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Internal Newsletter of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation

ubuntu diplomat

31 August 2020 Vol 7

IT'S YOUR VOICE



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Publisher | The Department of
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DIRCO runs an annual dialogue forum in honour of Mme Gertrude Shope. Mme Shope is a qualified teacher, member of the ANC, chairperson of the Central Western Jabavu Branch of the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW).

EDITOR'S

LETTER

Dear Colleagues,

Mama Gertrude Shope has from time immemorial been a champion of gender equality. As we celebrate her birthday month, we remember that she was part of the women's leadership in the National Executive Council of the African National Congress who fought tirelessly to realise equal gender representation in the leadership of the organisation. To further ensure the sustainability of this strategy, the women wanted to produce an official document, which any government in power should adhere to.

These women were tenacious about their objective and saw their battle to a resounding success as their recommendation for 30% female representation yielded more votes than anticipated during party elections. What is most significant of Mama Gertrude's fight against inequality, is the fact that, together with her fellow female compatriots, they knew that this was not a women's battle alone, but one that men needed to acknowledge and collaborate on. This is the most sustainable manner in which to achieve gender equality. Mme Shope said of that momentous occasion in the late 1980s, "Although we were fighting patriarchal stereotypes, we worked together with men. We did not say we are fighting against men but that, as one family, we need to fight together".

Women's Month is a time to commemorate not only the women of 1956 who pushed to make their voices heard, but it is especially a time to celebrate the many strides that women have been able to make across many spheres of life and society. However, it is a time for South Africa to take stock and ensure continued action to implement the myriad proposals for, among others, gender equality. It is imperative that annually, we are able to celebrate achievements with the knowledge that there is tangible progression. This was the sentiment shared by most of the panellists who participated in the webinars held in commemoration of Women's Month 2020. There was an undeniable desire across the board, for collaboration between government, civil society, business and other stakeholders to make an elaborate effort to address gender inequality.

The Sixth Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum (GSADF) went further to explore leadership accountability for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda during COVID-19 and beyond, in light of the increased incidents of gender-based violence during the pandemic. This has not been a purely South African problem and thus, leaders the world over were compelled to seriously accelerate implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on WPS. The resolution rightfully urges all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all UN peace and security efforts. The arrival of COVID-19 has highlighted the fact that conceptualisation and repetition of plans must now translate into implementation because failure to do so will result in the continuous cycle of the unfortunate and gruesome actions performed



against women. There is a resounding call for increased inclusion of women in mediation and negotiation to ensure effective and long-lasting solutions to conflict. Read the article on the Sixth GSADF to learn more about discussions on the role of women in silencing the guns as well as building and strengthening new architectures for peace.

The battle for gender equality is far from over as is echoed in most of the articles in this month's edition of *It's Your Voice*. The women of 1956 fought the good fight 64 years ago. Now, it is upon the young women of 2020 to take the baton and continue by auctioning the wishes and guidance by exemplary women like Mme Shope and not take our rights nor our liberation for granted. It is time to embrace these rights and freedom and ensure forward movement. No more stagnation. It is time to stand together and move onwards and upwards. Malibongwe!

"The emancipation of women is not an act of charity, the liberation of women is a fundamental necessity for the revolution, a guarantee for its continuity and a precondition for its victory." – Samora Machel

WOM

CONTENTS

- 05 Saluting strong women: A profile of Minister Naledi Pandor
- 13 The Sixth Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum
- 19 International Youth Day Webinar on Youth Engagement for Global Action: "Silencing the Guns: A Must for Africa's Development"
- 23 We stand on the shoulders of giants: Women and frontline diplomacy pre-1994
- 31 IBSA project Presidential Visit
- 32 Comoros-South Africa relations - South African Ambassador hosted by the President of the National Assembly

- 34 Nelson Mandela celebrations at the SA High Commission in Sri Lanka
- 35 Cuban tribute to Ambassador John Nkadimeng: His huge legacy on South Africa-Cuba relations will never be forgotten
- 39 Women, gender equality and human rights
- 41 Pursuing gender equality: Navigating unconscious biases
- 43 Top 10 – #StopGBV
- 45 Globe at a glimpse
- 47 From growing up in a militarised community in South Africa to providing expertise on human rights
- 51 Gender-based violence and masculinity

#ABOUTME

Saluting strong women: A profile of Minister Naledi Pandor

- SAnews.gov.za

Stern, strong women, with an aversion to any form of childhood nonsense, have raised many good men and women, often in times of great difficulties, with the hope that their children will make a difference in an ever-evolving world.

"Our parents played a very important role, especially our mother. Our father was very active in politics, in the struggle, and so our mother was the one who was at home," says Dr Naledi Pandor, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation.

While raised by both parents, activists Joe and Fikile Matthews, Minister Pandor specifically remembers the role her mother played, in her obtaining her education despite living in exile.

"I remember that London can be a very cold place, but I remember that even in winter, she would walk us to school to make sure we go into the school gates and go to class," she recalls.

Her mother, she remembers, was very determined that she got her education in whichever country the family found itself in at the time.

"She was very determined that we would be educated wherever we landed – be it Botswana, Lesotho [or] Zambia. She insisted that education was the most important thing and of course, our dad when he was there, would support her in that regard," she said.

Dr. Pandor did not disappoint her parents and went to obtain several qualifications, including a Master's degree in Education from the University of London.

Befittingly in April 2019 while serving as Minister of Higher Education and Training, Minister Pandor obtained her PhD in Education from the University of Pretoria.

While she has no immediate plans of going back to the lecture room, she is a firm advocate of continuous learning.

"Well, I don't know about studying again. I hope to continue being a student by reading and learning as much as I can.

"But, as to going back in the classroom and having young people wonder why I'm there I'm not too sure. I remember the looks I got when I started the PhD," she says as she pauses for a hearty laugh.

Dr. Pandor, who continues to have a keen interest in education and linguistics, believes the future of education and a "lot of life activity" is closely associated with information technology.

She says the use of virtual means of education and communication is going to become increasingly important.

"I think we are going to see many more online courses, some of our universities and colleges were not able to continue offering students teaching programmes because of the inadequacy of their IT capabilities.

"I believe that once we are all freed of this current COVID-19 crisis, you're going to see much more attention towards online learning."



With the world continuing to evolve and being more inclusive of women in various fields, South Africa has also been striving to have more women voices heard.

With the country celebrating Women's Day under lockdown, government has made advances in achieving gender transformation, which include legal protection, increased access to basic services such as water, electricity, housing and free healthcare to the poor.

One of the most significant has been the advancement of women representation and gender equality across the state machinery.

Representation of women ministers in Cabinet increased from 11% in April 1994 to 50% following the April 2019 national elections.

However, the notion of the first woman to do this or the other, continues to have a bearing on life today.

This is despite the fact that following the 2019 elections, 46.1% of women held seats in Parliament, up from the 11% seen in the first democratic elections in 1994.

"There has been a great deal of progress made, particularly in democratic South Africa and we should celebrate that, however, there's still a great deal to be done. The level of inequality that we have, not just in our country but worldwide, means there's a great deal of work to be done to ensure gender equality," added Minister Pandor

As fate would have it, Dr Pandor was the first woman to become Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces back in 1999.

"I think that this thing of first woman, first black, almost suggests that you're in that position because of gender or colour and it denies recognition of the talent that those individuals have, the skills and the experience that they've built up over a long time," says the Minister.

She cautions that while it is good to celebrate the achievements of women, one should be weary of falling into the trap of diminishing women's achievements.

"So, we should be careful when we celebrate that we don't diminish the capabilities of the individuals that are appointed. I think we have talent but we have been denied the opportunity. It is not that we did not have talented people before; it is just that they were not allowed into the room. Now they are, and we are beginning to see what is possible."

She also points out that there are still areas of resistance that require attention.

In March 2019, Cabinet adopted a Gender-Responsive Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing Framework to ensure the mainstreaming of gender priorities.

In addition to obtaining their education, the Minister urges young women to forge healthy friendships as part of their toolbox to reaching their dreams.

"Friends are important, the circle you build is important and don't give up on education, it's absolutely the greatest empowerment that you will have," she says.

