

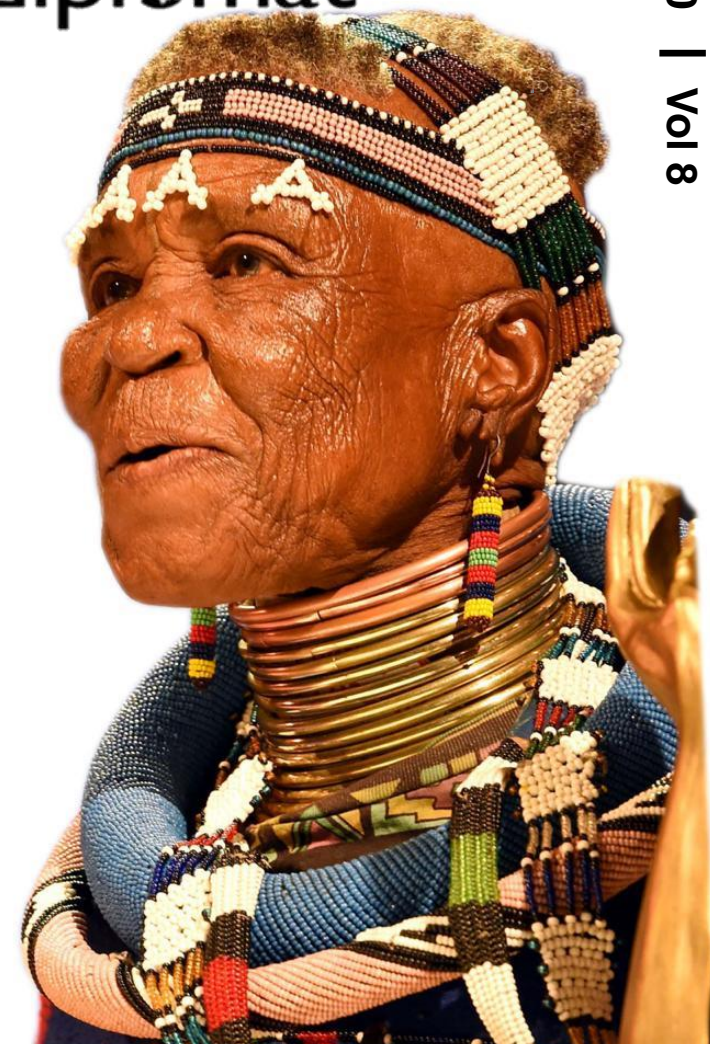
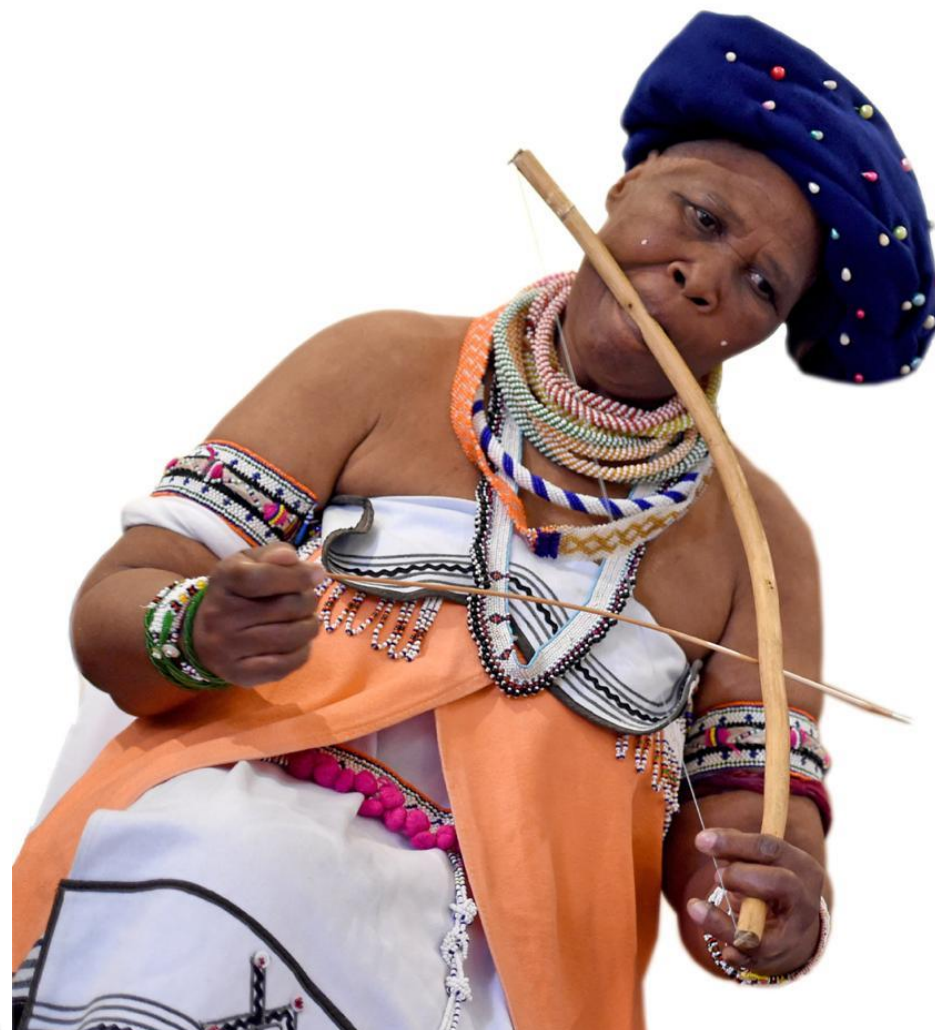
# IT'S YOUR VOICE

Internal Newsletter of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation

ubuntu diplomat



30 September 2020 | Vol 8



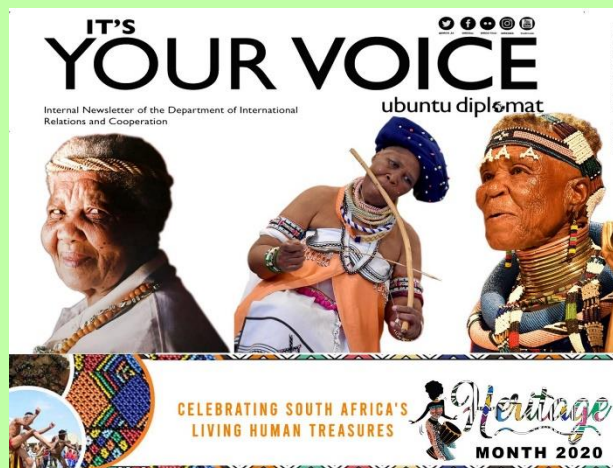
CELEBRATING SOUTH AFRICA'S  
LIVING HUMAN TREASURES





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This year's Heritage Month was dedicated to the living human treasures, namely, Dr Esther Mahlangu; Mama Madosini Latozi Mpahleni and Mama Ouma Katrina Letsau.

# EDITOR'S

## LETTER

September in South Africa is the beginning of a new season, and time to celebrate the renewal of our environment as nature blooms in all its colour and splendour. September is also Heritage Month during which our nation celebrates the richness of our cultural diversity and heritage. As our Constitution asserts, South Africa belongs to all who live in it and therefore signifying an inclusive and vital document, which is our guiding law on our nation's values and rules. It therefore follows that the vision of South Africa's Constitution is for everyone to be equal. It is regarded one of the best constitutions in the world.

