

IT'S YOUR VOICE

Internal Newsletter of the Department of International
Relations and Cooperation

ubuntu diplomat

31 March 2022

• Vol 2



international relations
& cooperation

Department:
International Relations and Cooperation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



HUMAN RIGHTS MONTH 2022

THE YEAR OF UNITY AND RENEWAL:
PROTECTING AND PRESERVING OUR
HUMAN RIGHTS GAINS



CREDITS

Editor-in-Chief	Nthabiseng Makuwa
Managing Editor	Mathapelo Monaisa
Guest Editor	Magdeline Motswaledi
Copy Editor	Delien Burger
Photographers	Jacoline Schoonees Yolande Snyman Katlholo Maifadi Yandisa Monakali
Content coordination	Magdeline Motswaledi Mathapelo Monaisa
Publisher	The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO)

EDITOR'S

LETTER

Dear Colleagues,

This year, South Africa commemorated Human Rights Month under the theme: "The Year of Unity and Renewal: Protecting and Preserving our Human Rights Gains".

The commemoration coincided with the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the passing of the Constitution on 4 December 1996 and which took effect on 4 February 1997. Chapter 2 of South Africa's Constitution states that the Bill of Rights is a cornerstone of our democracy. The bill outlines the rights of all people and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom.

This historic day is linked with 21 March 1960, when ordinary people embarked on a protest march against the pass laws. On that day, over 60 people died and hundreds were wounded when police fired on a peaceful crowd that had gathered. The tragedy came to be known as the Sharpeville Massacre.

In this month's edition, you will find several highlighted events that took place in March 2022. The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Dr Naledi Pandor, travelled to Geneva, Switzerland, for the High-Level Segment of the 49th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to deliver the keynote address at the launch of South Africa's candidature for the HRC for the period 2023-2025. Minister Pandor' called on the council to be true to the letter and spirit of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action by truly treating all human rights as "universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis for all people". In her conclusion, the Minister thanked the African Union for endorsing South Africa's campaign for HRC membership.

The Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Candith Mashego-Dlamini's visited Mookgophong, in the Waterberg District, Limpopo. The objectives of the visit were to raise awareness about socio-economic challenges facing young people and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic in and around the village. The Deputy Minister was accompanied by members of the Diplomatic Corps, who made generous donations to the cause.

Feeling anxious most of the time? Employee Health and Wellness hosted a webinar on anxiety in the workplace during the COVID-19 period.

Kind regards



MM

07

Solidarity with women in areas affected by conflict in commemoration of International Women's Month

11

12th South Africa-United States Annual Bilateral Forum

13

Deputy Minister Candith Mashego-Dlamini visits Mookgophong, Limpopo

21

South Africa's candidature to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) 2023-2025

25

A day in the life of Khayakazi Koto

27

Feature on anxiety

29

Bokamoso Chorus crowned champions at the inaugural African Choral and Gospel Championship (ACGC), Rwanda



The Commonwealth

***Delivering a
Common Future***
*Connecting
Innovating
Transforming*



HUMAN RIGHTS DAY 2022

THE YEAR OF UNITY AND RENEWAL:
PROTECTING AND PRESERVING OUR HUMAN RIGHTS GAINS



“We seek to live in peace with our neighbours and the peoples of the world in conditions of equality, mutual respect, and equal advantage.” – Oliver Tambo

#HumanRightsMonth



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Solidarity with women in areas affected by conflict in commemoration of International Women's Month

By Caron Kgomo
Deputy Director: Gender and Diversity Management

On 16 March 2022, the Office of the Chief Operations Officer hosted a hybrid webinar to observe International Women's Month, which is commemorated annually on 8 March. This year's International Women's Month is taking place in the context of escalating conflict in Europe in which we have seen hundreds of thousands of women and children from Ukraine rendered internally displaced or as refugees in neighbouring countries. Many more have remained behind, either unable to escape or willing to act to defend their country. In Africa, the conflicts in the Eastern Democratic Republic, Ethiopia, Sudan, Sahel, Northern Mozambique and many other countries persist and women there have, and continue, to be targeted and displaced, living under perilous conditions. For this International Women's Month, our focus as women peacebuilders is on expressing our solidarity with all women in areas affected by conflict.