Families also form an integral part of one achieving their dreams, she says.

"Being in international relations, I've learned that being in contact with other people helps to stop your prejudices and the perspectives you have on others, which are often uninformed perspectives. So, widen your circle as that stops you from being threatened by the presence of others," says the Minister.

Dr Pandor, who first became a Member of Parliament in democratic South Africa in 1994, has held various Ministerial positions.

Asked about which has been her favourite portfolio, Dr Pandor refers to education as the love of her life.

She has, however, also discovered that science and technology is her other love.

"I believe that we as Africa should do much more than we are doing now to invest in science, research and innovation. I believe there's a future for that. Through education, I think that we have so many talented young people and what I loved in [the Department of] Education was meeting that talent and in [the Department of] Science and Technology, I saw how education and science can help to advance a nation," she said.

Dr Pandor, who has served as Minister of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation for over a year now, reflects on her current work, which has allowed her to know the different political and developmental thinking around the world.

"There still continues to be many divides in our world. We haven't yet arrived at a common humane philosophy and I have been somewhat appalled by the level of division between the wealthy nations and the poor nations. I think we need to build a stronger basis of

collaboration for development because we can't have so many people left behind," she says.

The Minister has also been pleased to see that the African Union (AU) is beginning to position itself as a significant continental body.

"I hope we as South Africa will continue to give support to the AU. I believe it is the institution that will help Africa to advance its development goals."

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Minister Pandor has continued to hold virtual meetings with other Ministers of International Relations around the world where experiences with the pandemic are shared.

"So, we are spending over 80% of our day in front of a computer having virtual exchanges. We remain very active internationally but it is virtual so we've all learned to utilise ICT to a very good effect."

With COVID-19 having disrupted daily life and forcing the world to adapt to a new normal, Dr Pandor, like many around the country, has had to adjust to life with the wearing of a cloth facemask when heading out in public.

"Well, you have to be more careful. I don't like wearing masks but I have to because I have to protect myself and the people around me. I suppose it also makes you much more nervous plus you don't have much human interaction and I'm a 'hugger' by nature," she smiles.

The new normal has also posed challenges for the field of diplomacy.

"Diplomacy is also about friendships, so we shake hands and we hug. It's been quite terrible because if you meet colleagues you want to rush forward but then you remember that oops you can't do that! Instead of that welcoming look, people look horrified [as if to say] 'don't touch me!'"

The pandemic, she says, has made people more nervous about interacting with others.

The Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) strategy focuses on 6 key pillars namely:

1. Women's Economic Empowerment and Sustainable Development - Women's empowerment is key to growth, prosperity and sustainability.
2. Social justice, protection and Women's Rights - women's rights are human rights; they span all spheres- social, political, legal and economic.
3. Leadership & Governance - good governance demands equal and effective participation by women.
4. Gender Management Systems - providing access and investing resources (financial and other technical resources) to support women.
5. Women, Peace and Security - Ensuring women's perspectives are included on issues of Peace - Prevention, Protection, Promotion Programmes.
6. Media and ICTs - Giving women a voice in African media and access to technology for knowledge.

Agenda 2063

The Africa we Want

Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 calls for:

"An Africa, whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children."

African Union



2020

SILENCING THE GUNS:
Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development

#SilencingTheGuns



"GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IS SOUTH AFRICA'S SECOND PANDEMIC."

Women should not have to protect themselves from men. They should feel safe and secure with us as men. Violence against women is a men's problem. As South African men, let us take responsibility for our actions. We must treat the women and girls of our country with care and respect."

President Cyril Ramaphosa



COVID-19 lockdown regulations have resulted in many South Africans not seeing their loved ones.

"Of course, we don't see our children because of no family visits. But since we are the ones who are putting the restrictions in place, I think we have an important role in ensuring that we observe all the restrictions as an example to the rest of our community," says the mother of two sons and two daughters.

With citizens forced to move most of their lives onto digital platforms to get groceries or to conduct meetings with their work colleagues, among others, Minister Pandor admits to having had to sharpen her technological skills.

"I've had to learn how to use virtual means. I constantly forget to unmute as I talk away, and it has been a very good learning experience. I'm a better user of technology because of COVID-19," she giggles.

We live in a constantly changing world where women struggle with developing self-confidence due to the surrounding environments they may find themselves in, such as abusive relationships and gender-based violence (GBV) and femicide.

As the country commemorated the 64th anniversary of the 1956 women's protest march to the Union Buildings, government has taken steps to address the upsurge of violence against women and children.

Cabinet has recently approved a collection of laws in response to President Cyril Ramaphosa's September 2019 commitment to address the scourge of GBV and femicide.

These include the approval for submission to Parliament of the Domestic Violence Amendment Bill, which strengthens application of the Domestic Violence Act.

Among others, the amendments enhance penalties and recognise repeat or serial offenders with regard to sentencing.

While the country wages war against GBV and femicide, Minister Pandor also speaks about the importance of empowering women in the economy.

"One of the lessons we have noted during the COVID-19 pandemic and in particular as a result of the restrictions and lockdowns that governments put in place, is that women continue to be in vulnerable economic situations. We have to attend to the empowerment, economically of women. We have to ensure that they have access to financial support for their businesses."

She says women, as the bedrock of society, must be supported in their business ventures so that they can run businesses that earn them and their families' decent livelihoods.

"We need to empower women to play their full role in society," she says.

Dr Pandor also pays homage to women health workers who find themselves at the forefront of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I must say that it has been women as health workers, and as members of the family, who have saved many lives during this crisis and we salute those women, particularly our health workers for the incredible role that they've played."

Asked about what she wishes her younger self knew today, Dr Pandor says she would have taken better care of her health.

"That she should not become fat, that is my one regret in life. I've not watched my weight properly. I was a very slim young person and I think I let myself go. Not that I'm prejudiced against people my size, but I don't think it's a good thing to allow yourself to become that and it's my fault, not anybody else's. I tell my daughters all the time to keep their shape," she says as she laughs.

In her spare time, the Minister who refers to herself as "just Naledi, the daughter of Joe and Fikile Matthews, a teacher by profession" and as someone who is hard-working and loves to learn and is a patriot, loves reading and listening to music.

Music of the 80s and 90s as well as reggae get her feet tapping.

"From time to time, on a Sunday morning, when I'm in the kitchen on my own, I have particular radio stations I listen to and I like to jive along as I work and nobody must come in," she says of her ritual.

In all likelihood, Dr. Pandor who devours thrillers in her spare time, was tapping her foot to some of her favourite tunes, as the country celebrated Women's Day on Sunday, 9 August.



the doj & cd

Department:
Justice and Constitutional Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Level 2: Public Places



Parks, beaches and nature reserves will be open for outdoor activity



Restrictions on all social gatherings remain in place to prevent the spread of the virus



Sporting events will be allowed **without spectators** to prevent the spread of the virus

South Africa will move to Level 2 from Tuesday 18 August 2020

The 6th Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum

- By The Mediation and Support Unit, DTR&D

The Sixth Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum (GSADF) virtual webinar, titled: "The Role of Women in Silencing the Guns: Building Architectures for Peace During COVID-19 and Beyond", was held over three sessions from 27 to 28 August 2020.

The forum focussed on how to move forward with the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda in light of the COVID-19 crisis, with the aim to identify transformative approaches to peace mediation and peacebuilding as well as placing women's leadership at the centre.

The forum highlighted efforts towards silencing the guns, the continued implementation of the WPS Agenda and building architectures for peace during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond by reflecting on the following key questions:

- what are the policy imperatives that should be considered to ensure that the gains made since the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 are not lost due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- what is the role of women in implementing the African Union's (AU) theme of the year, "Silencing the Guns in Africa: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development" during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- what must be done to focus on building resilience in communities for successful and peaceful resolution of conflicts?

The high-level session, titled: "Leadership Accountability for the Implementation of the WPS Agenda during the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond", was held on 27 August 2020. Led by the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Dr Naledi Pandor, the high-level session brought together the AU Special Envoy for WPS, Mme Bineta Diop; the Executive Director of UN Women, Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka; and the State Secretary of the Norwegian Foreign Affairs, Ms Marianne Hagen for a discussion.

