the workplace. It therefore follows that in order for us to adequately address this



scourge of gender-based violence, we need to address the challenges of inequality between men and women. In addressing this challenge, we need to go further than shouting slogans on equality but start to take deliberate steps in achieving equality now!

We are therefore challenged to ensure that all of us play our part, especially as men standing side by side as equals with our women counter-parts in implementing policies and programmes that ensure that gender-based violence has no space in the workplace.

The year 2019 was also significant in the global context in that the International Labour Organisation (ILO) adopted during its Centenary Conference in June, the Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190) and Recommendation (No. 206). This served as a historical achievement because for the first time, we now have an international Convention that addresses violence and harassment in the workplace. The Convention acknowledges that "gender-based violence and harassment disproportionately affects women and girls, and recognizes that an inclusive, integrated and gender-responsive approach, which tackles underlying causes and risk factors, including gender stereotypes, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, and unequal gender-based power relations, is essential to ending violence and harassment in the world of work"

We therefore have a responsibility to dismantle patriarchal structures in our workplaces. As you are aware, patriarchy is a political and socio-economic system that treats men as superior to women. It is about time that we realise that as men we have more to benefit by having equal representation of women in all spaces of power and not just lower levels.

There have been many studies done that have shown overwhelming benefits when women are involved in decision-making. The question I want to end with now is that of what is to be done if we are indeed to end gender-based violence in the workplace? The first I can think of is that we really need to reflect on the conversations that we have amongst ourselves as men, the so called "locker-room talk", as many of them perpetuate gender-based violence.

We need to hold each other accountable as men and not be bystanders when those amongst us perpetuate abuse. It was Edmund Burke who said, I quote "The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing."

Let us rise up.

Let us take back our name.

CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL MENS DAY November 19

#EachforEqual - Gender Equality is not only a women's issue

“ Being able to identify our weaknesses today, will ensure that we will be able to build better remedies for a different type of conduct for the men of South Africa, of Africa and the world. ”

Mr. Alvin Botes: Deputy Minister, International Relations and Cooperation

INTERNATIONAL MENS DAY November 19

“ The fate of the women of our country cannot afford to wait. We need to start now. As men, we need to change our behaviour now. ”

#SaveHerNow

Mr. Hlomla Dandala, Goodwill Ambassador for the Fight Against GBV

CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL MENS DAY November 19

#EachforEqual - Gender Equality is not only a women's issue

“ As men we are culpable either by looking the other way and not speaking up against it. We need to challenge other men. We need to call each other out. ”

Mr. Mbuyiselo Botha, Commission for Gender Equality

#ABOUTME

A compelling passion for the art and craft of diplomacy.

-Bobby J. Moroe

It was in the mid-80s when I was overcome by a compelling passion for the art and craft of Diplomacy. But at the time I was far from conscious that this art and craft was called diplomacy. As a young man, growing up in the dusty streets of Soweto, a sight of "men in black", driven in luxurious "black cars", and protected by huge "men in black suits" into what looked like a big oval Conference Centre was common to me. My years of encounter with these men in black happened as I was glued into our small "black and white" family TV set for which my friends had to pay a nominal fee to watch.

As I grew older, and having conducted some informal research through reading, I established that, in fact, these men in black were called diplomats. This oval building which looked like a Conference Centre and made for an architectural marvel was actually the famous United Nations Headquarters in New York - a building I had an opportunity to visit later in my career life. During my teen years I continued to read more about diplomacy, but I still couldn't make head or tail of the exact nuances of this craft, and what these men in black were doing inside this building. I also often wondered - who on earth wears a black suit on a daily basis and lock themselves in a Conference Centre all day?