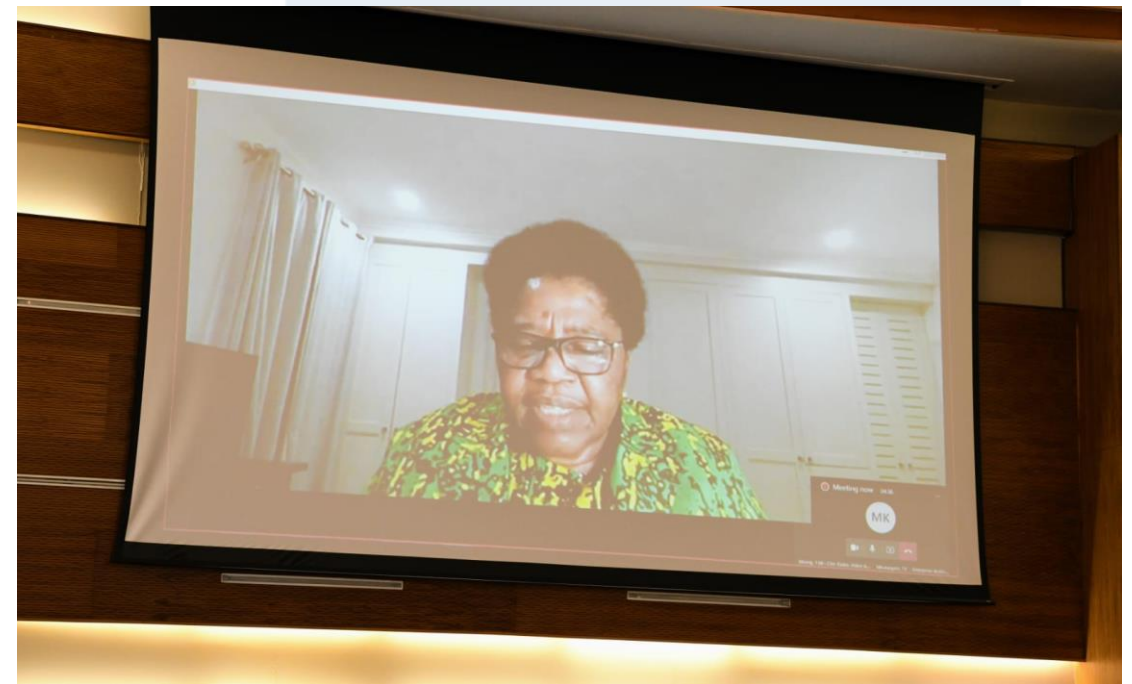
South Africa adopted the National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in August 2020. Our NAP calls on South African women to have peace tables and dialogues that bring stakeholders together to discuss peace and security issues nationally, continentally and internationally. It also calls on us to support and offer solidarity to women in conflict countries. South Africa has a history of supporting women in conflict areas as was demonstrated by the formation and actions of the South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID). It has also been at the forefront of implementing the WPS Agenda, especially in relation to women's engagement in peace processes.

The Gertrude Shope Women's Mediation Network has trained many women across the continent on mediation. Given the deterioration in peace and security in Europe and in Africa this International Women's Month is an opportune moment to bring our collective experience to bear and to action our commitments outlined in our NAP.

The objectives of the dialogue were to:

- demonstrate solidarity with women in conflict zones
- understand the nature of conflicts
- uncover the impact of conflict on women and the different roles women occupy during conflicts
- reaffirm the need for peaceful resolution of conflict
- determine the role that women peacebuilders in South Africa, continentally and internationally can play to support women in conflict areas and to support peace processes
- strengthen the implementation of the WPS Agenda and the South African NAP
- disseminate the South African NAP.

The dialogue, anchored by Deputy Minister Candith Mashego-Dlamini, and moderated by Professor Cheryl Hendricks, Executive Director Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, brought together a panel of high-level speakers, civil-society representatives and youth to address the issues outlined in the objectives. Ms Charlotte Lobe, in her capacity as the South Africa Focal Person on WPS, was a member of the panel, as well as Pravina Makan-Lakha, ACCORD, who were co-sponsors of the event.