This year's Heritage Month sees the country is gradually opening up the economy and establishing a semblance of a new reality, amid the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, more than ever, South Africans are reminded of the meaning of strength in numbers. The tourism industry, which contributes considerably to our heritage, is now open to the nation, albeit with some conditions. This is a good opportunity for South Africans to push back against the challenge that is the Coronavirus pandemic

and celebrate by visiting the cultural and heritage institutions that also provide the opportunity for communities to interact and connect with each other. Museums, art galleries and educational institutions help bring communities closer together.

September is also the month of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The year 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the UN. UNGA annually sees the meeting of heads of states and government in the GA at the UN headquarters in New York, United States of America. Due to COVID-19, this year's UNGA was held online, giving new rise to digital diplomacy to ensure the continued advancement of multilateralism. Both Minister Naledi Pandor and President Cyril Ramaphosa participated in various sessions and high-level meetings during UNGA75, thanks to the enabling technology at our disposal. The pandemic has been a firm reminder of the need to fast-track South Africa's Fourth Industrial Revolution objectives.

Our missions abroad celebrated Heritage Month in full force, ensuring that South Africa's uniqueness in its diversity and incredible cultural heritage is in full display across the globe. They hosted conversations with other South Africans



abroad, promoted our tourism attractions, honoured our living human treasures, participated in the #JerusalemaDanceChallenge and flew the South African flag high wherever they were.

In observing Heritage Month, let us celebrate our ability to be unique in our immense diversity. Let us rejoice our unity in diversity. !ke e: /xarra //ke

*Nthabiseng Makuwa*

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## Dr Pandor participates in the Ministerial Meeting of the Alliance for Multilateralism

On 25 September 2020, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Dr Naledi Pandor, participated in the Ministerial Meeting of the Alliance for Multilateralism. The meeting was held under the theme: "Our Commitment and Contribution to Building Back Better". On 26 September 2019, on the margins of the 74th Session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, the Alliance for Multilateralism was officially launched with a view to building a multinational network and presenting results. The alliance, which is co-chaired by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Jean-Ives Le Drian, and Mr Heiko Maas, Germany's Minister of Foreign Affairs, consists of a grouping of countries from all regions of the world and includes South Africa.

The alliance promotes multilateralism and its objective is to illustrate that countries that support multilateralism and the UN remain the majority in the world. The alliance seeks to establish a network of countries ready to support multilateralism and cooperation, including joint efforts on empowerment of women and girls, climate change, health, humanitarian law, disarmament and transnational organised crime, among others.

The purpose of the Ministerial Meeting was to reflect on the continued efforts and initiatives of the alliance to strengthen multilateralism and international cooperation with the UN at its centre, and address the many challenges confronting the world beyond the COVID-19 pandemic by "building back better" so as to ensure that countries and regions are better prepared for similar pandemics in the future. Furthermore, the Ministerial Meeting adopted a Declaration of Principles outlining the objectives of the alliance, namely: to seek broad and diverse support in favour of international cooperation to protect the rules-based international order, promote new initiatives and advance reforms in order to make multilateral institutions more effective in delivering tangible results to citizens around the world.

In her remarks during the meeting, Minister Pandor expressed South Africa's support for the

alliance and that government welcomed the discussion and hoped that all member countries would continue to ensure that this global collaboration served the greater good.

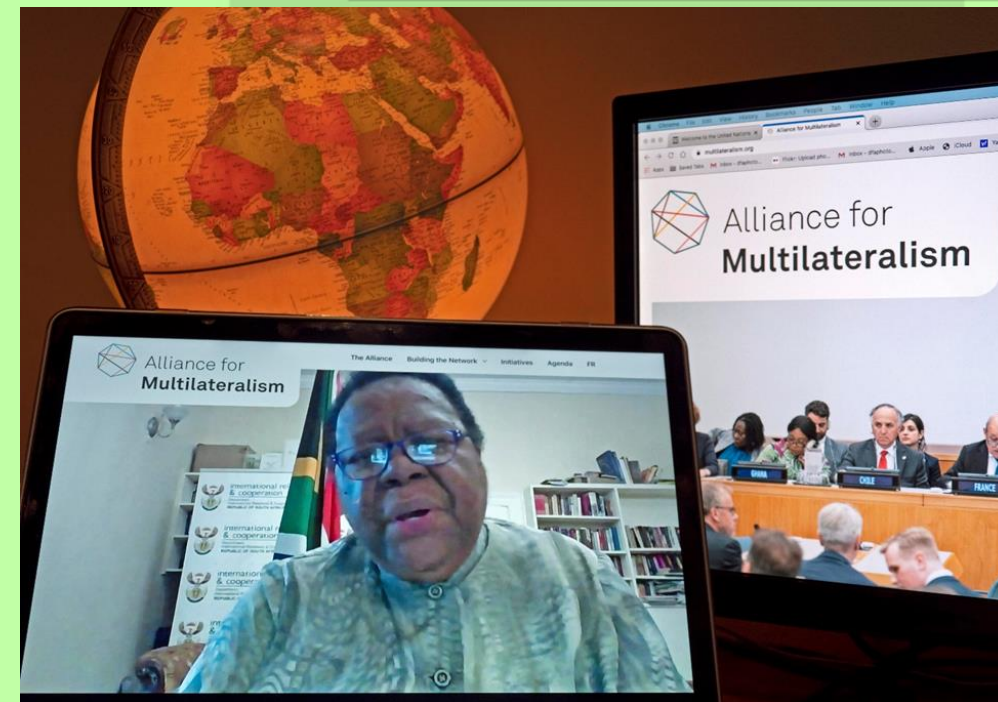
Dr Pandor put it to the meeting that "Africa has been severely impacted by the pandemic and gains made over many decades have been reversed. Our alliance should devote time in the future to devising effective support measures to assist the most vulnerable."

It is then no wonder that African countries have welcomed the debt standstill that has been agreed to for six months of this year, as this goes a long way in affording relief to those most susceptible to the effects of COVID-19. The Minister added that: "Much more relief and support are required for our economies to recover, for jobs to be created and for new industries."

Another group of the world population that has not been spared the devastating effects of the Coronavirus, is women. Minister Pandor highlighted this matter, saying that: "Women have been affected gravely by the pandemic — small and micro businesses have been destroyed by lockdown restrictions and the absence of financing for women's businesses – will make recovery slow."

"Our alliance includes the most powerful countries and more can be done together to reverse the worst effects of COVID-19", added Minister Pandor.

On the Chairship of the African Union (AU), Dr Pandor reiterated South Africa's continued collaboration with the rest of Africa to realising the goal of achieving sustainable peace not only on the continent, but globally as well. "As Chair of the AU, we have taken on the challenging goal of silencing the guns in Africa; our working together can help the AU to achieve this important objective and create a foundation for development. Achieving peace in Libya, Palestine and Yemen would signal progress."



Minister Pandor further expressed South Africa's welcoming of global initiatives aimed at developing a vaccine against COVID-19: "We have called for immediate and equal access for all and believe much more should be done to support research and innovation in Africa and to invest in health systems that can offer quality care and universal health coverage.

Our alliance should seek practical ways of building back better. The next global emergency should find us better prepared with stronger social protections, health systems and public services."

What the COVID-19 pandemic has shown the world is that a more concerted effort is required to escalate the urgent need for digital integration.

"We should also work at ensuring digital inclusion as our digital inequality has been exposed as virtual communication came to play.

