



# IT'S YOUR VOICE

Internal Newsletter of the Department of International  
Relations and Cooperation

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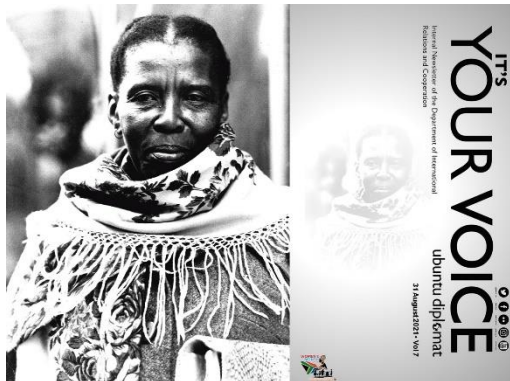
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## CREDITS

Editor-in-Chief	Nthabiseng Makuwa
Managing Editor	Mathapelo Monaisa
Copy Editor	Delien Burger
Design Concept	Reratilwe Aphane
Photographers	Jacoline Schoonees Yolande Snyman Katholo Maifadi Yandisa Monakali
Content coordination	Mathapelo Monaisa
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Every year, in August, South Africa marks Women's Month, as a tribute to the more than 20 000 women who marched to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956 in protest against the extension of the pass laws to women. Mama Gertrude Shope is also celebrated during August. Mme Shope is a pioneer of the promotion of gender equality.

## EDITOR'S

## LETTER

Mme Gertrude Shope celebrated her 96th birthday on 15 August 2021, a day when South Africa remembers Mme Shope's sterling contribution to the women's question on the need for gender equality. Every year, in August, our country marks Women's Month, during which we pay tribute to the more than 20 000 women who marched to the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956 in protest against the extension of the pass laws to women. It is therefore a welcome coincidence that Mama Gertrude Shope is celebrated during Women's Month.

Since 2015, DIRCO has commemorated Mme Shope's birth month during August through the Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum. Mme Shope is one of South Africa's living treasures. As Minister Naledi Pandor said in her address during this year's dialogue, "Gertrude Shope belongs to a rare breed of women whose impact on the political progress of our country is yet to be fully appreciated". She has, throughout her life, devoted herself to fighting for women's empowerment and promoting their rights. It is also important to highlight the fact that the South African Government has declared 2021 the year of

Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke, yet another extraordinary woman who was not only the first black South African woman to hold a BSc degree, but was also a prevailing force in the liberation struggle of the country. An internationalist, Mme Maxeke championed the potential of African people, especially women. Mama Charlotte Maxeke often encouraged women to stand up and take control of their own affairs.

This year marks 65 years since the watershed 1956 women's march to the Union Buildings. The year 2021 also marks the 26th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, which created a platform for greater gender equality. 2021 has also been a notable year as DIRCO in collaboration with stakeholders, hosted the launch of the South African National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in March. In addition, Minister Pandor launched the Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke African Women's Economic Justice and Rights Initiative (AWEJR) on 23 August. The AWEJR is a platform that will promote South Africa's gender agenda and plan to mobilise the global community to support women's leadership across all the action coalitions, particularly economic justice and rights, education, training and mentorship as well as creating opportunities in political participation,



diplomacy and trade. South Africa has indeed, through these milestones, made commendable advancement towards the gender agenda.

It is women like Gertrude Shope, Charlotte Maxeke, Winnie Mandela, Sophie de Bruyn, Lilian Ngoyi, Adelaide Tambo, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa, Albertina Sisulu and so many others whose spirit continues to prevail through inspired women today (many of whom are employed by DIRCO), who persistently remind society that the time for women is here.

More and more, we are able to witness a progression towards realising the vision of the Generation Equality Forum. May this noble work continue. May we see gender equality in our time.

*MM*

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## CELEBRATING THE SPIRIT OF CHARLOTTE MAXEKE – PIONEER, ACTIVIST, ARTIST, INTELLECTUAL, INTERNATIONALIST AND VISIONARY

- By Dr Naledi Pandor  
Minister of International Relations and Cooperation

Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke lived in a different South Africa from the one we live in today. In fact, it was not until 50 years after her death that the winds of change swept across her native land, ushering in the democratic process that would realise the rights she advocated for. We celebrate Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke as a trailblazer and a torchbearer in various sectors of society. We celebrate her as:

**An artist and performer:** We recognise her role as a member of the African Jubilee Choir that performed on domestic and international platforms (Europe, Canada and the United States [US]) at the turn of the 19th century. During the choir's tour to Europe, Maxeke also performed solo for Queen Victoria.

**Internationalist:** She travelled to at least two continents when travelling was not easy, as it is today. This gave her an unparalleled exposure to other cultures and a broader view of the world beyond the limitations of South Africa. We recognise her as an early proponent of people-to-people mechanisms in the context of the conduct of international relations and cooperation in today's world. Throughout the choir tour, she exchanged ideas with her contemporaries, shared information, used art to bring South Africa to the world and used other aspects of culture to foster mutual understanding between her and her audiences. She also worked with suffragists in Europe and the US during the choir tour.

Upon her return home, she participated in a number of international conferences where she highlighted the plight of African women. She advocated for cooperation and understanding between the people of South Africa and friends she made through the tour and her studies

abroad. For example, she used her relationship with WEB du Bois as one of her lecturers at Wilberforce University to continue to inform the world about the conditions of Africans in South Africa. This is documented in some of her letters with this outstanding Pan-Africanist.

**An intellectual:** She became a symbol of academic excellence and one of the first women in southern Africa to acquire a Bachelor of Science degree in 1901 from the prestigious Wilberforce University, Ohio, in the US.

**A torchbearer in women's leadership:** She was the only woman in the room at the founding meeting of the South African Native National Congress, now the African National Congress, at the Methodist Church in Waaihoek in Bloemfontein on 8 January 1912. It was through the motivation of Alfred Bitini Xuma that she was given observer status at this meeting. The one thing that is unimaginable is how she sat there quietly when her participation was being discussed. The irony of the whole thing is that at the time of this meeting, she was more intellectually advanced than most men in that room but her gender was a barrier for her participation.

**A visionary:** In 1918, she co-founded the Bantu Women's League and became its first president. The league not only fought against the pass laws but aroused public opinion on another equally disgusting practice – the medical inspection of black women before they entered domestic service. In today's world, we would define her as an activist of sexual reproductive health and rights.

**A teacher:** She later taught at a primary and secondary school she co-founded, called the Wilberforce Institute in Evaton, in the Vaal. The institute is still in existence to this day.

**A social worker:** Her work as social worker and native welfare officer can be argued to be the best portrayal of her strength and distinguished ability. Maxeke had, as in most instances, seen the need and taken the initiative to serve her people without funds and for no pay. Her opinions and recommendations were sought by the state and, in many cases, she succeeded in getting suspended sentences for her cases where lawyers often failed in cases of their clients.