In her remarks, during the webinar, Deputy Minister Mashego-Dlamini spoke about South Africa's solidarity with women living in conflict areas, as well as support for the empowerment of women in peacekeeping endeavours. She said, "The NAP calls on South Africans to continue with its long-standing practice of supporting women in conflict areas. South Africa has supported women in countries such as the DRC, Burundi and South Sudan". The Deputy Minister further highlighted the fact that women often found themselves in extremely challenging and dangerous situations during civil unrest and conflict. "Rape continues to be used as a 'weapon of war' in many of the conflicts. Women's livelihoods, reproductive and sexual health are directly affected". However, Deputy Minister Mashego-Dlamini continued to point out that although women were victims during conflict, many more were also actors during conflict, raising awareness about its impact, becoming advocates for peace, peace-builders, mediators and human rights defenders as well as providing humanitarian support.



Ms Charlotte Lobe delivers her inputs



HE Fionnuala Gilson, Ambassador of Ireland to South Africa



POPULARISING AND IMPLEMENTING THE SA NAP ON WPS

A DIALOGUE IN SOLIDARITY WITH WOMEN IN CONFLICT AREAS

20
22

“Although women are victims during conflict, many more are also actors during conflicts, raising awareness about its impact, becoming advocates for peace, peace-builders, mediators and human rights defenders as well as providing humanitarian support”.



*Ms Candith Mashego-Dlamini
Deputy Minister: International Relations and Cooperation*



international relations
& cooperation

Department:
International Relations and Cooperation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

www.dirco.gov.za



DIRCOza



@DIRCO_ZA



DIRCO ZA



@dircoza



theDIRCOZA

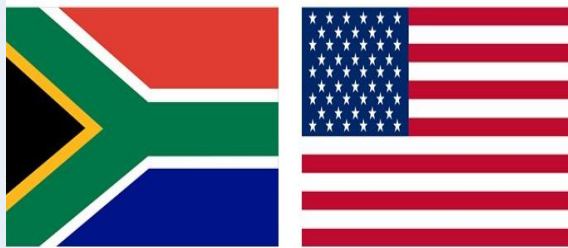


Department of
International Relations
and Cooperation



12th South Africa-United States Annual Bilateral Forum

By Andre van de Venter
Deputy Director: USA



The 12th Meeting of the South Africa-United States (US) Annual Bilateral Forum (ABF) was recently held to review sectoral cooperation funded by US development assistance. The forum, one of the largest bilateral structured meetings under the umbrella of DIRCO, was co-chaired by Ambassador Maud Dlomo, Deputy Director-General: Americas and Europe, and Mr Todd Haskell, Chargé d' Affaires, ad interim of the Embassy of the US.

Approximately 70 senior officials from partner departments and their counterparts from the US Embassy engaged in discussions within eight working groups focussed on current and future bilateral cooperation in areas such as trade and investment, health, basic and higher education, agriculture, energy, water, environment, transportation, science and innovation, and safety and security. One of the main areas of collaboration discussed, is the ongoing collaboration to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and the agreement to further enhance the historical strong global health collaboration between the two countries.

In relation to the bilateral trade and investment relationship, it was noted that two-way trade in goods between the two countries grew from US\$13.9 billion in 2010 to US\$21 billion in 2021. Significantly, in 2021, the US ranked as the second-largest destination for South Africa's exports globally. South Africa looks forward to hosting the African Growth and Opportunity Act Forum in 2022 and both sides undertook to work collaboratively to resolve non-tariff barriers to trade.

In science and technology, there was appreciation for the good cooperation in the field of astronomy between the South African National Space Agency and National Aeronautics and Space Administration, while the creation of hubs in South Africa for vaccine production and support for innovation to address diseases of relevance to South Africa and the African continent was welcomed. Reference was made to the robust and constructive cooperation in both the higher and basic education, with an expansion in cooperation and US support for Technical and Vocational Educational Training in South Africa. The parties further appreciated the ongoing interventions, at both national and local levels, to address gender-based violence, including community-based programmes targeting the youth and young women in particular.

Regarding safety and security, both parties welcomed the robust and mutually beneficial cooperation and agreed to intensify collaboration in mutual legal assistance and other justice-related matters. The two sides looked forward to re-launching the Bilateral Strategic Energy and Climate Change Dialogue and to work with other partners to support the Just Transition to a low-carbon economy and a climate-resilient society in South Africa.

The ABF is a key component of the Strategic Partnership between South Africa and the US. The numerous cooperation programmes and projects between the two countries are aligned to South Africa's domestic priorities and the National Development Plan, which aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030.

Apart from the ABF, South Africa and the US also have structured engagements in the Working Group on African and Global Issues at Director-General level, as well as the Strategic Dialogue on Ministerial level.