The leaders brought forward key issues regarding the importance of the role of leadership to ensure accountability for the WPS Agenda, during and beyond the pandemic. These include the need for a women political leadership that supports the WPS Agenda and the need to ensure collaboration between government and the community to support community-based organisations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The leaders further indicated that women had always led in various sectors, however, COVID-19 had brought them to the forefront as first defenders of conflict. In light of the fiscal constraints that were brought by the pandemic, we also need to be vigilant and ensure that WPS-dedicated resources are not diverted, thus reversing the gains made; and that we need to reflect more on the impact of COVID-19 and identify what still needs to be done to a better job of building back society. Lastly, the leaders underlined their long-term commitment to work strategically in their areas to promote the WPS Agenda.

The session, chaired by Ambassador Mathu Joyini, the Deputy Director-General of the Branch: Diplomatic Training, Research and Development, included a special tribute to Mama Gertrude Shope. A video tribute heralding her work done in the GSADF since its inception and a special message from Minister Dr Pandor, highlighted the sacrifices that Mama Shope made in gender equality throughout the liberation movement and after South Africa achieved democracy. Mama Shope, who recently celebrated her 95th birthday, gave a special video message to urge participants of the GSADF to continue striving for equality. She also thanked and sent well wishes to participants.

Panellists for the second session, titled: "The Role of Women in Silencing the Guns", held in the afternoon of 27 August 2020, emphasised the need for availability of leadership at all levels and the development of country-specific strategies to ensure the successful implementation of the AU Roadmap towards Silencing the Guns.

Furthermore, they indicated that guns were a symptom of underlying challenges and that good governance, development; societal issues and the rule of law need to be addressed to ensure that there was no violence. However, in order to silence the guns, the speakers indicated that we must look at the nexus, who was manufacturing the weapons, who was buying them and where was the money coming from.

Security was identified to be all-encompassing and that it should include the protection of community-based organisations and women at grassroots level. In this regard, the speakers indicated that we must find ways to support the creation of institutions that would ensure sustainable peace for women; that policy provision of action-oriented recommendations address identified challenges and barriers to women's participation; that monitoring and evaluation systems are established to ensure accountability; and that we invest in the Peace

Fund to ensure availability of resources for post-Conflict reconstruction and development. The session was moderated by Ms Charlotte Lobe, the Acting Chief Operations Officer of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO).

The forum concluded on 28 August 2020 with the third session, titled: "Building and Strengthening New Architectures for Peace". The session was chaired by Ms Tshililo Munzhelele, the Director responsible for the Mediation Support Unit of DIRCO. The panellists for this session, which included women peacebuilders and practitioners in the field of WPS, emphasised that despite the negative impact of COVID-19 on women's role in peace processes, the pandemic could be seen as a vehicle that fast-tracked the need to use innovative solutions such as digital technology and social media platforms by peacebuilders and mediation actors in WPS initiatives.



SESSION ONE



Mme Gertrude Shope

At the same time, they also noted the need to bridge the digital divide to ensure that digital solutions did not become means of exclusion of women's participation.

The speakers noted that as we build back better, we should ensure that the participation of women at the local level was key to the peace ecosystem. In this regard, we need to ensure the collaboration of women and the development of future teams that will provide assistance at a community level; ensure that we identify and form partnerships with trusted members of the community such as nurses; that we leverage on the use of technology; and that there is inclusivity and inter-generational participation of women in peace processes.

In light of the fiscal constraints that were brought by COVID-19, women were urged to amplify their voices to ensure that there is continued allocation of resources to the WPS Agenda. Speakers also indicated that to ensure availability and participation of women at all levels, we should invest in the capacity-building of women and the development of conflict prevention strategies in local languages. It was also noted that we needed to reflect on indigenous systems of conflict resolution and develop peace and security architectures that are flexible to deal with the new

challenges as they emerge.

All of the sessions were broadcasted live online and a total of 279 people attended and viewed the sessions. The video recordings of the sessions are available on DIRCO Facebook and Twitter social media pages. The forum also saw the launch of the GSADF webpage, which enables participants and the public in general to obtain more information about the forum and obtain access to links to WPS Agenda-related information. Visit the GSADF webpage on the following link:

<http://dircoevent.southafricanorth.cloudapp.azure.com/dirco/www/index.html>



Prof Cheryl Hendricks, Executive Director, AISA



Mme Mathogonolo Maboe, Dream Team Foundation / Age of Hope Foundation



Ambassador Mathu Joyini, Deputy Director-General: DTRD (DIRCO)



Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director: UN Women



Ms. Marianne Hagen, State Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs Norway



Mme Bineta Diop, AU Special Envoy on WPS

SESSION TWO



Ambassador Charlotte Lobe: Acting COO (DIRCO)



Ambassador Osman Keh Kamara, Special Advisor to The Special envoy on Silencing the Guns



Brigadier General Bobelo, South African National Defence Force



Ms Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, Chief Executive: (SAIIA)



Ms Liezelle Kumalo, Researcher Peace Operations and Peacebuilding Institute for Security Studies



Amb Liberata Mulamula, Former Tanzanian Ambassador to the US



Ms Mukondeleli Mpeiwa, Senior Policy Officer MSU/ Coordinator PoW & FemWise-Africa Secretariat Peace and Security Department

SESSION THREE



Mme TM Munzhelele, Director: Mediation Support Unit (DIRCO)



Ms Pravina Mekan-Lakha, General Manager- Operations & Business Development: ACCORD



Ms Alice Wairimu Nderitu, Kenyan armed conflict analyst and mediator, educator and author



Ms Marita Sorheim-Rensvik, Norwegian MFA Special Envoy on WPS

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WHEN I WAS BORN TO THRIVE.
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IT'S
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International Youth Day Webinar on Youth Engagement for Global Action: "Silencing the Guns: A Must for Africa's Development"

- By Basse Phepheng
Directorate: Gender

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), in collaboration with UN Women (South Africa Multi-Country Office), the Embassy of Switzerland and the Embassy of Norway, hosted a webinar to celebrate International Youth Day (IYD) on 12 August 2020. The IYD was established by the United Nations (UN) in 2000 as a means of raising awareness of issues affecting young people around the world. Each year, the Secretary-General of the UN decides upon a theme for the day based on issues of concern to young people. IYD 2020 was celebrated under the theme, "Youth Engagement for Global Action", which seeks to highlight the ways in which the engagement of young people at local, national and global levels is enriching national and multilateral institutions and processes, as well as to draw lessons on how their engagement, representation and development in formal institutional politics (policy, practice and procedures) can be significantly enhanced.

DIRCO, through the Office of the Chief Operations Officer, saw the need to blend the IYD theme and the 2020 African Union (AU) theme of "Silencing the Guns: A Must for Africa's Development" into one theme for DIRCO's celebration of IYD. The webinar was designed to accentuate the role of youth for global action and soliciting consensus among the panellists on youth engagement, inclusion and development for Global Action and Silencing the Guns in Africa.

During the webinar, the participants focussed on Youth Engagement for Global Action, and issues surrounding the role of women and youth in peace and security, and were able to hear perspectives and experiences from various youth leaders, current and past. Ms Charlotte Lobe and

Ms Anne Shongwe co-moderated the webinar and were joined by the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Mr Alvin Botes, in a high-level panel, among them, AU Special Envoy for Youth, Ms Aya Chebbi; South Africa's High Commissioner to New Zealand, Ms Vuyiswa Tulelo; representatives from Norway and Switzerland, Mr Jon-Åge Øyslebø, Minister Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission, Royal Norwegian Embassy in Pretoria and Ms Barbara Schedler Fischer from the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs; Mr Waseem Carrim, CEO of the National Youth Development Agency; Ms Agnieszka Fal-Dutra Santos of the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders; the African Leadership Centre in Nairobi's communication specialist; former Chairperson of the South African National Youth Commission; and former and current student activists.