"Our roadmap to recovery must include the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. We must therefore utilise this historic opportunity to not only confront the multidimensional challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, but to also ensure that all three pillars of sustainable development are advanced as we build back better to achieve a more just and sustainable future.", she said.

"We require decisive, multilateral, coordinated and innovative action from all of us, putting our citizens, especially the most vulnerable, first. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls should also be at the centre of all our post-COVID recovery programmes.

It is imperative that recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic leverages synergies and complementarities between social, economic and environmental measures, for a holistic response to the crisis.

In conclusion, Dr Pandor said that South Africa endorsed the alliance's Declaration of Principles, which outlines the alliance's political framework and objectives based on three actions, namely, to protect, preserve and advance international law and agreements; to drive initiatives in support of strengthening the multilateral system; and to reform existing international institutions, in order to make them more inclusive, representative and effective in delivering tangible results to the peoples of the world.

"South Africa will continue to work with the members of the Alliance for Multilateralism in creating a just, humane and equitable world and a rules-based international system of global governance."



# Deputy Minister Candith Mashego-Dlamini hands over Nelson Mandela Day donations

The Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ms Mashego-Dlamini, on 22 September 2020, visited two schools in Atteridgeville, Pretoria - Bokgoni Technical Secondary School and Walton Jameson Primary School to hand over donations.

Donations came from the members of the Diplomatic Corps who generously gave to the schools in efforts to make a difference in the lives of the learners.

The Deputy Minister was given a tour of the school by the Councillor Magodiello and the head of Bokgoni Technical School, Principal Sono.

Deputy Minister Mashego-Dlamini was also shown some of the learners at work in their classrooms.

During her visit, Deputy Minister Candith Mashego-Dlamini addressed the learners explained to them, the mandate and work of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation.

The Deputy Minister extended a vote of thanks to the Diplomatic Corps for their donations to Bokgoni Technical School and Walton Jameson Primary School.

Deputy Minister Mashego-Dlamini further shared with the learners the function of Embassies and Consulates, on the extent of the work they do abroad to assist S.A citizens, as well as the work of strengthening relations between #SouthAfrica and other countries.

Ms Candith Mashego-Dlamini ended her visit with an interview by Pheli FM 95.0 in Atteridgeville where she outlined South Africa's foreign policy, amongst many other topics.



The donations from members of the Diplomatic Corps



Deputy Minister Candith Mashego-Dlamini talks to the learners during her visit



Learners of Bokgoni Technical School working in class



Deputy Minister Candith Mashego-Dlamini with the principal of Bokgoni Technical School, Mr Sono as well as the District Councillor, Mr Magodiello



Ms Mashego-Dlamini takes a tour of the computer laboratory at Walton Jameson Primary School



The Deputy Minister being interviewed on Pheli FM 95.0



## Address by President of the Republic of South Africa and African Union Chair, President Cyril Ramaphosa, at the 75th United Nations General Assembly Debate

On 22 September 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa addressed the General Debate of the 75<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The Debate was held virtually for the first time in the UN's 75 year history. In his remarks during the Debate, President Ramaphosa observed the organization's 75 years of existence, established to introduce a new world order to achieve peace in the world.

It was the dawn of a new era of global cooperation, forged in the aftermath of one of the darkest periods in the history of humankind," said the President.

"In 1945 the world was in crisis. It was counting the devastation wrought by war, devastation and plunder.", he continued and reminded the meeting of the current war on COVID-19 that the world is currently experiencing.

"Today, we are in the throes of another crisis – the Coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic has cost nearly a million lives. It has deepened human suffering and uprooted communities, destroyed livelihoods and plunged economies into turmoil."

However, President Ramaphosa was encouraged by the existence of the UN and its efforts to seek world collaboration in solving global issues. The President said: "But just as the founders of the UN once stood united for the greater good, so too do we stand together to confront this grave threat".

"In this crisis, people across the world have extended the hand of solidarity to people in other nations. From the North to the South, humanity has been galvanised into action.", added President Ramaphosa and continued to highlight the formation of international partnerships to ensure there is equitable access to medical equipment and supplies in the fight against the Coronavirus.

Many nations have set up extensive social support systems to protect citizens whose jobs, businesses and livelihoods have been threatened

and President Ramaphosa further explained that South Africa's response to the COVID pandemic has demonstrated the heights that can be attained when nations work in the spirit of friendship and solidarity.

"If we are to build a common and inclusive future in the aftermath of COVID-19, it is this solidarity that must endure."

President Ramaphosa remembered former President Nelson Mandela with a quote: "It is human solidarity, the concern for the other, that must be at the centre of the values by which we all live."

As the African continent, our response to Coronavirus has been swift and effective. We have a continental strategy to fight the pandemic being driven by the regional economic communities.

"The African Union has established a COVID-19 Response Fund and launched a ground-breaking African Medical Supplies Platform to ensure all countries have access to the necessary equipment and supplies. Nonetheless, the pandemic will inevitably set back our developmental aspirations", said the President.

When the Secretary-General António Guterres delivered the 18th Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture in July 2020, he called on the nations of the world to forge a New Social Contract and a New Global Deal. He said we must create equal opportunities for all, that we must advance a more inclusive and balanced multilateral trading system, that debt architecture must be reformed, and that there should be greater access to affordable credit for developing countries. President Ramaphosa reiterated South Africa's support and endorsement for the UN Secretary-General's call:

"It is in the spirit of this New Global Deal, that we call on the international community and our international partners to support the rollout of a

### #UNGA75

THE 75<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

22 September 2020

His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa, in his capacity as the African Union (AU) Chairperson, will address the first day of the General Debate of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, under the theme: "The future we want, the United Nations we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism – confronting COVID-19 through effective multilateral action."



international relations  
& cooperation  
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International Relations and Cooperation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



South Africa  
Inspiring new ways



UN 75  
2020 AND BEYOND



STRONGER  
SAFE  
SUPPORTING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

comprehensive stimulus package for African countries.", said President Ramaphosa.

"This will enable African countries to not only mitigate the health impacts of COVID-19 but to aid us in the immense task of rebuilding our shattered economies. To ensure that no country is left behind we reiterate our position as the African Union that economic sanctions against Zimbabwe and Sudan should be lifted to allow their governments to respond adequately to the pandemic.

President Cyril Ramaphosa further called for the suspension of interest payments on Africa's external and public debt.

On gender equality, the South African president observed the 25th Anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action and impressed on the General Assembly the need to intensify efforts to empower women and girls.

"It is the right of women and girls to be full and equal participants in the workplace, in political life and decision-making, in the economy, in obtaining an education and in society as a whole."

South Africa is proud to be a member of the UN's Generation Equality campaign and has prioritised the eradication of gender-based violence and femicide.

"At a continental level, we are working to finalise and adopt an AU Convention on Violence against Women during the course of this year. AU member states are engaging on measures to promote financial inclusion, preferential procurement and preferential trade agreements for women." said President Ramaphosa

He further spoke about the AU's objective to continue with effort to 'silence the guns' once and for all through conflict resolution and peace-building, "Cooperation between the UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council has contributed to improved peace and security in the Darfur region of Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Mali and the Central African Republic."

It is imperative that this collaboration is institutionalised and that the financing of AU peacekeeping operations is addressed and resolved.