Roundtable discussion during the breakaway sessions



Group photo

Deputy Minister Candith Mashego-Dlamini visits Mookgophong, Limpopo



Gender-based violence (GBV), femicide and drug and alcohol abuse continue to present challenges to the health, safety and well-being of all South Africans. These social ills are more prevalent in rural areas where access to economic opportunities is poor. Drastic action in local economic development, change in overall societal behaviour and addressing the social ills are required. The Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Candith Mashego-Dlamini, visited Mookgophong, Waterberg District, Limpopo, on 11 March 2022 to raising awareness about socio-economic challenges facing young people in and around the village. The Deputy Minister was joined by members of the Diplomatic Corps, who have made generous donations to the cause.

The issues discussed included drug and substance abuse, GBV and human trafficking, teenage pregnancies, increasing violent behaviours, rising unemployment and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The area is an attractive holiday destination. It is steeped in history, having developed from a mining background. Tin and platinum are the main minerals available in this area. With its attractive scenery, numerous holiday resorts have developed around its peaceful nature reserves and steaming hot springs, as well as hiking trails. Despite this beautiful geographical area, communities in and

around this areas are living under severe socio-economic challenges characterised by unemployment, drug and substance abuse such as nyaope etc, GBV as well as an increase in teenage pregnancies. Access to amenities is stifled by the poor infrastructure that is virtually non-existent. Schools around the area are battling while crime also contributes to this bleak situation.

In addressing the above challenges, government has a number of appropriate instruments and mechanisms. For example, to combat drug and substance abuse, the National Drug Master Plan (NDMP) 2013-2017 is in place. It was drafted in accordance with the stipulations of the Prevention of and Treatment for Substance Abuse Act, 2008. For combating GBV, the National Strategy Plan (NSP) on Gender Based Violence and Femicide (GBV& F) is in place. It is complemented by the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

South Africa remains overwhelmed by the increase in drug and substance abuse and GBV&F, and has been experiencing an exponential increase during the COVID-19 pandemic. The forms of violence are characterised by gruesome killings of women, girls and members of the LGBTIQ+ community. Research has identified the key factors that put vulnerable people, especially women and children,



as being HIV/AIDS, alcohol abuse and sexual partnering, gender norms that place men in control in sexual relationships, low educational levels and limited access to employment, poor healthcare, inadequate housing and sex work. COVID-19 has also been more devastating among the young population, especially school going girl- and boy-children, as well as out-of- school youth.

The challenges, and the environmental factors listed above, worsen the existing vulnerabilities, overburdens and exposes women, girl-children and persons living with disabilities to more risks, and increases insecurity and tensions in households. Concerted government efforts to put in place mitigating strategies notwithstanding, the scourge of GBV continues to be one of the greatest challenges communities face during emergencies.

The unrelenting pandemic has weakened child protection systems, undermined existing laws, policies, regulations and service delivery across all social sectors. The mostly affected sectors include social welfare, education, health and security. The frightening reality is that in the absence of strategic interventions, young people are more likely to suffer severe long-term consequences that would deprive society to benefit from demographic dividends of youth.

The vision espoused in the NDMP 2013-2017 needs to be implemented with added commitment, otherwise the dream of a South Africa free of drugs by 2024 will remain a pipe dream.

South Africa recorded increased rates of teenage pregnancies in the 2018–2019 financial year, according to a report released by the Department of Basic Education. More recently, the numbers have drastically increased. This situation worsens existing vulnerabilities, overburdens and exposes women, girls and persons living with disabilities to more risks, and increases insecurities and tensions in the households.



Deputy Minister Mashego-Dlamini with members of the Diplomatic Corps

GBV is one of the greatest challenge communities face during emergencies. Child protection systems, including laws, policies, regulations and services across all social sectors, especially social welfare, education, health and security are weakened and disrupted.

Over the recent past, the schooling environment in South Africa has seen a negative rise in school-based violence. This phenomenon is characterised by bullying, sexual violence and other related violent acts. The social media has been flooded with scenes of young girls and boys embroiled in scuffles, with some ending in unnecessary loss of lives.