**An economic empowerment agent:** Maxeke understood the intersectional identities of women who faced multiple discrimination and imbued with the spirit of service, her work included economic empowerment whereby she set up an employment agency for Africans in Johannesburg. She also worked with young people who were in conflict with the law.

**Human rights activist:** As a human rights activist, not only did she help with reducing sentences for juvenile delinquencies, she also had the ability to gain insight into human life and conduct by assisting with their rehabilitation and socioeconomic needs.

While being the first black woman in the many spaces she operated in, she understood that for meaningful representation of women, she needed to rally other women to amplify their voices in the struggle for gender equality.

Based on all of these factors, we had to find a way to not only tell her story but to impart knowledge and inspire generations of women who will embody her values in a meaningful way. We wanted to ensure that she multiplies.

In paying tribute to the work of Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke, the department I lead (Dirco) has developed an organic legacy initiative that will be an embodiment of her values and leadership qualities. This initiative will be anchored in South Africa's foreign policy, which is primarily Pan-Africanist in form and internationalist in content, titled, The Charlotte Maxeke African Women's Economic Justice and Rights (AWERJ) Initiative.

While being the first black woman in the many spaces she operated in, Charlotte Maxeke understood that for meaningful representation of women, she needed to rally other women to amplify their voice in the struggle for gender equality.

The Government has declared 2021 as the Year of Charlotte Maxeke. Annually, during the month of August, we pay tribute to the women's generation of 1956 who marched to the Union Buildings. We also pay tribute to the pioneers of the women's movement in South Africa dating back to the 1913 women's march when Charlotte Maxeke led a march in Bloemfontein against the early introduction of passes.

This year we observe Women's Month under the theme "The Year of Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke: Realising Women's Equality". This theme underscores the constant struggle for the attainment and protection of women's rights during the time wherein the country battles with the devastating COVID-19 global pandemic.



The AWEJR Initiative is our contribution to the Global Acceleration Agenda for the empowerment of women and girls. It is the missing piece in our Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

Through this initiative, we have come full circle in our efforts on the full emancipation of women and girls.

This initiative is a practical expression of our diplomacy of Ubuntu and it aims to strengthen South Africa's international solidarity work. It is an affirmation and a validation of women's economic justice rights as fundamental human rights. South Africa recognises that while more efforts have gone into civil and political rights of women, the economic rights of women and girls have been largely neglected. It is for this reason that South Africa chose to focus its efforts under the Generation Equality Forum on economic justice and rights.

In July, President Cyril Ramaphosa joined other heads of state and organisations at the Paris Forum to endorse the outcome of the multi-stakeholder process, the Global Acceleration Plan for the empowerment of women and girls across the globe. Furthermore, he outlined South Africa's commitments for the next five years, including the Charlotte Maxeke AWEJR Initiative as one of the programmatic commitments.

Through the implementation of this initiative, South Africa seeks to mobilise the global community to support women's leadership across all the action coalitions, particularly economic justice and rights, through education, training and mentorship for women and youth as well as creating opportunities in economic participation, networking, diplomacy and trade.

The Charlotte Maxeke Initiative will launch collaborative projects with targeted support for women and girls to ensure that they have increased opportunities in decision-making across political and economic spheres.

The Charlotte AWEJR Initiative has six concrete flagship programmes to be implemented gradually in the coming three to five years:

1. The Africa Future Leadership Development Programme is aimed at inculcating the values of Pan-Africanism, integrity and selflessness through mentorship and training opportunities for youth on international policy and diplomacy work. This programme will target young people from all over the continent.
2. The African Women's Leadership Award will recognise and honour exceptional African women leaders whose achievements, mentorship, influence and contributions have advanced Africa's development in various sectors of society.
3. The first-ever Minister's Breakfast with Women Ambassadors on gender equality initiatives. This platform will create a platform for women diplomats to share perspectives on the gender agenda and explore available opportunities to promote the empowerment of women and girls in Africa.
4. The African Women's Leadership Training Programme on Economic Justice and Rights. This will be exclusively tailored to enable astute African women leaders' opportunity to apply leading-edge knowledge, experience and insight on economic justice and rights. It aims to provide a networking platform for African women leaders to share best practices and practical lessons from their experience in the field.
5. The Women's Trade Fair, which will showcase African women's products and services to markets on the continent and globally. Furthermore, it will also raise awareness about the opportunities provided through policy initiatives such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).
6. Last, but certainly not least, the Fellowship for African Women in Diplomacy. To honour this exceptional educationalist, the department will seek partnership for an annual fellowship programme specifically

targeting African women in diplomacy. This programme will provide degree and non-degree awarding opportunities to the next generation of African women in diplomacy. This is an effort to impart and mould a female public servant inspired by the values of Charlotte Maxeke, such as ethical leadership, empathy and excellence.

We have been engaged in the consultative process with many of our friends and partners with whom we would like to take this initiative forward. Nonetheless, it continues to be an open invitation for all who see an opportunity to contribute to the realisation of the economic justice and rights of women and girls in Africa.

In the words of Mama Charlotte Maxeke: "This work is not for yourselves, kill that spirit of self, and do not live above your people but live with them, and if you can rise bring someone with you."

## CHARLOTTE MAXEKE AFRICAN WOMEN'S ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND RIGHTS INITIATIVE

**"The Year of Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke:  
Realising Women's Equality"**

“

South Africa seeks to mobilise the global community to support women's leadership across all the action coalitions:

- Economic justice and rights,
- Education, training and mentorship for women and youth
- Creating opportunities in economic participation, networking, diplomacy, and trade.

**Dr. Naledi Pandor**  
Minister, International Relations and Cooperation



**#CharlotteMaxekeAWEJR**







*We shall not rest until we have won for our children freedom, justice and security."*

*— The Women of 1956*



## THE 2021 GERTRUDE SHOPE ANNUAL DIALOGUE FORUM: SITUATING THE WOMEN PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA IN AFRICA'S POST-COVID-19 RECOVERY PHASE

- By Wian Grobbelaar  
Directorate: Mediation Support Unit

The Republic of South Africa has a long history of promoting women rights and empowerment at national, regional and international levels. It is against this background that the country continues to engage on various issues aimed at enhancing the role of women, including in peace and security processes. In contributing to implementing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda, advanced by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), and its subsequent resolutions and other related decisions, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) initiated the Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum (GSADF) in August 2015.

At present, the focus of the world is still on the COVID-19 pandemic – a global threat to stability, peace and development. As the world continues to battle the pandemic, it is clear that what started as a health crisis has turned into a socio-economic and financial insecurity crisis as the lives and livelihoods of millions of people around the world are threatened. UN policy briefs show that the pandemic has caused a widening gap in the social system, with a disproportionate impact on women and girls, and with increased cases of domestic and gender-based violence, globally. It further points out that the limited gains made in the past decades are at risk of being rolled back.