Despite my lack of understanding and comprehension, my curiosity remained undeterred. I was at pains to understand if, whatever it is that the men in black discussed in this oval Conference Centre, required them to dress up strictly in black suits. My enquiring mind also revealed my passion for apparel. It was only a few years before my matric that I gathered a semblance and understanding of what this craft was all about. I owe gratitude to my history teacher at Moroka High School in Thaba-Nchu for exposing me and my classmates to the history of the United Nations, and why it was established in 1945, after the second world War. What was more appealing to me was that, amongst others, the UN was committed to maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations, promoting social progress and better living standards and human rights. Little did I know that promoting human rights will be the linchpin of South Africa's foreign policy after 1994, based on our historical past.

When I was doing matric, the diplomatic passion intensified and I set my mind in pursuing a career in diplomacy, and this time around not for the purpose of wearing a suit or to be driven in a black car, but to represent the national interest of my country, and contribute to the course of humanity as reflected in the founding principles of the UN - at least this much I knew. I miraculously passed my matric with an exemption, and this gave me access to study for a University degree - a milestone which came as a great shock to my family. Clearly, they were not expecting me to obtain a University entrance certificate because I seemed to display an errand youthful character. After wasting a full academic year lazing around at home trying to find myself, I enrolled at the University of the North West, the erstwhile University of Bophuthatswana. This is where I pursued a degree in political science and international relations. I was so excited that I used to carry my student card with me at home during school recess as proof that I am a University student. But my first year was a complete disaster. Again, I spent the whole year studying the wrong courses. I realized after the end of the second semester that I chose economic and statistics as my major subjects, and ignorantly selected political science and international relations as ancillary subjects - a very costly exercise to my academic year. In essence, I did my first year during my second year at University.



I grew more resilient and resolute about this passion and was prepared to sacrifice my comfort in order to accomplish this goal. Despite receiving the Dean's warning for being a hopeless student who wasted the entire year for selecting a wrong combination of courses, I followed the academic stream of International Relations and political science up to Masters level. By then I was armed with enough information to understand that upon completion of my studies, I will be ready to contribute in advancing the national interest of my country, even beyond the United Nations. I was eager and ready to join the diplomatic service

On 1 March 2004, having had a stint as a junior lecture in political science and international relations at the North West University, I was appointed as an Assistant Director at then Department of Foreign Affairs - a position more fulfilling, yet with relatively lower remuneration package than that of a junior lecture. I took a significant salary cut. Moving to Pretoria, an expensive city than Mafikeng, was a risk I was prepared to take against all odds. The rest became history when I was nominated to undergo diplomatic training at the then Diplomatic Institute in Pretoria, which, according to sources previously served as an Embassy of Bophuthatswana in South Africa. My first posting was at the South African High Commission in India where I spent five years of an amazing journey that I will forever cherish. These were amongst the best years of my career as a new kid in the diplomatic game. As fate would have it, this is the same Mission in which I paid a visit when I was undergoing a short course in entrepreneurship in 1999. At the time I had to take a short break from my Honours studies, and accepted this offer by the Indian Government under the ITEC scholarship programme between South Africa and India. I was selected by the Department of Economic Development in the North West Province, under the stewardship of Mr S. Tshukudu.



State visit to South Africa by President Mohammadu Buhari of Nigeria 3/10/2019



State Visit in South Africa

It was in India where I cut my teeth in Diplomacy. I met people that I never thought I would meet. I gained access to places that I would ordinarily not have access to. For airport duties, I would wake up very early in the morning to receive delegations from South Africa and they often comprised of Ministers – people I wouldn't ordinarily meet in person. I dined with royalty, rubbed shoulders with Bollywood actors, attended meetings with Ministers and other prominent figures from both South Africa and India. All this because I am a diplomat. I practiced to walk, speak, and dress like a Diplomat. I made sure that my overall disposition and conduct did not undermine the craft of diplomacy. I felt a great sense of purpose and relevance. I did everything in my ability, as a junior Diplomat, to use my knowledge and skills to advance the interests of my country. I am very proud to have served my country in India for five years. I returned back home in 2010, just after the 2010 Soccer World Cup.