Now in its second year as an elected non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, South Africa has used its tenure to promote international peace and security by advocating for the peaceful settlement of disputes and inclusive dialogue.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE  
21 SEPTEMBER 2020

# SHAPING PEACE TOGETHER



[un.org/peaceday](https://un.org/peaceday) | #peaceday #UN75



# UN75

2020 AND BEYOND

SHAPING  
OUR  
FUTURE  
TOGETHER



## UNGA75 goes virtual amid the COVID-19 pandemic

- By Manqoba Mdluli, Directorate: United Nations (Political)

**F**or the first time in the history of the United Nations, both the high-level meetings and General Debate of the UN General Assembly had to take place virtually. This was warranted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been a major issue in many of the statements made by world leaders. The theme for the 75th session of the UN General Assembly is "The Future We Want, the UN We Need: Reaffirming our Collective Commitment to Multilateralism."

Due to the virtual nature of the General debate and the high-level meetings, Heads of State and Government had to deliver pre-recorded video statements, as prearranged by the UN Secretary-General, Mr António Guterres, and the 75th President of the UN General Assembly, Mr Volkan Bozkir of Turkey. The pre-recorded statements of Heads of State and Government were introduced by their respective Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in New York, which were streamed live on the UN's media platforms.

The high-level segment of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly commenced on 18 September 2020 with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Moment event convened by the UN Secretary-General. This virtual event brought together Heads of State and Government of United Nations Member States, as well as leaders from a range of SDG partners to identify the changes needed to recover better from COVID-19 and deliver the SDGs over the course of the decade. President Ramaphosa delivered a pre-recorded statement where he called for the need to identify solutions and accelerate the implementation of the SDGs at the national and regional level.

On 20 September 2020, President Ramaphosa delivered a pre-recorded statement at the High-level Meeting to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the UN. In his address, the President reaffirmed South Africa's commitment to the UN Charter and its support for the primacy of the UN as the central organ of global governance through which current challenges facing the world could be resolved. A Declaration was adopted as an outcome of the meeting where the Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their commitment to multilateralism and the pre-eminence of UN in addressing development, human rights and peace and security.

Since UNGA75 commenced, the world has witnessed Heads of State and Governments addressing a highly fragmented UN General Assembly. It is in this context that President Ramaphosa, in his capacity as the Head of State of the Republic of South Africa, as well as Chair of the African Union, delivered his virtual address to the General Assembly on 22 September 2020.

In his address, the President provided an assessment of the current global achievements and challenges that have affected continental peace, security and development. His address also made calls for the suspension of interest payments on Africa's external and public debt, as well as a rollout of a comprehensive stimulus package for African countries. He alluded that, this will not only enable the Continent to mitigate the health impacts brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, but will also aid Africa in the immense task of rebuilding its shattered economies.



The President further reflected on South Africa's term as an elected member of the UN Security Council (UNSC), the cooperation between the UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council, which has seen improved peace and security in the Darfur region of Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Mali and the Central African Republic. He also made repeated calls for a greater representation of African countries in the composition of a reformed and expanded UN Security Council.

President Ramaphosa's presence at UNGA75 was felt albeit virtually. The President articulated the position of South Africa and the Continent in all the high-level meetings related to financing for sustainable development; biodiversity; the 25th anniversary of the historic Fourth World Conference on Women; and the commemoration of the International Day on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.





# CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PREVENTION

**STAY  
SAFE**

**PROTECT SOUTH AFRICA**

**TOGETHER** WE CAN BEAT THE CORONAVIRUS

**S**ocial distance

**A**lways wear your mask

**F**acts not fake news

**E**ducate yourself



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Department:  
International Relations and Cooperation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





# MISSION ACCOMPLISHED





## Celebrating South Africa's beautiful cultural tapestry

- By Tarryn Warries Third Secretary Political, Oslo, Norway

September is a month dedicated to celebrating the diverse cultures that form the building blocks of our combined heritage. As an embassy, we highlighted the multicultural heritage of our beautiful country and introduced Norway to the beautiful cultural tapestry of South Africa. Although Norwegians are not strangers to our shores, its beautiful landscapes and cultural experience, their interaction with culture has been quite homogenous, predominantly filled with drumming, singing, bead-making and colourful dress. Although these attributes form part of the cultural heritage of Mzantsi, we wanted to highlight the diversity and shared values that enhance our South African heritage.

The Mission in Oslo embarked on a Heritage Month social media campaign that truly celebrated South Africa's living heritage. We interviewed South Africans who live and work in Norway. They not only reflected on their culture but also highlighted the way they integrate their South African heritage into their lives in Norway. During the month, we had 13 interviews with people representing several South African cultures, namely: Tsonga, English, Zulu, Venda, Afrikaans, Xhosa, Tswana, Pedi, Indian, Khoi and San; and mixed. Although each interview highlighted the beauty of their individual culture, it was interesting to see the commonalities in what the participants loved about their culture. From Duduzile Mathonsi (Tsonga) and Mpho Gadisi (Venda), who reflected on the importance of community, to Karen and Peter Laubscher (English); Thulani Maluleka (Zulu) and Zwai Mbula (Xhosa), who reflected on the South African friendliness and acceptance of all cultures. The project highlighted the overarching theme of Heritage Month, #MyHeritageYourHeritage, an emphasis on the interconnectivity of all the cultures of South Africa, a beautiful cultural tapestry that forms our common heritage.

As with the #JerusalemaChallenge, South Africans all around the world assist in spreading the South African culture and making it truly global. One can find South Africa almost anywhere, if it is simply in introducing the concept of braaing to your neighbours or spreading our laughter wherever we go, it is the people that still remain our greatest asset in promoting South Africa abroad. It is in the work of people like Zwai Mbula, a marimba artist, and Thulani Maluleka, a music conductor, who share the South African heritage of music across Norway. They use their classes to introduce South African languages and culture to their students. Our uniqueness is also spread by students, such as Eliot Moleba, who introduces South Africa as a microcosm for multiculturalism, through their PhD research. Eliot is currently looking at the acceptance of multiculturalism in Norway, in order to promote a society which is reflective of the changing demographics of the Norwegian society, so that everyone can feel represented. This of course is a characteristic, which South Africa has promoted since the dawn of its democracy.

It is through celebrating the beauty of our diverse heritage that we realise that the only way to achieve unity is through embracing our diversity. So, please join the Embassy in learning more about our different cultures and follow us on all social media platforms: Facebook @SAEmbassyOslo, Twitter @saembassyoslo, Instagram @saembassyoslo.



Duduzile Mathonsi (performing artist and writer)

Ambassador Selaelo Ramokgopa (South African Ambassador to Norway and accredited to Iceland)



Eliot Moleba (theatre maker and director; and PhD student)



# Jerusalema Dance Challenge – South Africa’s Display of Soft Power in the advent of COVID-19

- By Bobby J. Moroe, Minister Plenipotentiary - Abuja, Nigeria

In his address on Wednesday, 16 September 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa urged everyone to use Heritage Day on Thursday, 24 September 2020, as family time, “to reflect on the difficult journey we have all travelled, to remember those who have lost their lives, and to quietly rejoice in the remarkable and diverse heritage of our nation”. But what was more profound in his closing remarks was a unifying appeal for the country to participate in the “#JerusalemaChallenge” on Heritage Day. Through “#JerusalemaChallenge”, the President was affirming and asserting South Africa’s “soft power”. According to the African Union (AU), Jerusalema has become, “A song that has transcended its national boundaries, the continent and has people across the world dancing to its vibrant rhythm. So vibrant it has inspired a dance challenge that has taken social media by storm”.