Violence in South African schools has been prevalent, equating to a near pandemic. The scourge of violence has led to rising levels of suicide among school going young people, with girls being in majority. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in its study of 2017, indicated that every year around the world about 246 million children were affected by school violence. Daily and weekly incidences of violence in schools are reported. Perhaps, the advent of social media was a blessing in disguise. It has brought to the fore a hidden situation that had been ravaging the moral fabric of our schools, and society at large. Reports in different media platforms such as television, radio, and newspapers have suggested that the scourge of violence in schools has reached alarming, unparalleled and unprecedented proportions.

School violence has undermined the rights of many young men and women. Many young girls have seen their right to freedom and security of the person being severely violated. Their rights to be free from all forms of violence (as guaranteed by the Constitution) have been completely disregarded by their own peers. Some schools have been turned into war zones where pupils are tormented by bullies who treat them in the most inhumane and indecent manner.

The rise in unemployment has sent millions of young people into poverty and further alienated them from the mainstream economy. Statistics SA asserts in the Quarterly Survey published in October 2020, that even before the current crisis, young people were the hardest hit by the economic slowdown, resulting in the effective national school drop-out rate at 48%. South Africa has the second-highest rate of cyber bullying in the world and the current violence and looting that have taken place has impressed upon our children the acceptance of violent actions in our communities.



the dpsa
Department of
Public Service and Administration
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

GENDER EQUALITY TODAY FOR A SUSTAINABLE TOMORROW

8 March #IWD2022



MISSION ACCOMPLISHED



South Africa's candidature to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) 2023-2025: "Together, Building Back Better Through Human Rights"

By Lihle Mabuza

UN Desk: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Following the first democratic elections in 1994, South Africa returned to the international community in 1995 to assume its rightful place among the community of nations. In 2006, South Africa demonstrated its commitment to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms when it played an integral role in the transition from the erstwhile Commission on Human Rights (CHR) to the Human Rights Council (HRC).

South Africa was successfully elected to the council as a founding member for two consecutive terms from 2006 to 2010. The country was also elected to two additional consecutive terms from 2014 to 2019. Since the end of its previous term of membership in the council, South Africa has consistently played a key and active role in the development of international human rights and humanitarian law, focussing on the maximum protection for victims of human rights abuses and violations, including the concomitant adequate remedies and the combatting of impunity. South Africa remains dedicated to fulfilling its commitments to advance human rights and fundamental freedoms for all consistent with its Constitutional provisions.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) remains the supreme law of the land and no other law or government action can supersede the provisions of the Constitution. The South African Constitution guarantees all the universally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms and, in effect, internalises the key tenets of the 1948 United

Nations' (UN) Bill of Rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has significantly contributed to the centrality of human rights in the national jurisprudence. Therefore, our pledge and commitment are premised on the pursuit to make rights practically realisable for all peoples everywhere. In this regard, the political vision of the democratic Government in South Africa is predicated on a fundamental principle, which affirms the inextricability between economic, social and cultural rights on the one hand and civil and political rights on the other, which have been aptly captured in Chapter 2 of the South African Constitution.

The South African approach negates the false dichotomy and also breathes life into the Declaration on the Right to Development that was the first international instrument that explicitly framed the approach that all human rights are equal and indivisible and that people need to enjoy access to all of these rights for the development of persons, communities and societies.

It is through the Constitution that South Africa has been able to substantiate constitutionally guaranteed rights through the promulgation of numerous key pieces of legislation underpinning our democracy such as, among others, the:

- Promotion of Truth and Reconciliation Act, 1995

- Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, 2000
- Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000
- Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000
- Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013
- Employment Equity Act, 1998
- Labour Relations Act, 1995
- Public Service Act, 1994.

These fundamental pieces of legislation, together with other related pieces of legislation addressing health, education, housing, land, water and sanitation, food security and nutrition, have created a platform for the attainment of substantive equality in our society. South Africa's engagement with the international community is therefore based on the noble ideals for the respect for human rights, the rule of law, democracy, democratic governance and accountable electoral processes.

South Africa's aspiration for HRC membership is first and foremost driven by the imperative to pursue its national interests and to promote and protect its values. The primary responsibility in this regard is to constantly ensure that these interests and values find expression in efforts at the regional and international levels and that South Africa's membership should mutually reinforce the domestic pursuit of these interests and promotion of these values.

Some of the fundamental values that guide and bind South Africa's foreign policy include human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms. It is South Africa's firm principle that human rights are not only limited to civil and political rights, but also include economic, social and cultural rights (as well a right to development).