Upon my return home, I continued to serve my country in various capacities until I was nominated to serve in the Federal Republic of Nigeria as Deputy High Commissioner - from whence I write this piece. This was the apex of my career. My arrival in Nigeria coincided with the departure of the High Commissioner at the end of his tour of duty. I was privileged to be appointed to the position of Acting High Commissioner of South Africa to the Federal Republic of Nigeria for a period not exceeding two years. This was an opportunity I greatly cherish and appreciated. Today, after 15 years of a fulfilling career as a diplomat, I thought it prudent to start reflecting on the journey I have traveled. During my reflections I often struggled to find the best way to describe my contentment about the opportunities I have been given, and how I embraced them by adding value to the country's foreign policy project. As a former speechwriter, I relied more on quotations to express my thoughts. I have spent some time trying to search for an inspirational quote to aptly capture the extraordinary journey of my career as a diplomat. But I must confess, I have struggled to find one.

I undertook my first voyage and paid an unceremonious visit to the works of one prolific writer, Haruki Murakami. In one of his pieces titled, "Kafka on the Shore", I thought I would find refuge. But not quiet. His focus was on bidding farewell to those we worked with over the years. This was not my brief. I am not about to bid farewell to anyone, nor I do I harbor temptations to turn my back on the noble profession of diplomacy. Out of frustration and desperation, I swiftly moved to the works of one wordsmith, Laura Wiess. In her works titled, "How It Ends", she says: "I don't know how you say good-bye to whom and what you love. I don't know a painless way to do it, I don't know the words to capture a heart so full and a longing so intense." Although this captured my imagination, it still failed to resonate. Again, it sounded more like a farewell quote, fit for retirement.

Now, at this point I was on the verge of giving up the idea of using a quotation for inspiration when I came across the famous works of the legendary Charles Dickens, reflected in his book, "A Tale of Two Cities". It is here where I found true inspiration. This legend provided an apt piece reflective of a message how I felt about this noble craft and my journey. He says:

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair."

It is this legend who captured a brief script of a play that would be synonymous with my life and times as a Diplomat. There comes a time in our career lives when we feel that we have had the best of times and the worst of times. These moments are equally memorable and should be equally cherished. That is the level at which I am. Out of this career, I have witnessed emotional growth. At times working under the most difficult conditions, away from for months on end. Some moments such as the advent of COVID-19 were the most devastating for those of us who were far away from our loved ones. This pandemic has truly become both historic and traumatic for humanity. It is moments such as these that exposes the fragility of humanity, yet instill a great sense of appreciation for the often insignificant things in life. For all these good and bad experiences, I remain most grateful for the opportunity to grow and walk this path I have chosen.

Above all, my appreciation for the opportunity to serve as a diplomat is characterized by a heart full of love, a mind endowed with wisdom, and eyes full of tears, but tears of joy. In future, when I turn a new leaf in my career life, I will do so with greatest optimism for mine would have been a journey of hard work and dedication. Never in a single day has conscience ever escaped my mind, nor did I allow myself to be led astray from keeping my eye on the ball. I remained a loyal servant of the people during my entire diplomatic career. The day I bow out of this noble career, I will do so with a great sense of pride, and humility. During my career I have met committed individuals who worked hard to represent the country wherever they were posted. From my interface with them, I have learned invaluable lessons.

When the day for me to leave the dance floor approaches, I will find comfort in knowing that I leave behind men and women who are capable of advancing the goals we have set ourselves to achieve, particularly those of advancing the vision of our country's foreign policy. From this career I have been taught the virtues of patience, and that we are different as human beings - tolerance and maturity is therefore the centerpiece of this craft. Today I attach great value to other people's opinions in the quest to enrich my own knowledge and wisdom. It is here where I have learned how it feels to be complete. Today, I lack no humility, I bear no grudges, I look down upon no one. All I have is nothing but gratitude for having been part of South Africa's diplomatic project. I am humbled to be counted amongst the "men in black", and for the opportunity to serve.