The UN Secretary-General, Mr António Guterres' recent report on WPS further warns that the limited progress made on gender equality is at risk of reversal. Women constitute the bulk of frontline healthcare workers, shoulder most of the burden of care and will be the most affected by the economic consequences of the crisis. As it is, women are already suffering from a rising incidence of gender-based violence.

The African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) also underscores the importance of ensuring the protection of women and children, particularly girls, during lockdowns, as they face the risk of becoming victims of increased domestic violence and abuse, as well as sexual exploitation and harmful practices. In its efforts, the AU developed a framework document that serves as Guidelines on Gender-Responsive Responses to COVID-19, which provide some answers to COVID-19 in relation to the WPS Agenda.

African countries have moreover notably been some of the pioneers in digital finance, and yet, across the continent, more than 400 million people, most of them women, do not even have access to digital financial services. Digital financial inclusion is a practical strategy for helping the marginalised move toward the centre and alleviating financial insecurity.

To contribute towards realising the goal of economic justice and the rights for women, President Cyril Ramaphosa has therefore announced the launch of the Charlotte Maxeke African Women's Initiative on Economic Justice and Rights (AWEJR). This initiative, inspired by one of the pioneers of women's empowerment in South Africa, will involve collaborative projects to increase opportunities for women and girls in the areas of entrepreneurship, leadership and diplomacy.

Moreover, President Ramaphosa has committed to establishing the Advocacy Accelerator for Women's Digital Financial Inclusion in Africa. The initiative will mobilise stakeholders to invest in new platforms and products to increase access to digital financial products and services for women in Africa. Women living in poverty, who



lack opportunities, such as access to funds, will have more power to plan for the future instead of reacting to financial needs as they happen.

It is in this context that this year's GSADF was held under the theme: "Situating the Women Peace and Security Agenda in Africa's post-COVID-19 Recovery Phase". The event consisted of three sessions, each touching on the various factors of the AWEJR. The opening session was a high-level event, titled: Advancing and Celebrating Women's Leadership in Africa's Post-COVID Recovery Phase, led by the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Dr Naledi Pandor. Minister Pandor raised the creative proposal of a continent-wide Fund for Women Empowerment where African women can take responsibility for their financial inclusion by donating 10 dollars to the fund. Other speakers in this session included Norway's State Secretary to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr Audun Halvorsen, African Union Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, Mme Bineta Diop, as well as a recorded message from the event's patron, Mme Gertrude Shope.

The second session was led by DIRCO's Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ms Candith Mashego-Dlamini, where the focus was on The Global Health Debate and the impact of COVID-19 on Women in Africa. Here, issues around vaccines, stigmas around it and vaccine diplomacy and their impact on especially women in Africa were discussed. Other speakers in this session included Assistant Director-General for Strategic Programmatic Priorities: Cervical Cancer Elimination at the World Health Organisation, Dr Nothemba Simelela, as well as President and CEO of the South African Medical Research Council, Professor Glenda Gray.

The third and final session focussed on Advancing the Financial Inclusion of Women in Africa. Here, women from across the private sector spoke from their experience in financial inclusion. Speakers included Founder of Coronet Blockchain, Ms Pretty Kubyane; CEO of EagleQuest Africa, Ms Lebogang Mokgabudi; and Digital and Financial Inclusion Specialist, Ms Abigail Komu. The Dialogue Forum was closed by Mme Charlotte Lobe, Acting COO at DIRCO and South Africa's contact point on WPS, who provided a way forward.



# CHARLOTTE MAXEKE AFRICAN WOMEN'S ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND RIGHTS INITIATIVE

**"The Year of Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke:  
*Realising Women's Equality*"**

We celebrate Mme Charlotte Mannya Maxeke as a trailblazer and a torchbearer in various sectors of society:

- An artist and performer
- Internationalist
- Intellectual
- A torchbearer in Women's leadership
- An Advocate for women's rights
- A visionary
- A teacher
- An Economic Empowerment Agent
- Human Rights Activist

Dr. Naledi Pandor

Minister: International Relations and Cooperation



## Charlotte Maxeke

African Women's  
Economic Justice and Rights  
Initiative







*The task of dislodging racism and apartheid in South Africa is the common concern and responsibility of all freedom-loving and peace-loving people the world over"*

– Gertrude Shope







## WHAT IS THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN AND ITS RELEVANCE FOR SOUTH AFRICA?

- Deputy Minister Candith Mashego-Dlamini

### What is the NAP?

The UNSC requires UN member states to develop NAPs for the effective implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325.

The NAP is a framework for the implementation of UNSCR 1325, and subsequent resolutions that buttress it. UNSCR 1325 calls for greater participation of women in peace and security, protection of women and children during conflict, prevention of violence against women and the mainstreaming of gender into relief and recovery efforts. The resolution reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. A draft NAP on WPS in South Africa was developed following a protracted consultation with stakeholders.

South Africa's NAP seeks to create sustainable peace, security and equality for women, girls and gender non-conforming persons.

The mission is: "To create a safer peaceful South Africa, Africa and world for women, girls and gender non-conforming persons; enable meaningful participation of women in peace processes, and prioritise their needs and experiences and agency in all conflict and non-conflict contexts."

The conversation on "Talking Peace Creating Security: The Journey of the National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security" comes at an appropriate time, that is, during Women's Month, and after South Africa experienced unrest, as well as in a period of a prolonged pandemic. South Africa needs peace. Women need peace! The National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) is one of the instruments that can create greater human security for all in South Africa.

The adoption of the first-generation South African NAP on WPS 2020 – 2025 on 31 March 2021, was a pivotal moment in the country as a whole. The adoption is a sound demonstration of our commitment to the implementation of the international obligation under the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. The resolution encourages member states to develop NAPs. These are critical. The NAP is a product of the cooperation and collaboration between various sectors of government and civil society. The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), the Department of Defence and the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities convened the larger Steering Committee of the NAP. This steering committee, consisting of representatives of the major stakeholders, aptly guided the process towards the development and launch of the NAP.

It lists the following as its objectives:

- To promote, protect and respect an inclusive, safe and peaceful society by operationalising the WPS Agenda in South Africa
- To implement, evaluate and report on agreed-upon WPS frameworks at international, continental and regional levels
- To ensure the full and meaningful participation of women in peace and security processes, structures and institutions at all levels
- To establish and implement effective conflict management institutions, systems and processes
- To prevent violence against women, girls and gender non-conforming persons and protect them in all situations
- To position and promote South Africa as a credible international leader on issues related to WPS
- To ensure an integrated and coordinated approach to and the utilisation of best practices towards information and knowledge management for WPS.

The NAP is based on the four pillars of Participation, Protection, Prevention and Relief and Recovery. Each of the pillars have identifiable priorities and actions, target dates and lead institutions to meet those priorities.