The song “Jerusalema” is the creation of a South African DJ and record producer, Kgaogelo Moagi, known professionally as Master KG, and also features a South African vocalist, Nomcebo Zikode. The gospel-inspired song, with a twist of house-influence, gained popularity immediately after its release in the second half of 2019. It is hailed by many as a song that signifies victory and liberation in the soul of humanity, so deep that its lyrics can put anyone down on their knees to join in and sing along – “Jerusalem is my home, Guide me, Take me with You, Do not leave me here, Jerusalem is my home, Guide me, Take me with you, Do not leave me here”.

This musical masterpiece was followed by the release of a video in December 2019, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the full album was launched on streaming services after

it went viral during mid-2020. This led to the establishment of one amongst the most popular global hashtags by far #JerusalemaChallenge. According to the musical genius, Master KG, the dance challenge itself was conceived in Angola when a group of friends recorded a video of the dance choreography that has since gone viral. It was its remix featuring Nigerian singer, Burna Boy, which led to Jerusalema onto the US Billboard charts. According to media reports, the song topped the UK Afrobeats Singles Chart on 15 August 2020, and had subsequently held the number one position for two weeks. These great achievements unambiguously positioned “Jerusalema” as a force to be reckoned with, and an undisputed conduit for South Africa’s display of “soft power”.

In one of its publications, The Digital Diplomacy Hub, attributes the concept of “soft power” to Joseph Nye, an American political scientist who sets out three primary sources of “soft power”: political values, culture, and foreign policy. It further states that, according to Nye, “Soft power shuns the traditional foreign policy tools of carrot and stick, seeking instead to achieve influence by building networks, communicating compelling narratives, establishing international rules, and drawing on the resources that make a country naturally attractive to the world. But within these three categories, the individual sources of soft power are manifold and varied”. In one of his articles titled, “Soft power: the origins and political progress of a concept”, Nye argues that he coined the term “soft power” in his 1990 book titled, “Bound to Lead”, which challenged the then conventional view of the decline of American power. In essence, Nye holds the view that “soft power” is the ability to obtain preferred outcomes by attraction rather than coercion or payment. This is precisely what the song “Jerusalema” has achieved as the world



SA Embassy in Norway



SA Military students in Cuba



Students from the Nelson Mandela-Fidel Castro Medical Programme in Cuba



world battled with the effects of COVID-19. It has been extremely successful in attracting attention throughout the world and the pride attached to it lies in its origins – South Africa. This South African home-grown song has become a source of pride for the country, and remains a powerful tool for the promotion of “cultural diplomacy” between South Africa and nations of the world.

Despite a recorded cover version of the song by Spanish artist, Matias Javier, from Santiago, Chile, the “Jerusalem” remix by popular Nigerian artist, Buna Boy, is a further illustration of the depth and influence of cultural diplomacy in the creation of cohesion between South Africa and Nigeria. This song by South Africa’s young musical genius became a microscope through which humanity could witness the celebration of triumph over adversity. One would be forgiven to equate this song to the proverbial phrase, “when life gives you lemons, make lemonade”, which is often used to exude positive energy and outlook in the midst of arduous epochs. At the time when hope seemed bleak, and morale at its all-time low, the beats and tunes of Jerusalem infused the much longed spirit of hope that ‘this too shall pass’. Despite its Zulu lyrics, reports indicate that, “From hospital hallways in France and Sweden, to roof tops in Pretoria, public places in Italy, Romania, the UK and Canada, the beaches of Cape Verde, streets of Abuja and Lagos, markets in Lubumbashi, Favelas in Sao Paulo, apartments in Mexico City and Munich, in Jamaican compounds, somewhere in Tanzania, on Facebook, Twitter and TikTok, the #JerusalemDanceChallenge has hundreds posting videos of themselves or others dancing to the song”. As South Africa celebrates Heritage Month in September, many more people around the world, from the streets of Abuja and Lagos to the Favelas in Sao Paulo, will continue to share these videos, and dance to #JerusalemDanceChallenge.

Humanity has witnessed friends and foes gather together in laughter and joy to choreograph for the infectious beat of Jerusalem, and how those affected and infected by the pandemic were rising like a phoenix to celebrate their recovery. From North, South, West and East. Getting closer to home, in the context of cultural diplomacy between South Africa and Nigeria, Master KG and Burna Boy, through “Jerusalem” have both

created a path through which two countries may explore their cultural cooperation, and harness the existing energy and synergy between South African and Nigerian artists. This is a vital cog since the relations between South Africa and Nigeria are significant to both countries’ international relations engagements, especially in the continent, due to their massive influence and stature in global politics. If the two countries could leverage on their power and influence in the continent to promote cultural diplomacy, countries in the continent will no doubt emulate this unifying gesture. It is upon South Africa and Nigeria to lead.

As a matter of fact, during the apartheid era in South Africa, Nigeria used its soft power against the apartheid government and became one amongst the foremost supporters of anti-apartheid movements, including the African National Congress (ANC). As a result of this history, cultural relations between the two countries remain judiciously vibrant, with frequent people-to-people movement between the two countries. This has become an important feature in the celebration of South African and Nigerian heritage.

For the very first time in the history of South Africa’s new democracy, the country’s heritage month, under the theme, “Celebrating South Africa’s living human treasures” will be celebrated virtually due to the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is through “Jerusalem” that our nation’s diverse culture and heritage will be celebrated with the world in order to showcase our quintessence. Because this is the song that has preserved our lucidity, it will, again, be this song that we shall use to celebrate and embrace our heritage, in celebration of humanity’s triumph during a year characterized by hardships.

The ‘soft power’ that Jerusalem has become, will, once again, attract the whole world to celebrate our culture and heritage on 24 September 2020. Our country is all about friendship, and not competition. Our people seek to build bridges, and not destroys them. Overall, what we desire for ourselves as a country is what we wish for other nations. Our desire is to create a better South Africa, contribute to a better and safer Africa in a better world.



SA Embassy in Mexico flying the South African flag high. #FlyTheFlag



# The launch of Nelson Mandela Square in Munich, Germany

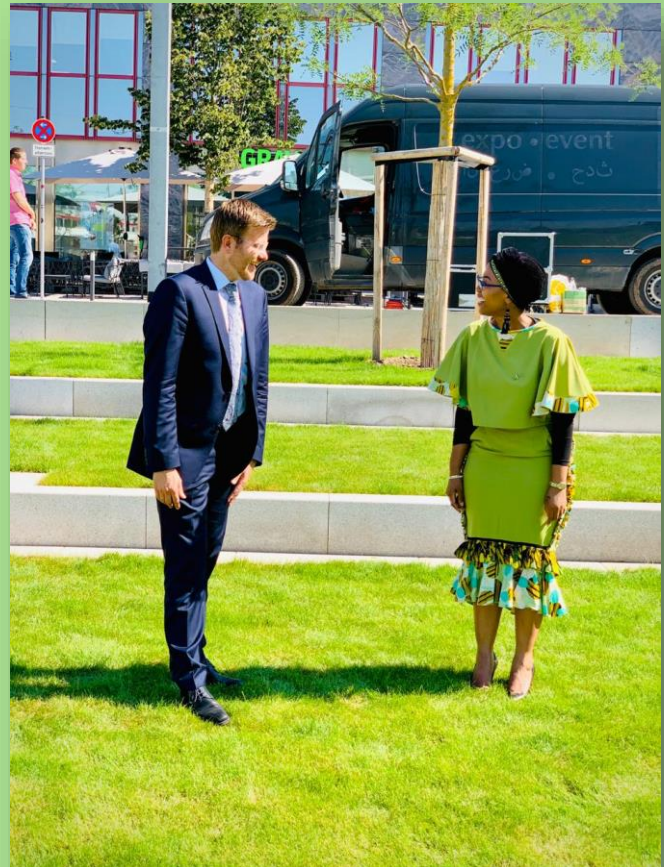
**A**fter a year and a half of construction, Nelson Mandela Square in Nuremberg's Southern City was finalised and launched by the city leadership.