South Africa's principled treatment and approach to human rights is informed by the widely accepted principles of universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights, as adopted by consensus. Minister Naledi Pandor travelled to Geneva, Switzerland, for the High-Level Segment of the 49th Session of the UN HRC from 28 February to 2 March 2022. Minister Pandor delivered the keynote address at the launch of South Africa's candidature for the HRC for the period 2023-2025 on Monday, 28 February 2022.

By participating in the structures and institutions of the global system of governance (such as the HRC), South Africa seeks to strengthen the multilateral system of interstate relations in order to foster/promote consensus of important issues of interest to the global community (in this case, the commitment to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights in the International Bill of Rights).

South Africa's return to the HRC should also advance the ongoing reforms of the council in order to strengthen its mandate and ensure that it keeps on its agenda, the issues of concern and interest to South Africa and its foreign policy objectives and priorities.

South Africa will focus on thematic areas that resonate with government's priorities such as the elimination of gender-based violence, addressing socio-economic inequalities, protecting human rights, fighting racism and protecting fundamental freedoms of migrants, refugees, children, and other persons of concern.

South Africa must pursue the right to quality education, access to healthcare services, enhance financial and economic inclusion of women, decent work and equal pay for work of equal value and respect for bodily integrity. Furthermore, South Africa will support implementation and follow-up to the programme of activities of the Decade for People of African Descent and the establishment of the forum for global consultation on the rights of people of African descent.

The next five years are going to be crucial for the HRC. It is imperative that South Africa be present in the council when the review takes place. South Africa needs to play a leading role in that process to ensure, among other objectives, that the outcomes of these processes are as close as possible to South Africa's and Africa's developmental priorities and objectives.



Click on the image on the adjacent page to read the brochure:
http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/2022/unhrc_candidature_2023-2025.pdf



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA'S CANDIDATURE TO THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (UNHRC)

2023 – 2025

*"Together, building back better
through human rights"*



#ABOUTME

Please tell us about yourself

I am Khayakazi Koto, Deputy Director for Ubuntu Radio at the Department of International Relations and Cooperation. I was born in Lady Frere and raised at Ezibeleni, both in the Eastern Cape. I hold a Bachelor of Arts from the University of the Western Cape. My radio career began in 2006 at Ulwazi Community Radio in De Aar. In 2007, I moved to Takalani Community Radio in Aliwal North as a presenter. In November 2007, I joined TruFm, a SABC regional youth station in Bhisho as a content producer and in June 2012, I joined uMhlobo Wenene FM, a national radio station in Gqeberha. I came to DIRCO in 2016 when I was employed to be a content producer for Ubuntu Radio. Essentially, I am a content producer and presenter of the afternoon drive show "Ubuntu Drive" every weekday from 15:00 - 18:00 CAT on Ubuntu Radio. I am passionate and curious about international relations, particularly South Africa's position and its role in the international arena.

Please take us through your daily routine

My routine begins a week in advance and not on the actual day, as I have to pre-plan the show. I catch up on the latest news to identify relevant content, request interviews and communicate with the show's



contributors to remind them of our appointment, I then draft a script and presents the live show. That entails calling contributors, conducting interviews either in-studio/telephonically/virtually, reporting on breaking stories and any South African event that advances South Africa's foreign policy. Furthermore, I also identify one interview a day and send it to the technical producers for Podcast. This interview is then shared on our social media platforms.

What do you like about your job?

Simplifying subjects or discourse that would otherwise be too complex for the average South African to grasp in the context of South Africa's foreign policy. I am encouraged by how my job affords me opportunity

A day in the life of Ms Khayakazi Koto

Deputy director, Radio Ubuntu



to change people's lives by being the bridge between available information and those who need the information. I am an earnest believer in the power of radio as a catalyst that fosters change, as it reaches even the most far-flung areas that would otherwise be left behind due to a number of factors such as: inequality, poverty, unemployment, lack of infrastructure and access to information. To me, radio is the cheapest form of education, therapy and entertainment.

What book are you reading at the moment ... when you are not working?

I am currently alternating between two reads, "*Courage is Calling*" by Ryan Holiday, to better understand how to handle fear; and "*Decolonising the Mind*" by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, a fascinating account of how much we have lost as Africans through language use.