South Africa to the United Nations, during the United Nations Security Council meeting on the Political and Humanitarian Situation in Syria, 25 November 2020

- By Ambassador Jerry Matjila, South Africa's Permanent Representative to the UN, New York

South Africa would also like to welcome our colleagues; the Permanent Representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey to today's meeting.

Firstly on the political situation Madame President, South Africa welcomes the recent package of agreements agreed to by the Co-Chairs of the Constitutional Committee on the agenda and dates for upcoming meetings. The progress made in agreeing on an agenda of national principles during the fourth round of talks, starting on 30 November, and on constitutional issues in the fifth round of negotiations, is commended. We hope that this spirit of cooperation continues during these important discussions. South Africa calls on the parties to build on this momentum and engage in a constructive manner to further the political process.

Real and tangible progress in the Constitutional Committee, as well as with regard to a cessation in hostilities, requires the withdrawal of all external interference, including in terms of support provided to armed groups. The sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria must be respected. The second element, which I would like to address, is the security situation in Syria. Let me start by expressing my deep concern at the continuing violence that has seen an increase in ceasefire violations and hostilities in the Northwest of Syria.

This has led to the death and injury of a number of civilians, including humanitarian workers. On 4 November, reports of the deaths of 8 civilians, including 2 aid workers, due to a number of airstrikes in southern Idlib are truly alarming. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the dedication and strength of all humanitarian workers who continue to deliver essential services in the face of these challenges.

The use of IEDs, landmines and unexploded ordinance in addition to the increasing reports of airstrikes and shelling, all contribute to the growing number of civilian deaths and injuries. When will enough be enough? South Africa urges the parties to fully adhere to the Idlib ceasefire agreement and to refrain from any actions that may escalate tensions even further. In this regard, South Africa fully supports Special Envoy Pedersen's call for a complete and immediate ceasefire nationwide, in line with the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire in the face of the ongoing global pandemic.

We appreciate in this regard the cooperation between Russia and Turkey in ensuring relative calm in the Northeast. The third and last element which I would like to address is the humanitarian situation in Syria. The severe economic difficulties, compounded by the continuing hostilities, the increasing spread of the COVID-19 virus and the onset of harsh winter conditions, have created a unique set of circumstances that have contributed to the humanitarian situation in Syria. It is of great concern that the number of positive COVID-19 cases have more than doubled in the last month.

South Africa reiterates its position that all those who require humanitarian assistance, should be provided with it, no matter who or where they are. And as we have heard here today and in previous briefings, millions of Syrians are in need

In this regard, the safe, unimpeded and impartial delivery of humanitarian aid and support, in line with international humanitarian law is more important than ever. This includes using all available methods of aid delivery, including cross-border and cross-line assistance. We call on the Government of Syria to continue to strengthen its cooperation with the UN and its partners towards the improvement and enhancement of cross-line humanitarian deliveries, particularly in areas where cross-border assistance is limited.