For example, the Pillar on Participation has two priority areas:

- Priority 1: To develop, implement and assess gender-sensitive laws, policies and strategies
- Priority 2: Ensure meaningful participation of women in peace processes, structures and institutions.

Under this pillar, we therefore see actions such as:

- review foreign policy to ensure that it is gender-sensitive
- update the gender mainstreaming strategies of the security sector
- develop gender-sensitive conflict management and post-conflict development assistance strategies
- host WPS peace tables
- develop a comprehensive baseline study on women in the peace and security sector
- deploy more women to UN, African Union (AU) and Southern African Development Community structures – 40%
- appoint more women as ambassadors, heads of delegations and defence attachés

- increase the percentage of women in oversight bodies on peace and security and election observation missions
- appoint more women to senior positions in the security cluster and as peacekeepers and mediators
- develop a peace infrastructure for women that draws on existing women's organisations and expertise on WPS
- train community leaders in peacebuilding and utilise them towards effecting peace
- establish a National Peace Centre – knowledge hub, training, capacity-building, coordination of peace infrastructure, policy advice and implementation support
- develop a Peace Programme for Youth
- develop Community Early Warning platforms
- develop concrete measure to address violent expressions of homophobia and xenophobia
- mainstream peace education into the school curriculum
- form community peace clubs for children
- mainstream gender into Diplomatic Training
- strengthen mechanisms for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse
- have gender-sensitive procurement processes.

The other pillars have a similar list of actions to meet their objectives. It therefore requires a whole-of-society approach to ensure the implementation of this NAP. We at DIRCO are committed to its implementation.

South Africa has actively participated in the development of the international frameworks on gender and on WPS. We were active in the adoption of UNSCR 1325 and we have sponsored UNSC resolutions 1820 and 2493.

The WPS Agenda is in line with South Africa's own agenda of gender equality and with its commitments to promoting the participation of women in conflict management. Through the Gertrude Shope Women's Mediators Network, South Africa has trained hundreds of women in mediation and South Africa deploys many women as peacekeepers to conflict contexts. Simultaneous to this meeting, we have another Capacity Training Programme on Conflict Resolution, Mediation and Negotiation running from the 23 – 27 August 2021 in keeping with our efforts on WPS.



During the recent unrest in South Africa, it was the Gertrude Shope Women Mediators Network that organised the South African Women Peace Table to see how the conflict could be deescalated and managed and to prevent further violent outbreaks.

The Peace Table mobilised women in their diversity across the country to engage in conflict de-escalation, management and prevention. The dialogue further encouraged the creation of conscious engagements in building unity of purpose and social cohesion, and to rebuilding South Africa's peace infrastructure. More than 450 women participated and demonstrated their commitment to resolving conflict and building sustainable peace.

The Peace Table acknowledged the following, and I quote: "the incidents of violence, loss of life, looting and mayhem witnessed during the crisis were manifestations of far deeper political and structural problems in South Africa. It highlighted the systemic nature of the challenges facing the country and that the orchestrated crisis was an affront to our hard fought-for democracy, including the rule of law. Large-scale poverty, inequality and unemployment, as well as inter- and intraparty political divisions and inadequate security provisioning, created an opportunity in which the poor and the most vulnerable found themselves caught up in 'big men' politics."

Although our NAP does not adequately cover the role of young people in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, in the implementation matrix, there are outlined activities that the youth must undertake. The NAP outlines the need to develop Peace Corps programmes for youth that enable their participation in national and continental peace. This is specifically on the role of youth in promoting peace and security expressed through Article 17 of the African Youth Charter. The article is included also in UNSCR 2250. The AU Peace and Security Department inaugurated the Youth for Peace Africa Programme in 2018 with the primary objective and responsibility of mainstreaming African youth into peace and security.

Furthermore, we recognise the inclusion of young people in the implementation of the NAP. Two key initiatives come to mind as we make reference to the role of young people in conflict resolution and peacebuilding: The Peace Pod and the Youth Task Team under Generation Equality sponsored by UN Women. The Peace Pod, I am told, is a youth live streaming platform event; a thought-provoking, action-led and influential youth platform driving the movement of peace through commitments, conversation and creativity to find the peace of society that is missing. The young people driving this process under the Lady of Peace have taken the NAP and created the Peace Pod, whose mission is to assist in delivering pillars 1 (participation) and 2 (prevention) strategic outcomes.

It is humbling to understand that these young people want to normalise the promotion of peace, provide an open platform for diverse dialogue, utilise synergies with partners and sponsors to provide relief effort and promote conflict resolution. The Second initiative I referred to is the Youth Journey: Youth Task Team under Generation Equality, sponsored by UN Women. This initiative also seeks to continue the agenda initiated by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

These young people have come to the realisation that many young women and girls continue to be among the most marginalised and vulnerable, facing multiple barriers including violence, limited or unequal access to resources, persistent inequalities and stereotypical cultural norms.

A Youth Task Team has been created as a strategic pillar of the Generation Equality Forum so as to engage more youth to contribute to initiatives aimed at ending gender inequality.

It is my singular honour to have received this opportunity to address this meeting and wish you success in your deliberations.

# #SANationalActionPlan

## Mission:

To create a safer peaceful South Africa, Africa and world for women, girls and gender non-conforming persons; enable meaningful participation of women in peace processes, and prioritise their needs and experiences and agency in all conflict and non-conflict contexts.