You have been able to visit locations as part of your job at DIRCO; tell us about your highlights

Two countries come to mind as my highlights. Namibia, for someone who gets anxious when I travel, Namibia truly felt like home. The familiarity of it all gave me a sense of comfort. India was a pleasant surprise. Before I left, I was convinced that I was going to hate everything about it because of what I was told. Also, I can't handle spicy foods, and I held the belief that's all they had in India. But I was wrong, the food was amazing and the visit to the Taj Mahal was special. Of course, one could not ignore the opulence and poverty paradox.

DO YOU FIND YOURSELF FEELING ANXIOUS MOST OF THE TIME?

DO YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW SUFFER FROM ANXIETY?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT CAUSES ANXIETY?

ARE YOU ANXIOUS ABOUT RETURNING TO WORK DURING THE COVID-19 PERIOD?



Anxiety

By Rokaya Adonis
Clinical Psychologist,
Employee Health and Wellness

Mental health came sharply into focus during the COVID-19 pandemic as the world struggled to combat its unprecedented effects. We had to redefine many facets of our lives due to the pandemic. With it came huge impacts on the mental well-being of every person. **Stress, fear, panic, and anxiety** have for most of us been constant features over the past two years, wherein our lives have been inextricably changed by the challenges the pandemic posed through the uncertainty of every new development on the COVID-19 front. The stressors many of us encountered in this time that have caused severe anxieties have been the deaths of loved ones, financial problems due to job losses, relationship problems, illnesses, abusive actions towards other and self, significant life changes (marriage or divorce), extreme loneliness as a result of social distancing, new COVID-19 variants and waves of infections, the easing and tightening of COVID-19 restrictions and measures along with it having to work remotely, or on rotation and recently having to return to work on a full-time basis.

Anxiety has become commonplace. However, we must acquaint ourselves with what anxiety looks like, its symptoms and causes. So, that when these are experienced in excess, cause behavioural disturbances, and persist for longer than six months, help should be sought from a mental health professional (psychologist or psychiatrist) as you may be suffering from an anxiety disorder.

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is the mind and body's reaction to stressful, dangerous, or unfamiliar situations. Though a measure of anxiety is necessary to help keep us alert it, can be debilitating for those suffering from an anxiety disorder. While anxiety can occur as a reaction to stress, it can also happen without any obvious trigger. Anxiety is more often associated with muscle tension and vigilance in preparation for future danger and cautious or avoidant behaviours.

Stress and anxiety can produce a range of physical and psychological symptoms that include dizziness, anger, irritability, restlessness, hyperhidrosis, insomnia, digestive issues, appetite changes, increased heart rate, apprehension, numbness and brain fog. The causes of anxiety are related to significant life stressors that trigger the emotional symptoms mentioned above.

If you suspect that you may be suffering from anxiety, see how many of the questions you answer **yes** to:

- Do you feel very anxious or worry about a lot of things?
- Do you think your worry is excessive?
- Do you worry more days than not?
- Have you been worrying like this for the past six months?
- Is it hard for you to control your worrying?
- Have you noticed any physical symptoms such as restlessness, feeling tired easily, trouble concentrating, irritability, muscle tension or trouble sleeping?
- Does your worrying negatively impact your ability to function, like at school, work, with friends, family, or in other areas that are important to you?

What are anxiety disorders?

Anxiety disorders are a cluster of mental disorders characterised by significant and uncontrollable feelings of anxiety and fear that significantly impairs one's social, occupational and personal functioning.

ANXIETY SELF-HELP

Eat right and exercise

If you don't take care of your body, other anxiety self-help may not have a chance to work.

Relaxation exercises

Relaxation exercises help relieve stress and create calm.

Make time for yourself

By making time for friends, spending time on hobbies or just getting some fresh air, overall stress can be reduced.

No more than you can handle

No one can do everything so ask for help from others when you feel you have taken on too many responsibilities.

Change your attitude

Focus on the positive and things for which you are grateful.

www.HealthyPlace.com

GLOBE AT A GLIMPSE

Bokamoso Chorus crowned champions at the inaugural African Choral and Gospel Championship (ACGC) Rwanda 2022

Music and dance were the order of the day at the Intare Conference Arena in Rwanda, Kigali, as Bokamoso Chorus - all the way from Mabopane in Tshwane - took part in the inaugural African Choral and Gospel Championship (ACGC), held in Rwanda from 23 - 27 March 2022. The Pan-African Gospel Choir Festival was initially scheduled to take place in South Africa, last year December. However, due to the travel bans in place at the time, Kigali became the next option for the choral and gospel music festival.