Deputy Minister Botes, in his keynote address, observed "the extent to which the current COVID-19 pandemic had delayed the implementation of the key priorities of South Africa's Chairship of the AU, including the issue of the silencing of the guns and the operationalisation of the African Continental Free Trade Area, among others. He further highlighted the need to find new means of pursuing the aspirations of a peaceful and prosperous continent and to deliberate on how we can further infuse activities of youth to realise a peaceful and secure continent as envisioned in Agenda 2063.

In the deliberations, the Deputy Minister reminded participants of Agenda 2063's Aspiration 4, which deals with peace and security, among others, and he accentuated the following in relation to the continent's young citizens: "a culture of peace and tolerance shall

be nurtured in Africa's children through peace and education."

Central to the discussions was the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) on Youth, Peace and Security, UNSCR 2250; and Women Peace and Security, UNSCR 1325. The UNSCR 2250 is the first to recognise the important and positive role young women and men play in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security, while UNSCR 1325 addresses the impact of war on women and the importance of women's full and equal participation in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and post-conflict reconstruction.



Generation Equality:
Realising Women's Rights for an Equal Future

#IAmGenerationEquality





**BE A PART OF THE
GENERATION
THAT ENDS
GENDER
INEQUALITY**

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**GENERATION
EQUALITY** REALIZING
WOMEN'S
RIGHTS FOR AN
EQUAL FUTURE

We stand on the shoulders of giants: Women and frontline diplomacy pre-1994

– By Ms Ruby Marks,
High Commissioner to Sri Lanka and the Maldives

South African women were at the forefront of the liberation movement pre-1994, and in many instances played a pivotal role in making representations in other countries on the realities of life under apartheid for the marginalised and disenfranchised majority. Indeed, women such as Ruth Mompati, Adelaide Tambo, Dulcie September, Hilda Bernstein and Miriam Makeba are no longer with us, but they helped to inspire many women to commit themselves to building better lives for our people.

Through their path-breaking work in frontline diplomacy during exile, they contributed immensely to the ending of apartheid. They laid the inspirational basis for many female diplomats, and continued to serve as examples of what it means to be a South African diplomat: displaying integrity, patriotism, loyalty and humility. These women helped to shape, through their advocacy work and lobbying of state and non-state actors, important policy changes towards apartheid South Africa, which enabled us to build support and solidarity that contributed in no small measure to hasten the end of apartheid. As frontline diplomats, their lobbying and advocacy role at anti-apartheid gatherings, multilateral fora and presentations to sympathetic governments highlighted the stark reality of people's lives under apartheid. We owe them an immense debt of gratitude for helping to lay the foundations of our current foreign policy under hostile conditions, and which, as in the case of Dulcie September, led to her assassination while she was African National Congress (ANC) Representative in Paris.

The pivotal role that women played in our liberation struggle has not been adequately researched or explored, and so the full story of the contribution of women still has to be told. Yet, all those women contributed to the liberation of our country, and helped to lay the foundational pillars of our current foreign policy. We would do well to remember that we stand on the shoulders of giants

A gallery of honour

The following women played pivotal roles in articulating the needs and aspirations of the oppressed majority in South Africa before the advent of our democracy. The list is by no means exhaustive, but should be seen as laying the basis for further research so that the full contribution of women to our liberation, and to our current positive standing in the world, can finally be told.

1. Ruth Mompati (1925 – 2015)

Ruth Mompati was a leading member of the then banned ANC and served as the head of the ANC's Board of Religious Affairs. She was a founder member of the Federation of South African Women (Fedsaw) and one of the leaders of the Women's March on 9 August 1956 to the Union Buildings in Pretoria. Between 1981 and 1982, she served as the Chief Representative of the ANC in the United Kingdom (UK) and became part of the delegation that opened talks with the South African Government at Groote Schuur in 1990. On 10 August 1992, Ma'm Mompati was invited to address the United Nations (UN) Special Committee against Apartheid in New York on the subject of women. The day was then declared International Day of Solidarity with Women in South Africa.

Ma'm Mompati served as, among others, a Member of Parliament in the National Assembly; South Africa's Ambassador to Geneva, Switzerland, from 1996 to 2000; and Mayor of Vryburg in the North West.

2. Adelaide Tambo (1929 – 2007)

Adelaide Tambo was a founder member of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Movement and the Pan-African Women's Organisation, a leader of the ANC Women's League (ANCWL), and a Member of Parliament in the National Assembly.



While in exile, she played an important role in supporting the external work of the ANC, in particular through her work to highlight the plight of women and children. She also initiated the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) in the UK, and played an active lobbying role with numerous groups from all sectors of society to highlight conditions in Apartheid South Africa. She received international awards in recognition of her tireless efforts, and was awarded the Order of the Baobab in Gold.

3. Dulcie September (1935 – 1988)

Dulcie September was a student and teacher leader who left South Africa to go into exile in the UK in 1973. She was an active member of the AAM, and a crusader of women's rights through her membership of the ANCWL. In 1979, Dulcie addressed the UN Unit against Apartheid on the plight of black children in South Africa under Apartheid. She also made representations in Finland, Canada and Tanzania, which contributed to global solidarity against apartheid. While working at the ANC Headquarters in Tanzania, she chaired preparations for the convening of two

conferences in Zambia and Angola to commemorate the 25th anniversary of South Africa's Women's Day.

Later, she also represented the ANC Women's Section at the World Congress for Equality in Czechoslovakia. She was appointed ANC Chief Representative in France, Switzerland and Luxembourg, and underwent military training in the Soviet Union. As the Chief ANC Representative, Dulcie distinguished herself as a skilled mediator, able to unite members of different ideological persuasions to work together. She worked tirelessly to rally support for disinvestment and full economic sanctions against the South African Government. In particular, France provided a substantial portion of South Africa's military aircraft and naval aircraft to the Apartheid Government. Dulcie received numerous death threats, and on 29 March 1988, she was assassinated outside the ANC's Paris office. Her killers have never been apprehended. Today, a square in Paris is named after Dulcie September, and she is remembered for her defiant heroism and courage in defence of our people.

4. Hilda Bernstein (1915 – 2006)

Hilda Bernstein was born in the UK, but relocated to South Africa in 1932, where she became active in worker and women’s struggles and the work of the Communist Party of South Africa. She was a founding member of Fedsaw, the first non-racial women’s organisation in South Africa. After she was banned by ministerial decree from working with 26 organisations, and following her detention, she went into exile in London. She was a member of the ANC External Mission and the Women’s Section of the ANC, and a regular anti-apartheid speaker at many fora not only in Britain, but also in different parts of Europe, Canada and the United States of America (USA) on behalf of the ANC. She moved back to South Africa in 2004, and was awarded the Albert Luthuli Silver Award for her “Contribution to the Attainment of Gender Equality and a Free and Democratic Society” in South Africa.

5. Miriam Makeba (1932 – 2008)

Miriam Makeba was a musician and human rights campaigner, also famously known as “Mama Africa”. She was the first vocalist to put African music onto the international map in the 1960s and performed both in Africa and Europe. As a result of her rise to fame through music and acting in films, South Africa’s Apartheid Government considered her to be a menace, and she took refuge in London before immigrating to the USA.

While in New York, Miriam accepted an invitation to address the UN Special Committee against Apartheid on 16 July 1963. She used that platform to become the voice of both Africa and South Africa’s oppressed people, and urged the UN committee to enforce a boycott against South Africa. “The first priority must be to stop the shipment of arms. I have not the slightest doubt that these arms will be used against African women and children” (Makeba and Hall 1987, 112). It was this speech that opened doors for other African leaders to reach out to Miriam Makeba.

“

All of these women contributed to the liberation of our country, and helped to lay the foundational pillars of our current foreign policy. We would do well to remember that we stand on the shoulders of giants.”