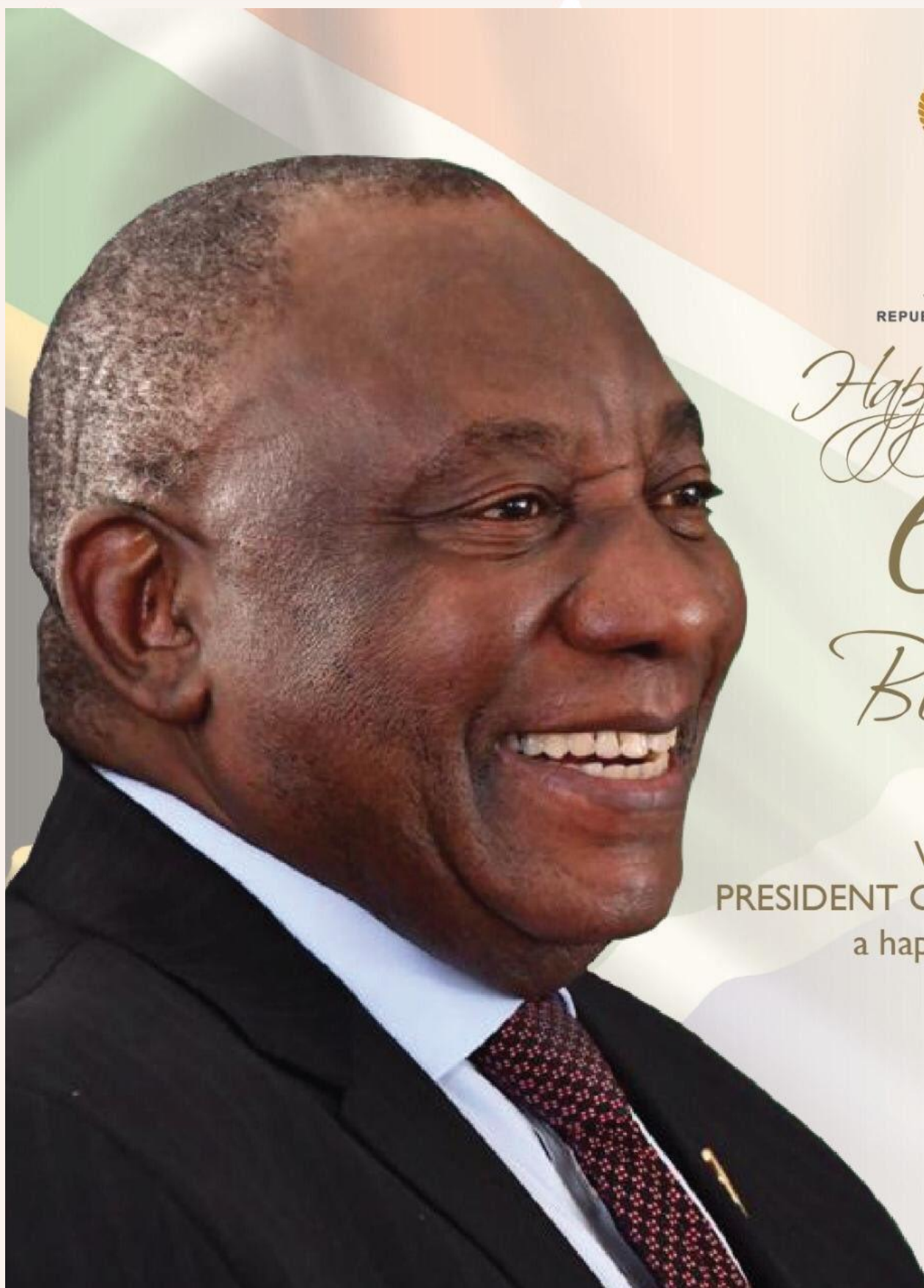


Without this crucial assistance, the Syria people will continue to face growing food insecurity, and the long-term effects of malnutrition, particularly with the harsh conditions of winter setting in. South Africa once again, requests the Secretary-General and OCHA, in their reports to the Council, to include the effects and impact of both direct and indirect, unilateral sanctions on the humanitarian situation in Syria.

Many Council Members have previously stated that it is the Syrian civilians who are bearing the heaviest impact of the humanitarian situation, surely this should not be worsened by the additional weight of unilateral economic measures? Madame President, an important aspect in making progress on the political process is the need for confidence building measures, including the release of civilians, particularly women, children, the elderly and those with disabilities from detention. These steps can assist in building trust and encourage the compromises that necessary in any negotiation process.

As we have said many times before, the situation in Syria can only be resolved through dialogue and negotiations and the full implementation of Resolution 2254 (2015). I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the combined briefings on the political and humanitarian situations in Syria. Discussing these two important aspects of the Syrian conflict together provides a comprehensive view of the situation on the ground in Syria and offers Council Members an opportunity to be briefed on and discuss holistic options to make progress towards a peaceful, stable and prosperous Syria.