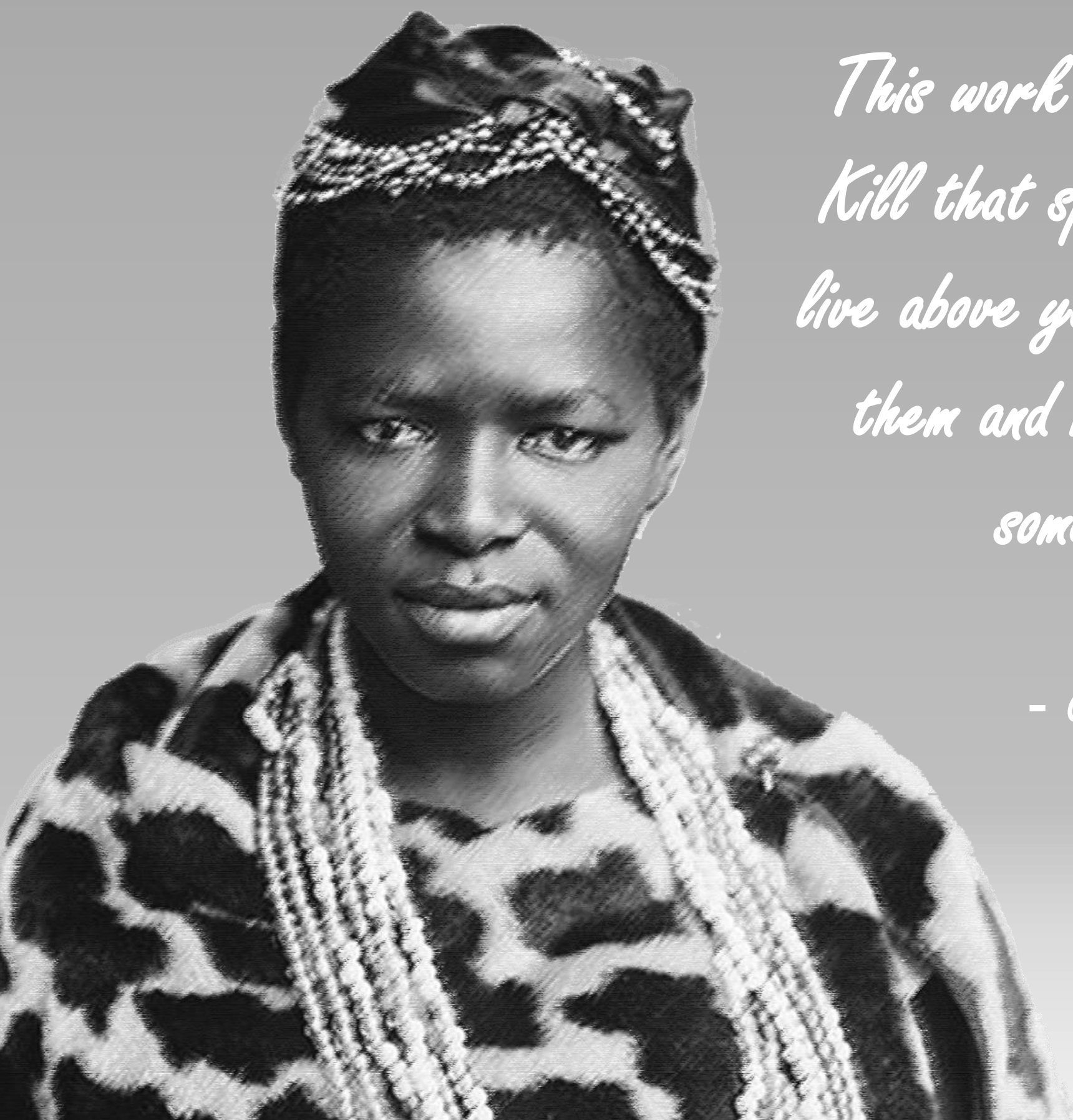


THE YEAR OF CHARLOTTE MANNYA MAXEKE:  
Realising Women's Rights

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*This work is not for yourselves.  
Kill that spirit of self and do not  
live above your people but live with  
them and if you can rise, bring  
someone with you."*

*- Charlotte Mannya- Maxeke*



# MISSION ACCOMPLISHED





## INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY 2021: TRANSFORMING FOOD SYSTEMS: YOUTH INNOVATION FOR HUMAN AND PLANETARY HEALTH

In 1999, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly resolution 54/120 endorsed the recommendation made by the World Conference of Ministers of Youth (Lisbon, 8-12 August 1998) that 12 August be declared International Youth Day. Such a day provides an opportunity to celebrate young peoples' views and initiatives on a global scale.

Today, young people hold a crucial role - working towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and related frameworks. Recent global priorities have been centered around fighting the impacts of climate change, unemployment, poverty, gender inequality, conflict, and migration.

The International Youth Day was proposed in 1991 by young people who were gathered in Vienna, Austria, for the first session of the UN's World Youth Forum. The forum recommended that an International Youth Day be declared, especially for fundraising and promotional purposes, to support the United Nations Youth Fund in partnership with youth organisations.

In 1998 a resolution proclaiming August 12 as International Youth Day was adopted during the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth. That recommendation was later endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 1999. International Youth Day was first observed in 2000.

On 12 August 2021, Deputy Minister Botes led a hybrid discussion with young people in the University of KwaZulu-Natal on Youth, Peace and Security commemorating International Youth Day, focusing on the pillar of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security. The UNSCR 2250 (2015) is the first international policy framework that recognises the positive role young people play in preventing and resolving conflict, countering violent extremism and building peace. The resolution identifies five

key pillars for action: participation, protection, prevention, partnerships and disengagement and reintegration.

Apart from COVID-19 pandemic, the unrest in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and Gauteng has tested the functioning and resilience of our food supply chains. While lockdown measures have, understandably, been implemented to tackle the public health threat, they have also affected food markets from local to global level. Some supply chains (such as wet markets and the hospitality sector) have been completely disrupted or seen significant operational change. Violence also in the two provinces has disrupted the functioning of food supply and to some extent the food production, distribution and healthy eating. The patterns in the food supply have changed, largely for fear of violence, incomes loss and the closure of food outlets (canteens, restaurants and hotels). Containment measures notwithstanding, food production, processing, access and availability must be maintained to ensure food security for all.

Taking into consideration the official outcome recommendations of the ECOSOC Youth Forum (EYF) which took place on the 8th April 2021, young participants stressed the importance of working towards more equitable food systems and further highlighted the need for youth to make informed decisions on food choices through increasing global education on the healthiest and most sustainable options for both individuals and the environment they live in. Furthermore, in enhancing the discussion for broader of youth participation, the ECOSOC Youth Forum resolved to celebrate the International Youth Day 2021 under theme of "Transforming Food Systems: Youth Innovation for Human and Planetary Health" which seek to highlight the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic particularly related to its effect on human health, the environment, and food systems.



The food system transformation includes the related resources, the inputs, production, transport, processing and manufacturing industries, retailing, and consumption of food as well as its impacts on environment, health, and society. There is accelerating momentum worldwide to adopt the food systems approach to bring consumption and production patterns together. Consequently, practical definition of food systems should meet two essential criteria:

- It should be suitable for the purpose at hand, which is to support the global and national collective efforts to bring about positive change in food systems, accelerating progress on meeting the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs; and
- It should be sufficiently precise to define the domains for policy and programmatic priorities. It should also serve concepts for data gathering, modelling, and analysis to assist in effective policy action. Simultaneously, it should be sufficiently general not to exclude any aspects of the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainability.

Through youth education, engagement, innovation and entrepreneurial solutions, this year's International Youth Day aims to provide a platform for young people to continue the momentum from the ECOSOC Youth Forum in the lead up to the high-level Food Systems Summit. During the forum participants highlighted the need for inclusive support mechanisms that ensure youth continue to amplify efforts collectively and individually to restore the planet and protect life, while integrating biodiversity in the transformation of food systems.

Youth involvement in peace building and transformed food system has the potential to bring innovative solutions, new perspectives to address the world's most pressing challenges. Youth engagement should be an intergenerational effort, due to the historical marginalisation of young people in decision making and leadership. Furthermore, to amplify the voices of young people by engaging them in the implementation of measures that contributes to a better future for both people and the planet. Youth engagement and youth participation should move beyond tokenistic box ticking exercises to more equitable and sustainable youth centred approaches.