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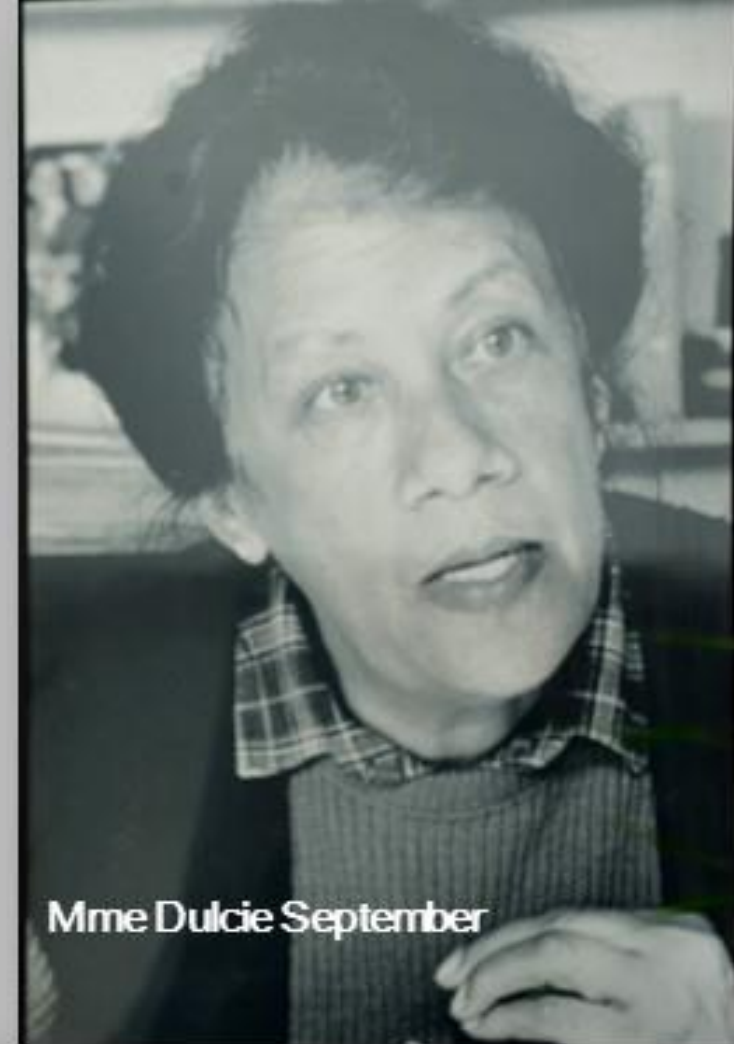




Mme Ruth Mompati



Mme Adelaide Tambo



Mme Dulcie September



Mme Hilda Bernstein

A Gallery of Honour

Generation Equality:
Realising Women's Rights for an Equal Future
#IAmGenerationEquality



Mme Miriam Makeba

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED



IBSA project Presidential Visit

The India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation (IBSA Fund) is not only a remarkable example of cooperation among three developing countries, but also a pioneering initiative to implement South-South cooperation for the benefit of other southern countries in partnership with the United Nations (UN) system. Its purpose is to identify replicable and scalable projects that can be disseminated to interested developing countries as examples of best practices in the fight against poverty and hunger.

The UN Office for South-South Cooperation is the Fund Manager for this initiative.

The UN Development Programme in Comoros and the Agricultural Research Council in South Africa are implementing a project, titled: "Enhancing Agricultural Capacity in the Union of Comoros", which is financed by the IBSA Fund. The project's responsibility resides with the steering committee, which is a representative of the Government of the Comoros and the South African Ambassador in Moroni. The pilot project was formulated with the following aim: "Improving production conditions and adding value to agricultural products on the Island of Mohéli and thus contributing to food and nutritional security for the Comorian population".

This project is a cooperation partnership among developing countries through the implementation of the South-South cooperation initiatives for the benefit of southern countries in partnership with the UN system. The project attempts to address challenges in the agricultural sector of the Union of Comoros mainly by developing an Agricultural Learning School in Mibani, Mohéli, as well as establishing two vegetable-production demonstration sites in Anjouan and Ngazidja.

The IBSA project was developed to have a suitable developmental impact with an incubation of a learning culture to drive the techniques and lessons learnt for a sustainable revolution in rural agriculture on the Island of Mohéli. The President of the Republic of Comoros, Azali Assoumani, visited the Mibani site in Mohéli, an agricultural centre specialising in the production of seeds in greenhouses.

President Azali pledged to multiply this successful example in agricultural regions. He encouraged young people to love and practise agriculture.

Watch a short video about the project here: project: <https://youtu.be/GX5OP0EnxE>



Comoros-South Africa relations

- South African Ambassador hosted by the President of the National Assembly



The Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa to the Union of the Comoros, Anesh Maistry, was received on Wednesday, 5 August 2020, by Moustadroine Abdou, President of the National Assembly, after the welcoming of new representatives to the country. Several issues were on the agenda, particularly relations between the two countries and the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the discussions, Ambassador Maistry highlighted the historic relations between the two countries, most particularly the idea of putting in place a bridge linking the assemblies of the two respective countries.

On other subjects, the Ambassador indicated that they had talked about the current fight against COVID-19 in the Comoros and the unwavering support for the development of the Comoros.

"Concerning my country's policy, our President is ready to work closely with the Comoros through very strong relations in international trade to hope for development", he told guests.

Mr Abdou expressed satisfaction with the affable relations between the two countries. He embraced the fact that South Africa had expressed its readiness to support the Union of the Comoros in several sectors.

"We welcome the eminent Ambassador. Our relations are good. We have requested the assistance and support of this friendly country that is South Africa for entrenching our country into the Southern African Development Community, an organisation which aims to promote economic development in southern Africa", the President of the Assembly indicated.

Relations between the two countries date back to 1990 and are mainly based on development. To name but a few, there are several initiatives, particularly the Galawa Hotel and the agricultural projects managed by South Africa's Agricultural Research Council.

Nelson Mandela celebrations at the SA High Commission in Sri Lanka



High Commissioner Ruby Marks hands over the book to Prime Minister Rajapakse and the Minister of Education at a recent ceremony

To mark International Nelson Mandela Day 2020, staff of the South African High Commission visited the Afro-Sri Lankan community. The people in this community are all descendants of the Indo-Atlantic slave trade, which saw some 15 000 Africans taken as slaves by respectively the Portuguese and the Dutch. They were used as slave labourers to build the many forts and churches around Sri Lanka. Although they are now integrated into Sri Lanka, they still retain their own distinctive cultural, linguistic and cuisine identity. Unfortunately, their history has never been recorded, except as part of oral tradition.

High Commissioner Ruby Marks wrote a children's book entitled, "Grandma, tell our story", which was illustrated by world-renowned illustrator, Sybil Wettasinghe. The book was written as a soft diplomacy tool in the context of South Africa's commitment to the African Agenda; to highlight South Africa's current Chairship of the African Union; and to strengthen our shared ancestral link with Sri Lanka. The book narrates how Africans were taken from the continent to Sri Lanka, and was published in English, Sinhala and Tamil. The book will not be sold, but will be distributed free of charge to all school libraries and public libraries in Sri Lanka. The High Commission also initiated a scholarship programme for children of descendants from Africa, and this will be administered independently by members of the community, representatives of Honorary Consuls for Africa, and other independent members of NGOs.



The launch of the book has been extremely well received by the media and general population, and copies of the book were handed over to Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and the Minister of Education at a recent ceremony.

Read the book here: <https://bit.ly/323E12m>

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Cuban tribute to Ambassador John Nkadimeng: His huge legacy on South Africa-Cuba relations will never be forgotten

– By Rodolfo Benítez Verson,
Ambassador of Cuba to South Africa, eSwatini and Lesotho

Cuba and South Africa formally established diplomatic relations on 11 May 1994, just one day after the late Mr Nelson Mandela's inauguration as President. In fact, Cuba was the first country that a liberated South Africa recognised diplomatically and the first in which South Africa established a new embassy after the end of Apartheid.

Commander-In-Chief, Fidel Castro, a guest of honour at the inauguration ceremony, informed President Mandela that he looked forward to the appointment of an Ambassador to Cuba. It was not an ordinary ambassadorship posting; many plans for the future had already been discussed by the two leaders.

In August 1995, President Mandela selected the late Ambassador John Nkadimeng for this important position. It was not a surprise for us in Cuba. Comrade Nkadimeng started working with Mr Mandela at the age of 25 in 1950 and they became very close. Madiba knew that Cde Nkadimeng was up to the task.