THE PRESIDENCY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Happy
68th
Birthday

Wishing
PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA
a happy birthday

TOP 10

Travel Tips

#TravelSmartWithDIRCO

1

Have a valid certificate of a negative COVID-19 test which was obtained not more than 72 hours before the date of travel

2

Make sure that you are familiar with the health risks of the country or countries you intend visiting.

3

Take out a sufficient travel insurance

4

Double-check whether you require a visa or permit for the country or countries you are visiting or transiting.

5

Keep a copy of your passport

6

Ensure that your passport is valid for at least six months

7

Remember if you are a dual national you must leave and enter South Africa on your South African passport

8

Always act within the prescripts of the law

9

Know the SA Embassy in the country of your destination

10

Know the laws of the country destination

GLOBE AT A GLIMPSE



Discussions and debates with fellow diplomats and international experts

Interactive training with innovative tools

Design your own Health diplomacy plan



PROGRAMME

Two modules of two days
8-9 and 14-15 December
from 10.30am - 15.30pm CET

Clingendael Academy
www.clingendael.org

Global Health Diplomacy online course

8-9 & 14-15 December 2020





international relations & cooperation

Department:
International Relations and Cooperation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DIRCO observed a mourning period in solidarity and memory of our colleagues who passed on during the lockdown, and all were encouraged to wear a black armband or any symbol of mourning.

Date: 25 – 29 November 2020



25 – 29 November 2020 **5 Days of Remembrance**

to honour those we have lost through gender-based violence and COVID-19

#We RememberSA



#WeRememberSA



Gert Sizwe, Uyinene, Moremi, Otwa, Mpho
Paulus, Lerato, Louis, Zithulele, Mmai
Dimpho, Thabano, Is, alhazho, E
Thanyani, Muzi, Ke, g, Tumelo, Te
Bale, wani, Derrick
Gab, elile, Lwa, Maanda, Xolan
Flo
Madisa, Thabile, Susan, Khathu, Galteamuti, Ts

aabo, Kotani, Neo, Leo
Buhle, Oupa, Falesa
Tenda
k, Elon
ni, Zoe, Verner, Fumani
Robin, Makhadzi, Dan
Tapiwa, Duduzile, Sam



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES TO MITIGATE THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

ALL EMPLOYEES ARE REQUIRED TO:

- ✔ Complete the *symptoms screening questionnaire* daily before entering the workplace and present it at the main entrance of the building.
- ✔ Cooperate with Security Personnel when passing through the temperature scanners.
- ✔ Wear face masks at all times, inside and outside the building.
- ✔ Practise hygiene i.e. regular hand washing with soap and water, or sanitising and cover your mouth when sneezing and coughing.
- ✔ Practise social distancing of 1.5m at all times and adhere to signage for social distancing in lifts, kitchens and throughout the building.
- ✔ Avoid handshakes, body contact and the sharing of phones, equipment, stationery, etc.
- ✔ Stay home and inform your supervisor when you are not feeling well, even when you are experiencing mild flu symptoms or taking medication such as paracetamol, ibuprofen, etc. Seek medical attention if the symptoms persist.
- ✔ Respect working hours even when working remotely (refer guidelines for working from home).

- ✔ Practise a “clean desk” policy in order to enable proper cleaning.
- ✔ Avoid gatherings and keep your face-to-face interactions with fellow colleagues brief.
- ✔ Ensure that in open plan spaces, seating arrangements are confined to one official on each side of the desk and diagonally opposite to each other to allow for social distance. Officials should wear the PPE (masks and / or face shields) provided to them.
- ✔ Report any health and safety concerns to your managers or your COVID-19 Steering Committee Branch representatives.
- ✔ Not stigmatise colleagues who are/were infected or affected by COVID-19.
- ✔ Not remove sanitiser containers placed at the photocopy machines.

ALL MANAGERS ARE REQUIRED TO:

- ✔ Monitor social distancing, particularly in open-plan spaces
- ✔ Minimise the physical exchange of documents and equipment
- ✔ Hold meetings virtually.

Please

WEAR A MASK AT ALL TIMES TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS

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