The following organisations also contributed inputs during the discussion.:

1. NYDA
2. SAIIA
3. Progressive Youth Alliance
4. Department of Women Youth and Persons with Disabilities



*“Be careful, think about  
the effect of what you  
say. Your words should  
be constructive, bring  
people together, not pull  
them apart” –*

— Miriam Makeba





# #ABOUTME

## Ms Lutendo Muvhango

- Director: ICT Security  
Branch: ICT

### It's Your Voice (IYV): What is your job title at DIRCO and what role do you play?

I am the Director: ICT Security in the department. My role entails protecting people and information assets, chasing the threat actors. I am responsible for the overall security management of information systems and related infrastructure within the department.

### IYV: What did you study to become a Cybersecurity Specialist?

To be a cybersecurity professional, one needs a multifaceted skills set because the bad guys (cybercriminals) we are wrestling with also have diverse skills. I have received holistic exposure to various domains within ICT, including networks, servers and end-user computing environments before specialising in ICT Security. The integrative ICT exposure helped me to have a deep understanding of where security fits into the whole information value chain.

I studied Bachelor of Science (BSc); Master of Business Administration (MBA) and have several technical and professional qualifications, including CISM; CRISC; Information Management; Ethical Hacking; and Network and Communications Security. I also have diverse vendor-specific technical certifications such as Cisco; Microsoft; Unix; and CompTIA, among others. The research topic for my dissertation was based on Cybercrime knowledge/awareness

### IYV: What inspired you to go into the field?

As a young woman, I always challenged myself to do things that scare me and keep me on my toes. I saw untapped gaps and opportunities in the ICT Security space, especially among women. Growing up in the deep rural village of Tshififi in Venda, I knew nothing about IT and computers. I honestly wanted to become a medical doctor. Due to financial challenges, I ended up studying towards a BSc degree at the University of Venda, with the intention of pursuing a career in medicine afterwards. However, while at university, I was exposed to a computer and a bit of Internet.

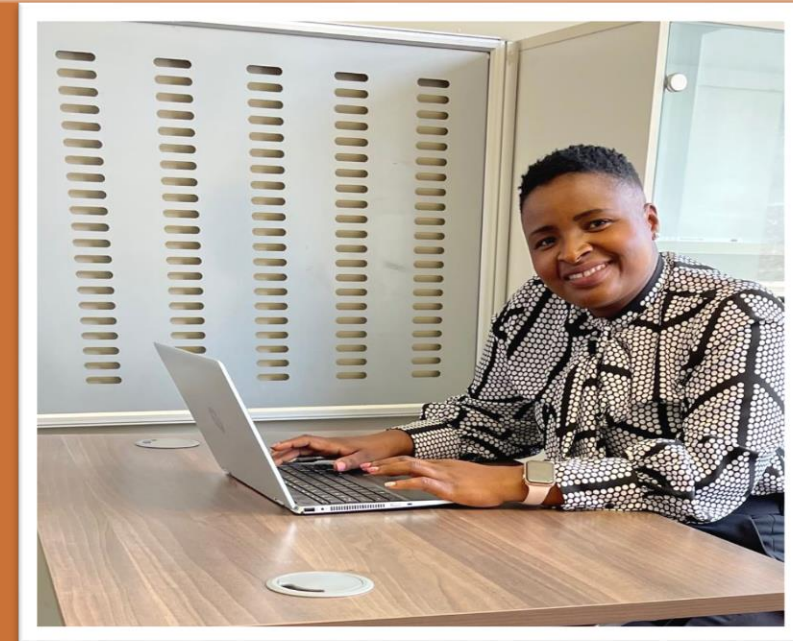
After completing my BSc, I got a scholarship from the then Department of Communications. I was trained in ICT at the Institute for Satellite and Software Applications (ISSA) in partnership with Stellenbosch University and other international institutes. The programme was aimed at bridging the digital divide, exposing youth from the historically disadvantaged communities who have done exceptionally well in Maths and Science to ICT. I was initially trained as a network engineer. I then developed a passion for network security and the rest, as they say, is history!

Occupying various roles in ICT Security cemented my passion and has inspired me to hone my information security skills further. The evolving cybersecurity threat landscape ensures that I don't remain complacent. It pushes me to

keep abreast of developments, to continuously learn, and adapt in this fast-changing environment.

### IYV: What is cybersecurity?

Cybersecurity is the technique of protecting networks, systems, devices and data from unauthorised access or criminal use, thereby ensuring Confidentiality, Integrity, and Availability (CIA) of information assets. In a nutshell, cybersecurity involves protecting people, critical information and infrastructure from the bad guys. Protection of the cyber space is even more critical in this digital age where attacks are growing in scale and complexity, exacerbated by the evolution of disruptive technologies and increased Internet accessibility.



### IYV: What are the three most important aspects that one must be aware of when it comes to digital safety/security?

- Adopt a zero-trust mentality to security in cyberspace.** Be cautious of not exposing sensitive data, including personal information on the Internet. Avoid giving information to cybercriminals on a silver platter, let's make it difficult for them! You can be the first line of defence (we need more "human firewalls" in the fight against cybercrime).
- There is an exponential increase in **targeted cyber attacks** aimed at exploiting the psychology of an unsuspecting user through what we call "social engineering". These attacks are mainly carried out through phishing emails. Cybercriminals are increasingly attacking people. Emails remain the number one attack vector! **Be very careful when opening suspicious emails as they could have malicious code embedded in the attachments and links.**
- Identity is the new digital security perimeter. Understand the dangers and cybersecurity risks associated with identity credentials such as passwords.** Use complex, difficult-to-guess passwords and where possible, use Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA). MFA is a method in which a user is granted access to the device or information system after presenting two or more pieces of evidence to an authentication mechanism. Thus, MFA entails the presentation of something you know (password) and either something you have (e.g. token such as auto-generated one-time pin) or something you are (e.g. biometrics).





**IYV: With digital media gaining increased popularity over the last two years, where do you see South Africa at present, and in the next five years?**

Over the last two years, the use of digital media in personal and professional communications has drastically disrupted the industry, and rendered the traditional communications platforms such as print media irrelevant. Digital media, particularly social media, continues to dominate our lives as more and more people are becoming tech savvy with access to smartphones and Internet. Furthermore, there has been a rapid adoption of digital media platforms, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Digital media has become the most powerful instrument of change in the communications landscape. Platforms such as online news media, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, TikTok, YouTube and Instagram continue to shape how

we live, socialise, consume news, receive and share information. Information is disseminated to a massive audience, at a large scale and at a very fast pace. The downside of this is that a lot of misinformation and fake news is also dominating the digital space.

Over the next five years, it is predicted that digital media will continue to evolve and redefine the future of communications. Communications professionals will need to rethink their communications strategies leveraging on these emerging digital trends, particularly focussing on big data analysis as well as behavioural and predictive data analytics. We need to brace for dead print and embrace paperless communication. It is predicted that the continued exploitation of emerging technologies based on artificial intelligence such as Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) will alter how we as humans interact with the digital space. Thus, there will be growth in artificial environments mimicking or simulating the near-real life experience setting in the virtual world.