The Cuban Government could not be happier with the choice. Cde Nkadimeng was already known by us in Cuba. We knew he was a very well-prepared cadre who combined great experience of leadership from the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party and the trade unions.

We were aware of his contribution to the fight against Apartheid, both in South Africa and in exile. He had demonstrated to be a man of principle and humility. Cde Nkadimeng was a profoundly committed diplomat.

Many combatants received military training, education and other skills from Cuban instructors in the Novo Katengue camp and other places in Angola. Others travelled to Cuba for education in our universities or for specialised military training. Many South Africans fighters carried Cuban passports to facilitate international movement during that difficult time.

Mr Nkadimeng also played a key role in strengthening the relations between the Cuban Workers' Federation (CTC) and the South African trade unions during Apartheid. Numerous meetings were held in Cuba between the CTC and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), and then later with the Congress of South African Trade Unions. Mr Nkadimeng, then General Secretary of SACTU, participated in 1990 in the XVI CTC Congress in Havana and had extensive meetings with our trade unions and leaders.

On his designation as Ambassador, he later said: "I felt that Tata Mandela had honoured me by sending me to Cuba, a country that was prepared to do anything for South Africa."

Mr John Nkadimeng assumed his position as the first Ambassador to Cuba of a liberated South Africa on 25 October 1995.

During his four years as Ambassador, he worked tirelessly to strengthen the special bonds of friendship, solidarity and cooperation between South Africa and Cuba. He loved the Cuban people and the achievements of our revolution. Cubans loved him back.

He was a key channel for the extensive engagements between presidents Mandela and Castro with whom he enjoyed a close friendship because they knew that more than a diplomat, Ambassador Nkadimeng was a true revolutionary, a real representative of the working class and a man of integrity. He was not seeking personal glory or material rewards. He was a true servant of the people of South Africa and a true friend of the Cuban Revolution.

Ambassador Nkadimeng played a key role in initiating important bilateral cooperation agreements in many fields, including the outstanding Nelson Mandela-Fidel Castro Medical Collaboration Programme, under which thousands of young South Africans coming from disadvantaged communities are trained in



Ambassador John Kgwana Nkadimeng
12.06.1927 – 06.08.2020

Cuba as medical doctors. These doctors come back to South Africa and assist with improving healthcare conditions in their communities.

After successfully concluding his important mission in Cuba, Ambassador Nkadimeng continued to be very close to our country. He was the Chairperson of the Friends of Cuba Society in the Gauteng province from 2002 to 2005. We will never forget his fundamental role in the South African campaign for the release of the Cuban Five.

We will always honour this giant of solidarity and internationalism. His life will forever be a crucial part of the history of our special relations. We are committed to preserve his enormous legacy. He will be sorely missed.

Hamba kahle Comrade John Nkadimeng!

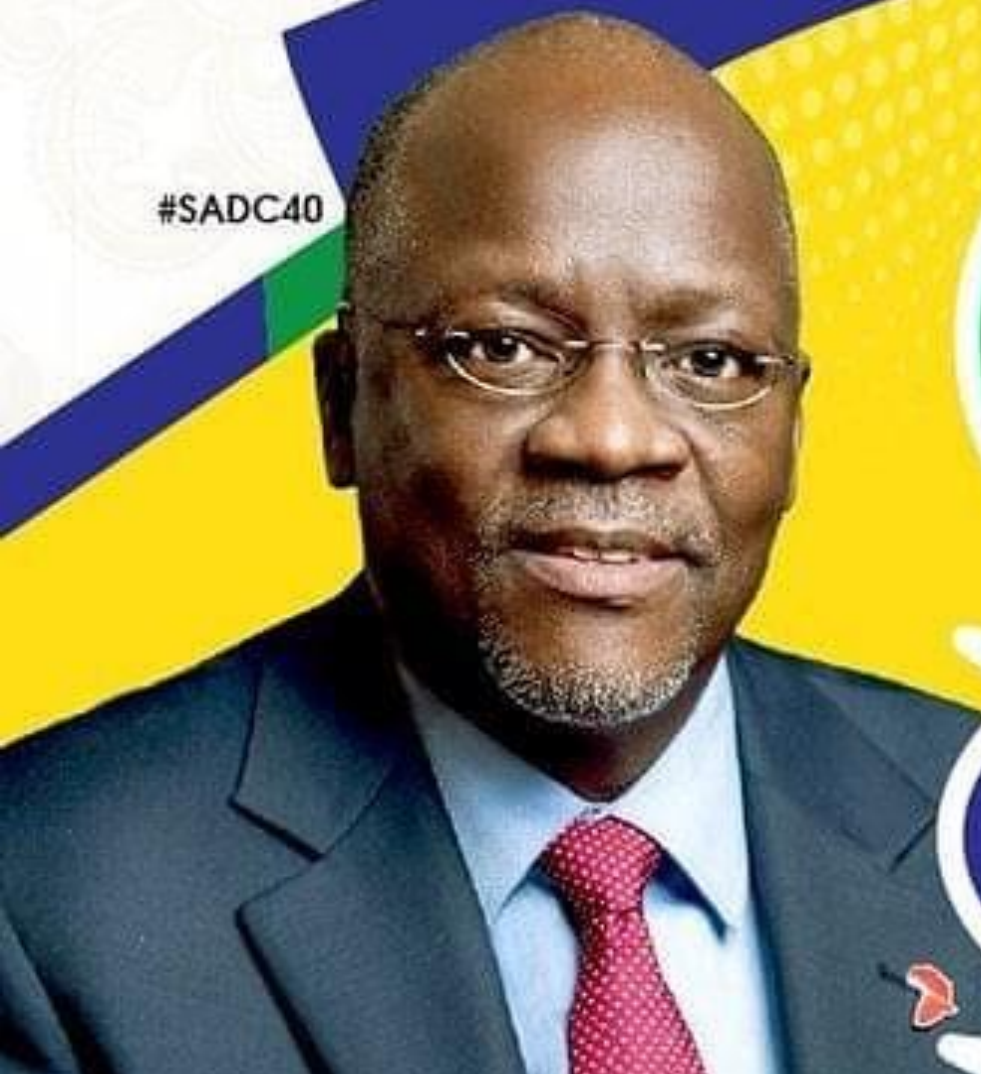


40th
Anniversary
1980 - 2020

SADC DAY MESSAGE - 17 AUGUST, 2020

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SADC DAY MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA AND SADC CHAIRPERSON, H.E. DR JOHN POMBE JOSEPH MAGUFULI

#SADC40



SADC has come a long way since its inception in 1980. In this respect, it is heartening to note that, over the past four decades, our Organization has recorded some important milestones in different areas of cooperation: from peace and security, to infrastructure development, trade and industry, agriculture and food security, health, education, gender and youth empowerment. Indeed, our region is now, more than ever, enjoying unparalleled peace and security compared to any other regions on the continent; intra-regional trade is increasing, extreme poverty is declining, income is rising and the level of our international competitiveness has been enhanced.

I call upon all SADC Member States to continue to work together not only in addressing the COVID-19 impacts but also in preparing the post-pandemic situation of our Community. This, I believe, would be a nobler way to celebrate this SADC Day.

Play your part and save lives.



Hand hygiene practices
hand washing / sanitising



Social Distancing



Cloth mask &
coughing etiquette



Cough or sneeze into
a bent elbow or tissue

**STAY
SAFE**

PROTECT SOUTH AFRICA

TOGETHER WE CAN BEAT THE CORONAVIRUS

Voices from DIRCO

Women, gender equality and human rights

– By Cathy Moruke
Directorate: Vulnerable Groups

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa recognises that women's rights are human rights. As a result, when South Africa returned to the community of nations in 1995, it prioritised the promotion of international norms and standards to reflect the rights of the previously marginalised groups – in particular, African women and girls. In all its engagements, South Africa emphasises that all human rights are equal, justiciable and must be treated the same as enshrined in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution.