The park boasts 70 new trees, a spacious lawn, safe bicycle paths, parking lots and Nuremberg's first bicycle parking garage, the bicycle storage store for around 400 bicycles to ensure both quality of life and functionality.

Mayor Marcus König, Mayor and First Plant Manager of the Public Space Service Nuremberg (Sör), Christian Vogel, and Planning and Construction Officer Daniel F. Ulrich, together with the South African Consul-General Ms Roleta Lebelo, Government Vice-President Dr. Kerstin Engelhard-Blum and Josef Hasler, Chairman of the Board of the Transport Company, officially opened the Nelson Mandela Square and the bicycle storage on Tuesday, 15 September 2020, at Hinterm Hauptbahnhof in the southern city.



South African Consul-General in Munich, Germany, Ms Roleta Lebelo addressing the guests at the launch of Nelson Mandela Square



Consul-General, Ms Roleta Lebelo and Mayor Marcus König



The launch of Nelson Mandela Square, in Nuremberg's Southern City



From left, Dr. Kerstin Engelhard-Blum, Mr Marcus König, Ms Roleta Lebelo Christian Vogel



## Celebrating Heritage Month in Washington DC

- By Zama Ngwane, 3rd Secretary Public Diplomacy, Washington, DC

**D**uring the month of September, the South African Embassy in Washington DC hosted a series of Heritage Month Conversations to highlight the various aspects of South African heritage and the arts. The conversations stimulated dialogue about South Africa and enhanced awareness among the American public.

Over a period of three weeks, virtual conversations were held with South African movie director and writer, Vusi' Africa Sindane; contemporary singer and song-writer, Msaki; and South African chef, food editor and author, Mme Dorah Sitole.

Vusi' Africa Sindane, the award-winning film director behind the internationally recognised film, *Letters of Hope*, started off the series. Africa highlighted the richness and abundance of the stories and talent within South Africa's film sector. He also emphasised the importance of government-led initiatives such as the Department of Trade and Industry's investment in South African film as critical pillars for the growth of a diversified and inclusive next generation of directors, producers and film economy in general in South Africa.

Our second conversation with Msaki focussed on the telling of African stories and the transmission of knowledge through music and song. In addition to speaking about her own musical contributions to South Africa's music industry, Msaki also stressed the importance of honouring and taking care of national treasures such as Mme Madosini Latozi Mpahleni who has been instrumental in the preservation of the art of traditional musical instruments including: uhadi, mhrubhe musical bows, and the isitolotolo.

The Heritage Month Conversations were rounded up by with Mme Dorah Sitole, who is also fondly known as "Mam D" among South Africa's food and hospitality circles. She has been within the food and hospitality sector for four decades during which time she has served as food editor for *True Love* magazine, and worked as a food stylist and authored four cook books with a distinct focus on South African and African cuisine. Her fourth book, *Forty Years of Food*, will be available for purchase in October 2020.

Sitole's contribution to the conversations was an in-depth look at the elements making up South Africa's food, how our food has been written about and received internationally, as well as the evolution of South Africa's culinary arts with the increasing voice of young and African chefs taking up space within the industry and offering their experiences.

These conversations were informative and stimulating and provided a contemporary window into some of the elements making up South Africa's colourful heritage..



Vusi' Africa Sindane - movie director and writer

Msaki; contemporary singer and song-writer



Dorah Sitole – chef, food editor and author



# 2020



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# Voices from DIRCO

## Reaffirming women as the custodians of our heritage, humanity and future

- By Jaimal Anand, Branch: Middle-East Asia

*"Women in the ANC ... have a duty to liberate us men from antique concepts and attitudes about the place and role of women in society, and in the development and direction of our revolutionary struggle."*

- OR Tambo ANC Women's Section in Luanda, Angola, 14 September 1981

The role of women in defining and protecting our heritage is not often linked but is, in my view, critical. The narratives that have been selected for this piece build on a position that women are a powerful force, and that this force has been suppressed by centuries of patriarchal conditioning.

All women have an innate strength and a special sort of courage that most men are unable to understand, however, during times of crises we have all seen this explosive force in action. The lens through which we, as men, perceive woman must change. One way of ensuring this is to drive to the fore narratives of women who literally shook the world, yet somehow their stories are overshadowed or stifled for reasons we may well understand, but not admit to. It is therefore important that mind-sets are changed at a societal level.

Dulcie September Square in Paris, France, was officially inaugurated on 31 March 1998. The name plate reads: "Dulcie September Square: Representative of the African National Congress: Assassinated in Paris on 29 March 1988".

Mme September's is among the many life stories shared by millions of women in South

Africa, Africa and the world. Her story stands out as a tale of courage and fortitude that is the embodiment of our heritage and our millennia-old emblems of true humanity. The events of 29 March 1988, when the 53-year-old Mama September was assassinated while opening the African National Congress (ANC) office in Paris are well documented: she was shot five times with a 22-calibre rifle.

Georges Marchais of the French Communist Party strongly criticised the French Government, and on 31 March 1988, Alain Guerin in L'Humanite, reported on special death squads that were operating in Europe. At her funeral, 20 000 mourners offered their last respects. Mme September was a woman and high-ranked ANC diplomat who fell on foreign soil for the liberation of our people. Mme September personified the emblems and virtues of the liberation movements through history. She was an internationalist, an activist, a warrior, a leader and above all an ordinary South African with an extraordinary dose of courage and principles. Despite her caring and gentle demeanour, she was clearly seen as a very real and dangerous threat.

Mme September's determination and sense of morality were reflected in her deep involvement with the Albertini Affair, that impacted negatively on the diplomatic relations between France and

(an increasingly isolated) South Africa between 1986 and 1987. French national Pierre Andre Albertini was part of the French Government's exchange programme and arrived in South Africa as a French language lecturer the University of Fort Hare. Albertini became politically active, and was imprisoned for his collaboration with the ANC. September had become active in mobilising the Anti-Apartheid Movement, and petitioned French President François Mitterrand not to accept the credentials of South Africa's new Ambassador to France until Albertini had been released from his Ciskei prison and allowed to return home.