According to Gartner, there will be extensive scrutiny, ethical dilemmas and societal implications on different approaches employed to influence behaviour in the digital ecosystem, including issues around privacy and security.

**IYV: What book are you reading at the moment and why?**

My current read is *"GREAT BY CHOICE". Uncertainty, Chaos and Luck - Why Some Thrive Despite Them All* by Jim Collins. I was inspired to read this book given the current unprecedented times in which we find ourselves. I was specifically curious to know how the leaders of top 10 great companies in the world at the time managed to navigate and thrive under extremely uncertain circumstances.

My key take-away from the book was "We cannot predict the future, but we can create it". The book made me realise that in as much as the future is uncertain, the only way of predicting it is by creating it. Today, disruptive technology is creating and shaping the new future for industries. The question for us as the department then becomes how best can we exploit the digital tools to shape our foreign policy objectives?

**IYV: Out of all the destinations you have visited, which is your favourite?**

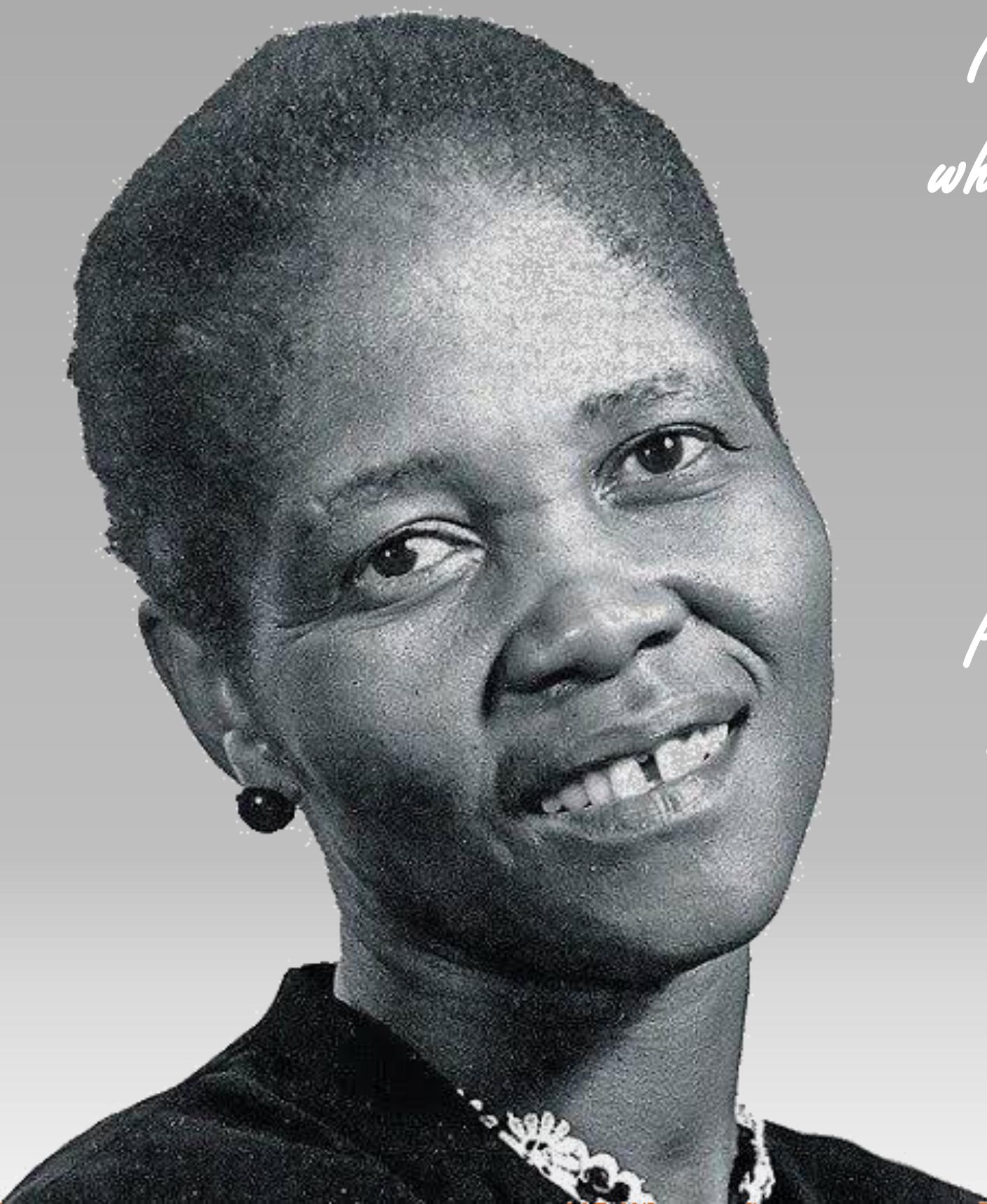
It's Serbia that stood out for me. I was curious to know how such a small country managed to develop its own technological capabilities under very difficult circumstances. I was also quite intrigued by Serbia's rich culture and history.

**IYV: Advice to the youth**

Cybersecurity is now a topic of national concern. Today, the digital ecosystem is increasingly becoming a safe haven for cybercriminals. There is a compelling case for South Africa to develop cyber resilience capabilities in the fight against cybercrime. For this, we need the next generation of cybersecurity leaders and professionals. I would like to encourage the youth, especially young women, to consider a career in cybersecurity. There is a huge skills gap and demand in this field.







*I am looking forward to the day  
when my children will share in the  
wealth of our lovely South  
Africa.*

*When I die, I'll die a happy  
person because I have seen the  
rays of our new South Africa  
rising"*

- Lillian Ngoyi





## WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK 2021: PROTECT BREASTFEEDING: A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

The world celebrates World Breastfeeding Week from August 1 to August 7 every year, to spread awareness about its importance and need.

Breastfeeding Week aims to raise awareness of the health and well-being outcomes of breastfeeding and the importance of supporting mothers to breastfeed for as long as they wish.

Choosing how to feed your baby is one of the most important decisions you will make as a parent. Breastfeeding is a gift that only you can give your baby. Your baby will feel safe and secure, and you will provide a healthy start for your baby's life.

Breast milk is nature's perfect food. The ingredients in breast milk cannot be manufactured. It has ingredients that ensure proper brain and eye development and a healthy immune system and digestive tract. The benefits of breast milk continue to promote normal healthy growth long after breastfeeding ends.

Why is breastfeeding important for your baby? Breast milk helps keep your baby healthy.

- It supplies all the necessary nutrients in the proper proportions.
- It protects against allergies, sickness and obesity.
- It protects against diseases, like diabetes and cancer.
- It protects against infections, like ear infections.
- It is easily digested – no constipation, diarrhea or upset stomach.
- Babies have healthier weights as they grow.