This year, the international community celebrates the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which asserts women's rights as human rights and committed to specific actions to ensure respect for those rights. The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has drastically impacted women and reversed the gains made in terms of women's access to income, health services and education. This time warrants global collective efforts to prevent the deepening of pre-existing inequalities. South Africa advocates for economic recovery plans that are gender-responsive, with appropriate budget allocation for the implementation of policies on gender equality. In order to respond accordingly to the plight of women and girl children across the world, focussed areas to be advanced should be the inclusion of women in the economy for meaningful participation and eradicating gender-based violence (GBV).

I grew up (in late 1980s) in a community surrounded by women who participated in some form of business (spaza shops, fruits and vegetable stalls, pastry food "magwenya" at schools, etc.) in order to earn an income and take their children to universities. Today, some of

their children are lawyers, academics and doctors. What I remember vividly is that they were able to make ends meet under harsh Apartheid laws that restricted them from participating in economic activities and confined them as child caregivers. Even though they were restricted by an Apartheid regime that discriminated against women based on race, class and gender, they were focussed and able to run their businesses with passion and determination. As an African woman, I relate to the lived experiences of many African girls and young women who continue to experience multiple and intersectional discrimination across the world.

My participation in the international norms and standard settings is mindful of these experiences and I believe that we can learn from these strong women. I have observed with appreciation that South Africa's perspective on the advancement of women and girls is valued because the country's Constitution has internalised these rights as enshrined in the United Nations Bill of Rights. However, as a country, there is still much to be done, including ensuring the full economic and financial participation of women in the country's economy and development. The South African labour market continues to be more favourable to men than it is to women with greater representation of men in management and decision-making positions.

According to the *2019 Fourth Quarter Labour Force Survey*, over 30% of black women are vulnerable and unemployed, as compared to 27% of men who are unemployed. From my experience, women also find themselves in a precarious position since they have to assume their gender role of keeping the home fires burning – sometimes putting their careers and



further studies on hold to raise kids – while their male partners continue to advance themselves.

Efforts of the international community to eradicate world poverty will always be in vain, unless something is done to address the plight of women and girls – because poverty has a woman's face. Women and girls constitute half of the global population – and yet they live in extreme poverty – and are victims of violent crimes – as compared to men and boys. As such, the empowerment of women and girls is crucial in addressing gender equality.

Women across the world are also affected by discriminatory laws that favour men and are entrenched in institutional, cultural and social norms that create power imbalances between men and women. In multilateralism, there are ongoing debates

on the fight against the discrimination of women in law and in practice, a thematic issue focussing on the responsibility of law-makers to protect and promote the rights of women to participate in political activities and access socio-economic opportunities. As such, the empowerment of women and girls is crucial in addressing gender inequality at various levels of society and in all sectors.

The eradication of gender inequality cannot be realised without the involvement of business, youth, men and women to provide concrete solutions. As Ms Wangari Maathai correctly puts it, "Human rights are not things that are put on the table for people to enjoy. These are things you fight for and then you protect." As women, we continue to make our voices heard, because eradicating poverty and gender inequality constitutes our future and that of our children.

Pursuing gender equality: Navigating unconscious biases

– By Lindelwe Dube
Branch: Africa – East African Community

“By changing the social order that oppresses women, the revolution creates the conditions for their genuine emancipation.” – Thomas Sankara

The month of August is one that has been reserved to commemorate the role that women played in the struggle against Apartheid. Most notably, the successful 1956 Women’s March to the Union Buildings, where an estimated 20 000 women across racial backgrounds gathered to challenge the State on the introduction of pass laws. The march, which took place on 9 August 1956, was a turning point in the perception of the role of women during the Apartheid years. They were finally recognised as active participants and power blocks in their own right. While it is important to commemorate this pivotal moment in South African history, it is worth noting that women had been coordinators since 1898, 1912, 1913, 1914 and 1918, at the earliest introduction of pass laws. Women’s Month is a gentle reminder that women were more than just accessories to their husbands but key players in changing the political landscape and leading South Africa into a democracy. There are ample examples of women who were harassed, arrested multiple times and violated – all while trying to raise their children and keeping the struggle alive while their husbands were serving life imprisonment on Robben Island.

It is important then to acknowledge Women’s Month as a time in which we not only change the narrative that women were footnotes in the struggle against apartheid, but rather powerful interest groups. The narrative needs to shift from a passive and romanticised tone to one that is active. The empowerment of women has never been about masculine protection of women but rather the fight to recognise women as equal players and contributors in society, worthy of the same recognition and equal benefits. Yet, decades later, women are still raising some of the issues that have been persistent since the beginning of time. One may argue that there is greater representation of women in positions, whether in politics or the private sector. It may be argued that this representation is enough, but in truth, quota systems don’t translate into meaningful representation, especially if patriarchal structures are still dominant in society.

It is within the spirit of the women who have led us into democracy that one must write this month’s

contribution. It requires that the piece be in a manner that is fitting of the bravery, strength and authenticity to truth, that the women who paved the way for us to be here, carried. The task always seems monumental, precisely because unless the conversation around women is passive and romanticised, then women cannot be listened to. Thus, Women’s Month is under threat of becoming a Mother’s Day of sorts instead of being recognised in its true political form. Patricia Collins, a feminist academic, writes: “that oppressed groups are frequently placed in the situation of being listened to, only if we frame our ideas in the language that is familiar to and comfortable for a dominant group. It is precisely this requirement that changes the meaning of our ideas and the language we use.” Despite this challenge, the conversation around gender equality must still continue until biases, whether conscious or unconscious, are eliminated.

South Africa is among the key countries on the continent and globally that puts emphasis on the recognition of women in power structures and the pursuit of gender equality in international institutions. In their academic article, “Gendering Foreign Policy: A Comparative Framework for Analysis”, Karin Aggestam and Jacqui True cite that South Africa is considered among the few “women-friendly” countries, particularly for the support of gender-mainstreaming policies within the international community and through ensuring that gender equality is a salient feature in its foreign policy. This is evident in the role that South Africa has played in ensuring that it is one of the leading countries in championing the landmark Convention for the Elimination of all Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as well as supporting the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, a resolution dedicated to ensuring gender-inclusive peace processes and gender equality in post-conflict societies.

Furthermore, within the African continent, South Africa has played a role in ensuring that African peacekeeping forces incorporate women and it has partnered with reputable organisations such as ACCORD in training female peacekeepers. South Africa has also produced the first female African Union Chairperson, Dr, Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, and the likes of Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the



Executive Director of UN Women; and most recently, Dr Tlaleng Mofokeng, who has been appointed by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights as Special Rapporteur for physical and mental health. These strides are a reflection of a commitment to promoting women leadership and gender equality.

However, lines can easily be blurred in understanding the difference between women empowerment and the masculine protection of women. The latter is a consequence of patriarchal structures that often see women as “needing to be protected” while still perpetuating social, political and economic inequalities. This weakness is not exclusive to South Africa. Many countries in the international arena face this problem. International institutions cannot sincerely pursue gender equality and empowerment until all realities reflect meaningful representation of women in the public and private sector.

On a social level, the violence against women has garnered international attention because of the gruesome manner in which women and children have been kidnapped, raped and murdered. However, government is making a continuous effort to collaborate with civil-society organisations to implement new legislation that will protect women and create local structures that will assist with the reporting of gender-based violence and femicide. Thus, the pursuit of gender

equality must move to meaningful representation that changes how women can participate actively in all sectors of society. The pursuit of gender equality is uncomfortable because it requires the true dismantling of patriarchal structures that only serve to benefit one group of people at the expense of another while yielding average results.



TOP 10

#StopGBV



During the Webinar on Silencing the Guns and Ending Gender-based Violence on 26 August 2020, Deputy Minister Candith Mashego-Dlamini showed support for action against Gender-based Violence by wearing #StopGBV branded masks.



GLOBE AT A GLIMPSE



This Women's Month, we celebrated South African women in diplomacy and Ambassador Nozipho Mxakato-Diseko, Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, told us why she was proud to be a diplomat and told young girls that "You matter. Your voice counts. Make a difference."

Watch Ambassador Mxakato-Diseko's message here:

https://twitter.com/DIRCO_ZA/status/1298232641796345857



South Africa's Ambassador to Finland and Estonia, HE Ms Carmen Smidt, has been involved in a number of COVID-19 relief projects in her community back home in the Cape Flats, Cape Town. She shared with us what Women's Month meant to her.