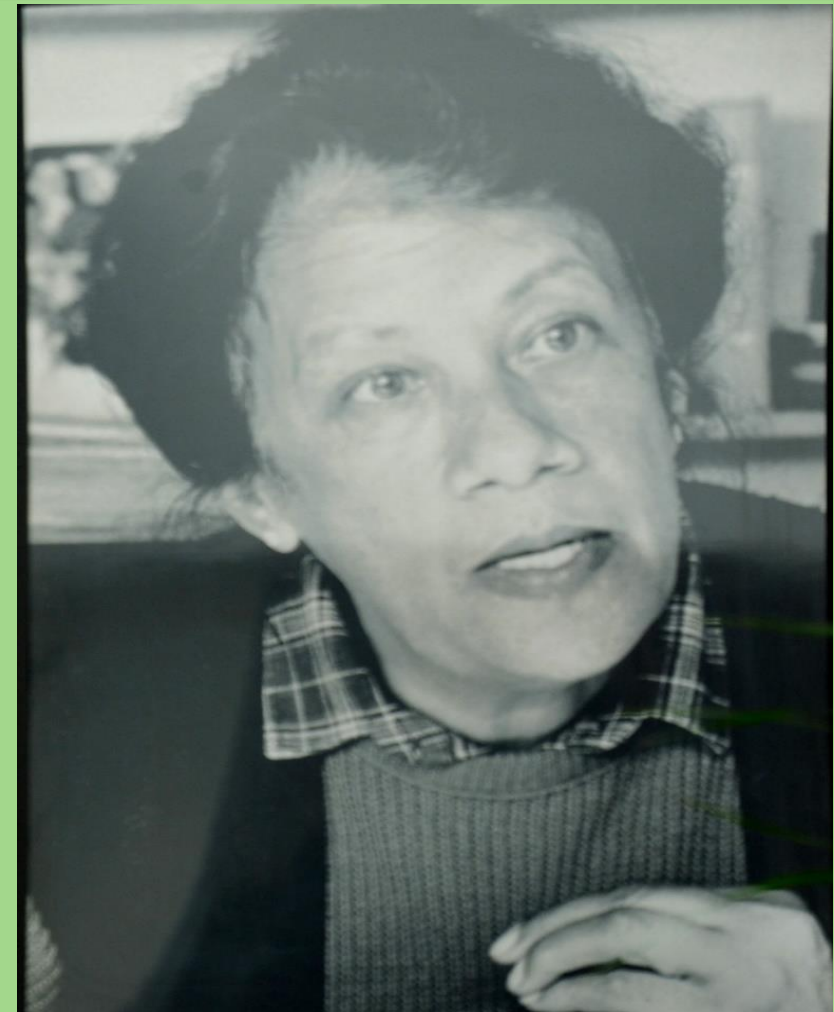
Mme September had fused an effective anti-apartheid lobby by driving the sanctions and disinvestment campaigns.

Her activities were not limited to Paris – she also mobilised widely in Switzerland and Luxembourg. Her activism became a serious threat to the South African regime and supporters of the regime in the international community.

Like many others, her life was symbolic of deep compassion and a humane bearing that cost her, her life..

### Women of war

The 21st century has become a terrain in which the order of the 20th century is being challenged and eroded. The 20th century was fascinating in many respects; it



Dulcie September



was a stage in which progressive values were being advanced mainly by post-colonial states, side by side with conservatism that remained firmly entrenched in the world order.

Svetlana Alexievich's 2017 publication, "The Unwomanly Face of War", is a harsh and very real story of female soldiers of the Soviet Union who served with distinction during World War II. In her review of the book, Liza Mundy describes a scene where a group of female fighters arrive at the front in their combat attire. These women were new graduates of the Soviet Union's women's sniper school, and were assigned to the 62nd Rifleman's Division. She cites a very specific story where the commander was annoyed to see female soldiers arrive at the front, and asked if "they've foisted girls on me". In his irritation, the commander then orders them to prove they can shoot, camouflage themselves and perform other key mandatory combat-oriented tasks.

While watching them train, he stepped on a hummock and was taken aback when the ground below him said "you're too heavy". The voice was that of a female sniper embedded in the landscape. The commanding officer then said: "I take back my words" and concedes amid their laughter. Tragically, the story goes on to detail the abuse that these women endured after their service, mainly from their family members and communities. This forced many to not disclose their military service, and the world nearly lost this legacy and history.

### The Sparta of Africa

Similarly in Africa, there is a little known history of the Dahomean warrior women. The Kingdom of Dahomey was a highly militaristic West African kingdom that was located in what is present-day Benin. It existed from about 1600 until 1904, and the Kingdom had a diplomatic presence in Brazil since 1750 and interacted diplomatically with Portugal and France as regional actors of the time.

With time, the Dahomean State became famous for its corps of ferocious female soldiers. Their origins are unclear, but most likely emerged out of female hunting teams. They were organised around 1729. The women reportedly behaved so courageously they became a permanent corps. Eventually, they became decorated to the point that King Ghezo ordered every family to send him their daughters, with the fittest being chosen as soldiers.

In 1861, a missionary by the name of Francesco Borghero was summoned to a parade ground in Abomey, the capital of the Kingdom of Dahomey. At that time, Dahomey was known in Europe as a "Black Sparta," a fiercely militaristic society bent on conquest. As a sign of friendship, King Glele presented his army to his European guest. Father Borghero noted 3 000 heavily armed soldiers marching into the square. He described the Dahomean troops as a fearsome sight, barefoot and bristling with clubs and knives, and a good part of this army were female.

The First Franco-Dahomean War in 1890 resulted in two major battles, one of which was really bloody and significant. It took place in heavy rain, at dawn and just outside Cotonou. The Dahomey army, which included formidable female units, assaulted a French formation, which was forced to fall back after a ferocious battle with hand-to-hand combat. The French won the day due to their heavy firepower, but in the battle's aftermath a French officer found a woman warrior called Nanisca lying dead and described the scene. "The cleaver, with its curved blade, engraved with fetish symbols, was attached to her left wrist by a small cord," he wrote, "and her right hand was clenched around the barrel of her carbine covered with cowries."

### Conclusion

On 24 August 2020, Reneva Fourie penned an article, titled: "Time to Ditch the Phrase 'building the capacity of women'" In the title,

she correctly challenges the language and the psychology that reinforce patriarchy. Reflecting on the life of Mama Dulcie September, many other South African women, freedom fighters and those leading relatively regular lives with highly irregular daily battles, it is unacceptable to continuously speak of capacitating women. It's patronising, it presumes incapacity and perpetuates the mind-set of oppression and is deaf to the fact that women are indeed capacitated.

This article has barely covered the volumes that have been documented about heroic women. The female force is without dispute the most formidable force on earth. When we hear of incidents of gender-based violence, rape and abuse, which have reached disturbing proportions, as men we must hang our heads in shame.

Men who take to such despicable behaviour are afraid of the legacy and heritage that women have given humanity. This article tries to present women who were equals to powerful and dangerous men like Barbarossa of Algiers who were able to respect women as their allies.

The only reason why Mama Dulcie September had to die violently is because she was a threat to the Apartheid regime, and same with the descendants of the women of Benin, the women who sailed the seven seas and those who fought toe to toe on any battlefield.

I will end by saluting the regular, day-to-day-women that we must not forget to honour. This is the mother who works 12-hour shifts to feed her family, the teenage orphan or the grandmother who has the responsibility of raising children with little

or no resources, the woman who tills the soil in the rural settings, the woman who puts her own scars aside and helps a society heal after the horrors of violence, abuse and even war. The list goes on, and often in our enthusiasm to narrate the stories of those who lead, we forget to celebrate the true, community-based builders of our nation.



*Jaimal Anand*

1 Liza Mundy is author of Code Girls Untold Story of the American Codebreakers of World War II

2 <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/dahomeys-women-warriors-88286072/>

3 <https://www.iol.co.za/news/opinion/time-to-ditch-the-phrase-building-the-capacity-of-women-d5d6626d-c14b-48fd-ab87-ec68f9f51541>



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## Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Awareness

**W**orld Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) Week is commemorated each year in September to draw attention to the fact that women should not drink alcohol while pregnant. The alcohol the mother drinks enters the unborn baby's bloodstream causing damage to the foetus. Such damage is permanent and irreversible. FAS children will have physical and intellectual problems.

FAS is caused when a pregnant woman drinks alcohol. The alcohol poisons the unborn baby and it may damage any of the unborn baby's organs, although the brain and the nervous system are the most vulnerable. Babies exposed to alcohol during pregnancy are therefore at risk of permanent brain damage. There is no amount of alcohol that's known to be safe to consume during pregnancy. If you drink during pregnancy, you place your baby at risk of FAS.