### WHO recommendations

Breastfeeding is the cornerstone of infant and young child survival, nutrition and development and maternal health. The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, followed by continued breastfeeding with appropriate complementary foods for up to two years and beyond. Early and uninterrupted skin-to-skin contact, rooming-in and kangaroo mother care also significantly improve neonatal survival and reduce morbidity and are recommended by WHO.

However, concerns have been raised about whether mothers with COVID-19 can transmit the SARS-CoV-2 virus to their infant or young child through breastfeeding. Recommendations on mother-infant contact and breastfeeding must be based on a full consideration of not only of the potential risks of COVID-19 infection of the infant, but also the risks of morbidity and mortality associated with not breastfeeding, the inappropriate use of infant formula milks, as well as the protective effects of skin-to-skin contact.

This scientific brief examines the evidence to date on the risks of transmission of COVID-19 from an infected mother to her baby through breastfeeding as well as evidence on the risks to child health from not breastfeeding.

The WHO recommends that mothers with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should be encouraged to initiate or continue to breastfeed. Mothers should be counselled that the benefits of breastfeeding substantially outweigh the potential risks for transmission.

Mother and infant should be enabled to remain together while rooming-in throughout the day and night and to practise skin-to-skin contact, including kangaroo mother care, especially immediately after birth and during establishment of breastfeeding, whether they or their infants have suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

Here are some tips for keeping mothers and babies safe during the COVID-19 crisis:

### 1. Continue to breastfeed while taking care with hygiene

So far, the virus has not been found in breast milk and all mothers are advised to continue breastfeeding, while practising good hygiene during feeding.

These include the 3Ws:

- Wear a mask during feeding
- Wash hands with soap before and after touching the baby
- Wipe and disinfect surfaces regularly.

### 2. Take additional hygiene measures and continue to breastfeed if you fall sick

Mothers who get Coronavirus shortly before giving birth and begin breastfeeding, and those who become infected while breastfeeding, will produce immune factors (antibodies) in their milk to protect their baby and enhance the baby's own immune responses. This means that continuing to breastfeed is the best way to fight the virus and protect your baby.

If a mother does fall ill with symptoms of fever, cough or difficulty breathing, she should seek medical care early, and follow instructions from a healthcare provider.

### 3. Use a cup and spoon to feed babies with expressed breastmilk when too sick to breastfeed

When mothers are too ill to breastfeed, they should seek immediate medical advice. It may still be possible to express milk and ask a non-infected member of the family to feed the baby using a clean cup or cup and spoon. It will be even more important to follow the 3 Ws at all times to keep the baby healthy and safe.

### 4. Take extra care when formula feeding

Breastfeeding is the best way of providing ideal food for the healthy growth and development of babies. However, there are instances where a mother is unable to breastfeed or where she has decided not to breastfeed. In addition, the widespread marketing of formula milks undermines the confidence of many mothers and encourages them to feed their babies using bottles and formula milks. In these cases, it is especially important that babies are being fed according to the instructions on the packaging and that extra care is taken with thoroughly washing bottles, teats and any other equipment used. The **3 Ws** should be followed at all times.

*\*Article prepared and shared by Dir: Employee Health and Wellness.\**

### References:

- World Health Organization
- Breastfeedingpartners.org
- Unicef.org
- Worldbreastfeeding.org
- <https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/wic/ewic/>





*I don't doubt for  
a moment that the  
revolution will  
result in a non-  
racial society."*

— Helen Joseph





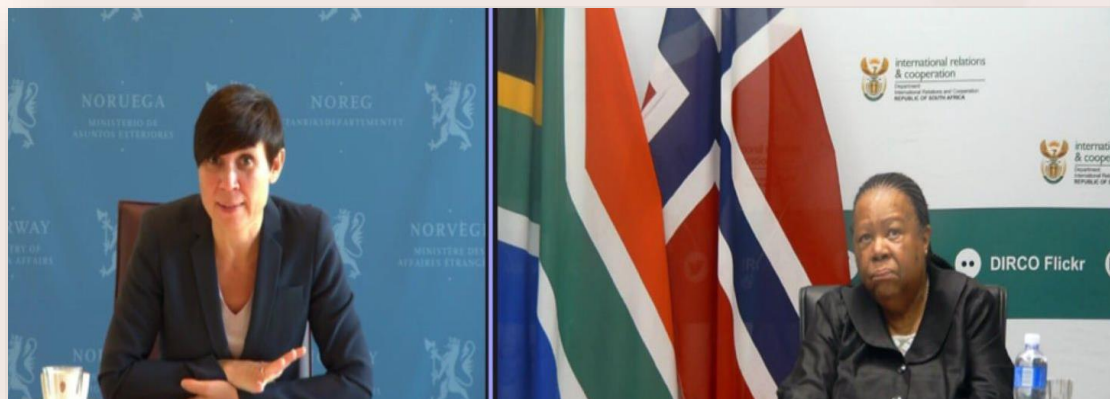
# GLOBE AT A GLIMPSE



President Cyril Ramaphosa in Berlin, Germany, to attend the G20 Compact with Africa (CwA) meeting, 26 and 27 August.



President Cyril Ramaphosa supported by Minister Naledi Pandor at the 41st Ordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government in Lilongwe, Malawi, 16 August 2021.



Minister Naledi Pandor met with Norway's Foreign Minister, Ms Ine Marie Eriksen Sørreide, for the Fifth Session of the South Africa-Norway High Level Consultation, 23 August 2021.



Dr Naledi Pandor hosting the Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dr AK Abdul Momen, during an Official Visit to South Africa, 22 to 25 August 2021.



# GLOBE AT A GLIMPSE



South Africa's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN), Geneva, Ambassador Mxolisi Nkosi, hosted the Chinese Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva, Ambassador CHEN Xu. Ambassadors Nkosi and Chen exchanged notes on a wide range of issues with a view to enhancing multilateral cooperation between South Africa and China, 24 August 2021.



Raymundo Garrido Lantigua, new Ambassador of the Dominican Republic, presented copies of his Letters of Credence to the Chief of State Protocol of South Africa, Ambassador Nonceba Losi., 12 August 2021



South African Consul General in New York, Dr Motumisi Tawana, receiving a visit from South African comedian Trevor Noah at the new premises of the Consulate, 18 August 2021.



South African Ambassador to Zimbabwe, Rejoice Twizwilondi Mabudafhasi, presented her credentials to President Emmerson Mnangagwa at the State House, 12 August 2021



# IT'S YOUR VOICE

Internal Newsletter of the Department of International  
Relations and Cooperation

ubuntu diplomat



To contribute to the publication, please send  
your content to [internalcomms@dirco.gov.za](mailto:internalcomms@dirco.gov.za)



## Charlotte Maxeke

African Women's  
Economic Justice and Rights  
Initiative