Watch the video here: https://twitter.com/DIRCO_ZA/status/1298928503438663681

From growing up in a militarised community in South Africa to providing expertise on human rights

– By Talifani Munzhedzi
Ubuntu Radio: Mon-Fri 06:00-09:00

In 2017, at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), South African medical doctor and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Consultant, Dr Tlaleng Mofokeng, delivered the first-ever statement from civil society, urging the world to use human rights standards for supporting access to safe abortion care. It was no surprise that she was confident to apply for consideration of the position of an independent global representative on health at the UNHRC.

Recently, during an interview on Ubuntu Radio to speak about her appointment as an Independent Expert/Special Rapporteur on the Right of Everyone to the Enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health, Dr T, as she is affectionately known, said she would use her own personal experience of growing up under Apartheid in South Africa and having lived in the democratic country where individual rights are enshrined in the country's Constitution.

During the conversation, Dr Tlaleng said her mandate would focus on thematic areas specific to the entitlements to health, intertwined with all the related rights such as the rights to water and sanitation, safe community, medicine and indigenous health systems.

Dr Tlaleng is a full-time commissioner at the Commission for Gender Equality and sits on various committees. She is also the Vice Chair of the board of the Soul City Institute for Social Justice and Board Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Taskforce (Sweat).

Dr T maintains that her appointment is a reaffirmation that South African youth and African youth are in fact capable of leading when given a chance. She adds that this is a testament of the calibre of the youth we have on the continent.

On sexual and reproductive health, Dr Tlaleng believes the issue of taboo around sex, sexuality and gender is prevalent across cultures and races, especially in Africa or the black community. She also observes that when young females are open-minded about their sexuality, they are stigmatised.

Speaking with affection about healthcare, Dr Tlaleng acknowledges that nurses and all who are the first respondents to a health crisis should

also be afforded compassion and care. “The respondents are at the coalface of most of our societal programmes. It will be the duty of hospitals to make sure they offer wellness programmes, debriefs and counselling for workers on the frontlines. Thus, we need to normalise mental care for healthcare workers”, she argues.

On COVID-19, Dr Tlaleng says the Coronavirus is possibly setting up the agenda for what is likely to dominate her immediate task. She highlighted the urgent mission of establishing whether countries are properly handling issues of access to healthcare during the pandemic, diagnostics and procurement.

Locally, she observed that while much had been done on educating the youth about their health, it had predominately come through the HIV/AIDS link. Thus, there is not enough comprehensive public health messaging and packaging on issues such as gender, identity, sexual rights and healthy relationships, technology consent and negotiating relationships.

Dr Tlaleng asserted that, while the majority of our young people were online, there was a need to assist them to understand the law that governs social media and the policy that oversees sharing content online. The roll-out of these programmes is sporadic instead of comprehensive.

Dr Mofokeng is the first African woman to be appointed to this important role. She will present annual reports to the HRC and the General Assembly on the activities she has undertaken.

To listen to the full interview on Ubuntu Radio, click on the link below:

<https://soundcloud.com/ubunturadioza/from-living-in-a-militarized-community-to-growingup-in-a-democracy-dr-tlaleng-mofokeng-un-rapporteur>



Below: Dr Tlaleng Mofokeng - medical doctor, specialist on sexual and reproductive health and UN Special Rapporteur on Right to Health



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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Gender-based violence and masculinity

– By Ncedisa Mayeko
 Directorate: Employee Health and Wellness

Background

This article was prompted by the concerning rate of gender-based violence (GBV) in our country. In one of his speeches in May 2020 during the nationwide lockdown, President Cyril Ramaphosa likened the prevalence of GBV in South Africa to a country at war with itself as “men have declared war against women”. The past few months of lockdown have seen an alarming increase in GBV, resulting in a huge psychological and emotional impact on the survivors – girls and women in general. It evokes a sense of hopelessness, vulnerability and extreme distress.

Gender violence in numbers (statistics)

Men can be victims of gender violence in the hands of intimate female partners, however, the focus of the current article is on violence carried out on women by men. Almost one in three (30%) of women globally have experienced violence from an intimate partner or someone else in their lives (World Health Organisation, 2020).

In South Africa, women experience a high incidence of intimate partner violence. However, a large number of cases remain unreported. It is difficult to quantify GBV in South Africa. Conversely, it was reported that in South Africa a woman is killed every three hours (Stats South Africa, 2018).

Research shows that there is a correlation between masculinity and GBV. Let us examine

this relationship closely. GBV includes physical, sexual, verbal, emotional and psychological abuse or threats of such acts or abuse, coercion and economic or educational deprivation, whether occurring in public or private life, in peacetime or during armed or other forms of conflict and may cause physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or economic harm”. (National Strategic Plan on Gender-based Violence and Femicide, 2020).

Masculinity refers to a set of traits associated with being a man. Psychology theory is of the viewpoint that masculinities are learned and thus can change. It is a result of this viewpoint that one believes that men hold the key to preventing and ultimately significantly reducing GBV in the future.

Forms of masculinity

In South Africa, it can be argued that some societal and cultural customs support gender norms that encourage the physical superiority of boys and men over girls and women. It is not uncommon to find many of these societal and cultural norms transcend into adulthood. It may become difficult for young men to challenge the privileges that society and culture accord them. Perhaps the time has come for behavioural scientists, traditional leaders, societal leaders and men to challenge such privileges. In order to understand men and the societal and cultural standards that some men may have been indirectly accorded, it is important to understand some forms of masculinity.

Harmful masculinities

Masculinities are learned at a young age and can impact men, women, families and ultimately societies. The following are the characteristics of harmful masculinities:

- Inability to express emotions: This usually results from beliefs such as “men don’t cry”.
- Aggression and violence may be used to express emotions and these can escalate to asserting power over others. These may become unconcealed in intimate relationships and lead to GBV.
- Men tend to be measured by the number of partners they have. The more partners a man has, the more stature he may hold in his social circle.
- Extreme risk-taking behaviour.
- Authority and control may supersede all ideals when the man feels vulnerable. Physical violence may be the only way to assert dominance in intimate relationships in such circumstances. This becomes so as the man has difficulty expressing emotions.

Harmful masculinities do not protect the behaviour of men who use violence towards their intimate partners or anyone in their lives. The narrative intends to explain that the men who conform to this narrative are likely to engage in GBV.

Positive masculinities

Positive masculinity provides a shift in paradigm. The focus moves from seeking what is wrong with masculinity or men to promoting existing strengths in men. Some of the characteristics of positive masculinity are highlighted below:

- expresses emotions
- promotes morality
- accepts that men are different
- embraces masculinity and its flaws.

Partnering with South African men to curb GBV

- Work with the millions of men who have never inflicted intimate partner violence on women.
- Learn examples of alternative masculinities from such men.

- Encourage and allow the freedoms and powers normally reserved for adolescent boys to all genders.
- Allow these men to stand up and educate the perpetrators of GBV.
- Allow these men to educate boys, girls and women in order to curb GBV.
- Enable role-modelling, thereby transferring good values and morals to a generation of men.
- Partner with women to fight GBV.
- Work with boys and men who have inflicted intimate GBV to understand from the perpetrators’ viewpoints in order to prevent and protect future victims and survivors.
- Prevent GBV by identifying possible triggers of violence.

“Working with men and boys does not equate to anti-feminism or take away the plight of the victims of gender-based violence”. (Langa, 2020).

Let us work together to stop GBV in our society. Please note that professional help is always available. Employee Health and Wellness is available to render counselling, therapy, care and support to employees who need assistance.



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Minister Naledi Pandor in the virtual meeting of SADC ministers



Minister Pandor in a meeting with women ambassadors accredited to South Africa



Deputy Minister Candith Mashego-Dlamini hosts the webinar on the impact of COVID-19 on women in agriculture



Deputy Minister Alvin Botes in a bilateral virtual meeting with his counterpart HE Julian Ventura Valero, Deputy Secretary of Foreign Affairs for Mexico

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