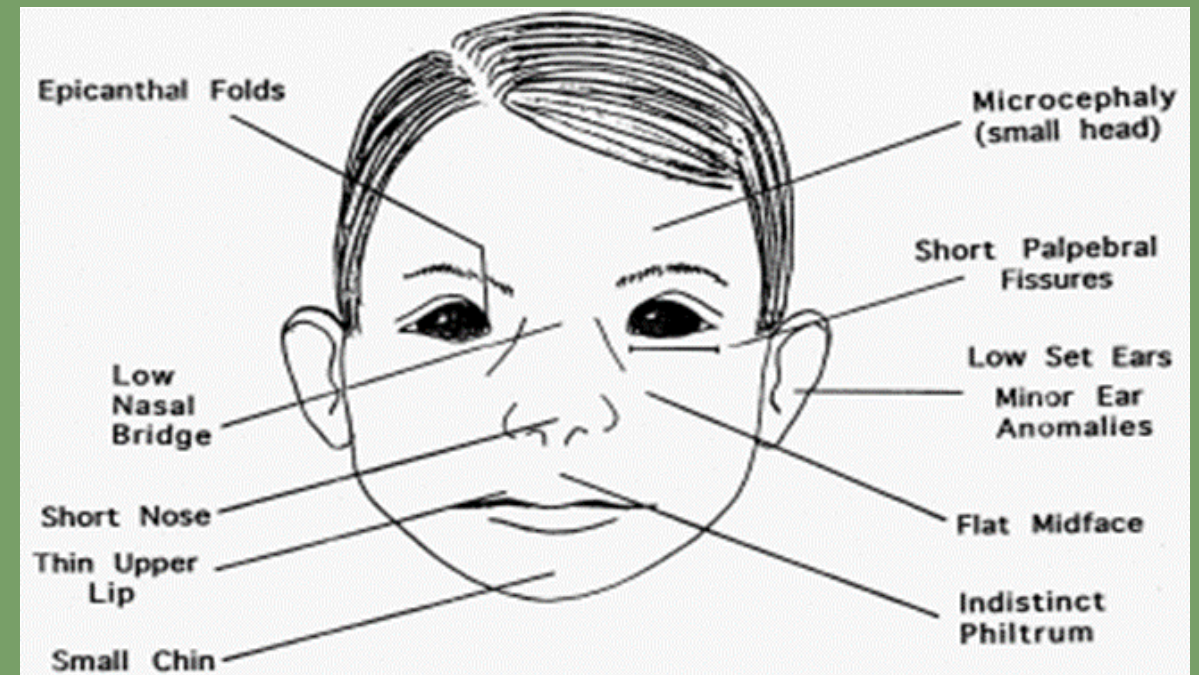
Women who drink alcohol during pregnancy can give birth to babies with foetal alcohol spectrum disorders, sometimes known as FASDs. FASD is the umbrella term for a range of disorders. These disorders can be mild or severe and can cause physical and mental birth defects. Types of FASDs include:

- FAS
- partial foetal alcohol syndrome
- alcohol-related birth defects
- alcohol-related neurodevelopment disorder
- neurobehavioral disorder associated with prenatal alcohol exposure.

### What are the causes of FAS?

When a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, some of that alcohol easily passes across the placenta to the foetus. The body of a developing foetus doesn't process alcohol the same way as an adult does. The alcohol is more concentrated in the foetus, and it can prevent enough nutrition and oxygen from getting to the foetus' vital organs.

Damage can be done in the first few weeks of pregnancy when a woman might not yet know that she is pregnant. The risk increases if the mother is a heavy drinker. According to many studies, alcohol use appears to be most harmful during the first three months of pregnancy. However, consumption of alcohol any time during pregnancy can be harmful.



Features associated with Foetal Alcohol Syndrome

### The severity of these symptoms ranges from mild to severe, and can include:

A smooth ridge between the upper lip and nose, small and wide-set eyes, a very thin upper lip, or other abnormal facial features, hyperactivity, lack of focus, poor coordination, delayed development and problems in thinking, speech, movement, and social skills, learning disabilities, intellectual disability, heart problems, kidney defects and abnormalities, deformed limbs or fingers.

### Prevention

Experts know that FAS is completely preventable if women don't drink alcohol at all during pregnancy. These guidelines can help prevent FAS:

- Don't drink alcohol if you're trying to get pregnant. If you haven't already stopped drinking, stop as soon as you know you're pregnant or if you even think you might be pregnant. It's never too late to stop drinking during your pregnancy, but the sooner you stop, the better it is for your baby.
- Continue to avoid alcohol throughout your pregnancy. FAS is completely preventable in children whose mothers don't drink during pregnancy.
- Consider giving up alcohol during your childbearing years.
- If you have an alcohol problem, get help before you get pregnant. Get professional help to determine your level of dependence on alcohol and to develop a treatment plan.

### References

Mayo clinic

South African Government. [www.gov.za](http://www.gov.za)

**FAS cannot be cured, but it can be prevented by abstaining from alcohol when you are pregnant.**





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**HERITAGE MONTH CONVERSATIONS**

Join South African food icon, former True Love magazine food editor, food stylist and author, Dorah Sitole, in conversation on all things South African food.

DATE: 22 SEPT 2020  
TIME: 10H00 (ET) / 16H00 (SAST)  
PLATFORM: ZOOM  
PLEASE REGISTER TO RECEIVE EVENT LINK:  
[HTTPS://FORMS.GLE/OW8PZEFQ9L9BHCE6](https://forms.gle/OW8PZEFQ9L9BHCE6)  
ALSO STREAMING ON OUR FB PAGE: @RSAINUSA





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**Staff at the South Africa Embassy, Harare, Zimbabwe.**

**#FLYTHEFLAG #FLAGFORHERITAGE**



1. Far left: The SA Embassy in Washington DC, USA, hosted conversations on Heritage Month
2. Top centre: Thulani Maluleka (Music Conductor) and Zwai Mbula (Music Artist and South African Arts Ambassador)
3. Top right: Staff at the SA Embassy in Rome, Italy, celebrate Heritage Day
4. Left: The SA Embassy in Harare, Zimbabwe, observes Heritage Day
5. Officials at the SA Embassy in Cuba doing the #JerusalemDanceChallenge





1. Top left: The South African Consul General in Shanghai, China joins the Heritage Month celebrations
2. Top right: Staff at the S.A Embassy in Budapest, Hungary fly the South African Flag
3. Bottom far left: Mpho Gadisi, External Auditor of South African origin, now residing in Norway observing Heritage Month with the S.A Embassy in Oslo, Norway
4. Left: South Africa's Chief of State Protocol, Ambassador Nonceba Losi and officials in Protocol in the traditional attire for Heritage Month. Ms Motlatsi Tshivhase (left) and Ms Lilian Ndhovela (middle)



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# #UNGA75

## THE 75th SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### Schedule

- 21 September: Commemoration of UN 75th anniversary
- 22 - 26, + 29 September: General debate

#### High-level events

*18 September - 5 October*

- 18 September: SDG Moment
- 29 September: High-level Event on Financing for Development
- 30 September: Accelerating the end of the COVID-19 pandemic: Taking new solutions to scale to save lives, protect health systems and restart the global economy
- 30 September: Biodiversity Summit
- 1 October: 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women
- 2 October: International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons



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