The 90 choristers arrived at the Kigali International Airport on Tuesday, 22 March 2022. Bokamoso did not only represent South Africa at the championships, but it was also the only choir coming from the Southern African Development Community.



High Commissioner Mpahlwa with Kgaugelo Mpyane, Musical Director of Bokamoso Chorus.

Other countries included Rwanda, Ghana and Nigeria, as well as representation by musicians from Ivory Coast, Togo and Cameroon.

Their performance left both the audience and the judges breathless and it was crowned with the Champions title in the category Mixed Repertoire – AC 1. It also received a Special Award for Opera, being the only choir that performed an opera piece in the competition. Bokamoso further claimed top positions in the Classical Soloist – AC6, taking both first position and first runner-up in that category.



Finally in the Sacred and Church Choir category – AC2, they claimed the first runner-up position, giving them a total of six awards: two trophies and four certificates. Bokamoso was also requested to do the closing performance for the grand finale and closing ceremony.

The management team of the choir also paid a courtesy call on High Commissioner Mandisi Mpahlwa and also extended an invitation to the Mission to attend the festival. Apart from the Intare Conference Arena, which hosted both the opening and the closing ceremonies, the festival was also held at two more designated places, the Kigali Car Free Zone's Imbuga City Walk and Notre Dame de Fatima in Musanze, Northern Province.

Bokamoso Chorus is a new choir based in Mabopane, South Africa. Founded in 2022, it is directed by Kgaugelo Mpyane, a well renowned violist and tenor.

The choir has more than 100 singers, well balanced among all vocal ranges, and it mainly performs works from the choral-symphonic repertoire. Bokamoso Choir also consists of a youth choir named Soshanguve Philharmonic, which entails mainly members between the ages of 18- 30. Most of the choir members are orphans and unable to make ends meet. Therefore, Bokamoso tries to assist the youth to get off the streets and share their talent and the love for music. The significant part of the choir's activity is devoted to performing modern and contemporary music. Please contact Bokamoso Chorus on the following email for further information: Bokamoschorus46@gmail.com

#WORLDTB DAY



➔ 24 March is World TB Day

FACT SHEET: TUBERCULOSIS



A total of 1.5 million people died from TB in 2020 (including 214 000 people with HIV). Worldwide, TB is the 13th leading cause of death and the second leading infectious killer after COVID-19 (above HIV/AIDS).

What is Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by a bacterium called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. The bacteria usually attack the lungs, but TB bacteria can attack any part of the body such as the kidney, spine and brain. Not everyone infected with TB bacteria becomes sick. If not treated properly, TB disease can be fatal.

What are the symptoms

Common symptoms of TB disease include prolonged cough; chest pain; weakness or fatigue, weight loss, fever and night sweats.

How is TB spread

TB germs are put into the air when a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, speaks, or sings. These germs can stay in the air for several hours, depending on the environment. Persons who breathe in the air containing these TB germs can become infected; this is called latent TB infection.

What is the difference between Latent TB Infection and TB Disease?

People with *latent TB infection* have TB germs in their bodies, but they are not sick because the germs are not active. These people do not have symptoms of TB disease, and they cannot spread the germs to others. However, they may develop TB disease in the future.

People with TB disease are sick from TB germs that are active, meaning that they are multiplying and destroying tissue in their body. They usually have symptoms of TB disease. People with TB disease of the lungs or throat can spread germs to others.

What Should I Do if I Have Been Exposed to Someone with TB Disease?

People with TB disease are most likely to spread the germs to people they spend time with every day, such as family members or co-workers. If you have been around someone who has TB disease, you should go to your doctor or your local health department for tests.

Why is Latent TB Infection Treated?

If you have latent TB infection but not TB disease, your doctor may want you to take a drug to kill the TB germs and prevent you from developing TB disease.

How is TB Disease Treated?

TB disease can be treated by taking several drugs for 6 to 12 months. It is very important that people who have TB disease finish the medicine and take the drugs exactly as prescribed. If they stop taking the drugs too soon, they can become sick again; if they do not take the drugs correctly, the germs that are still alive may become resistant to those drugs.

**PROGRESS IN
ENABLING ACCESS
TO TB PREVENTIVE
TREATMENT FOR
MILLIONS IN NEED,
FALLS FAR SHORT.**

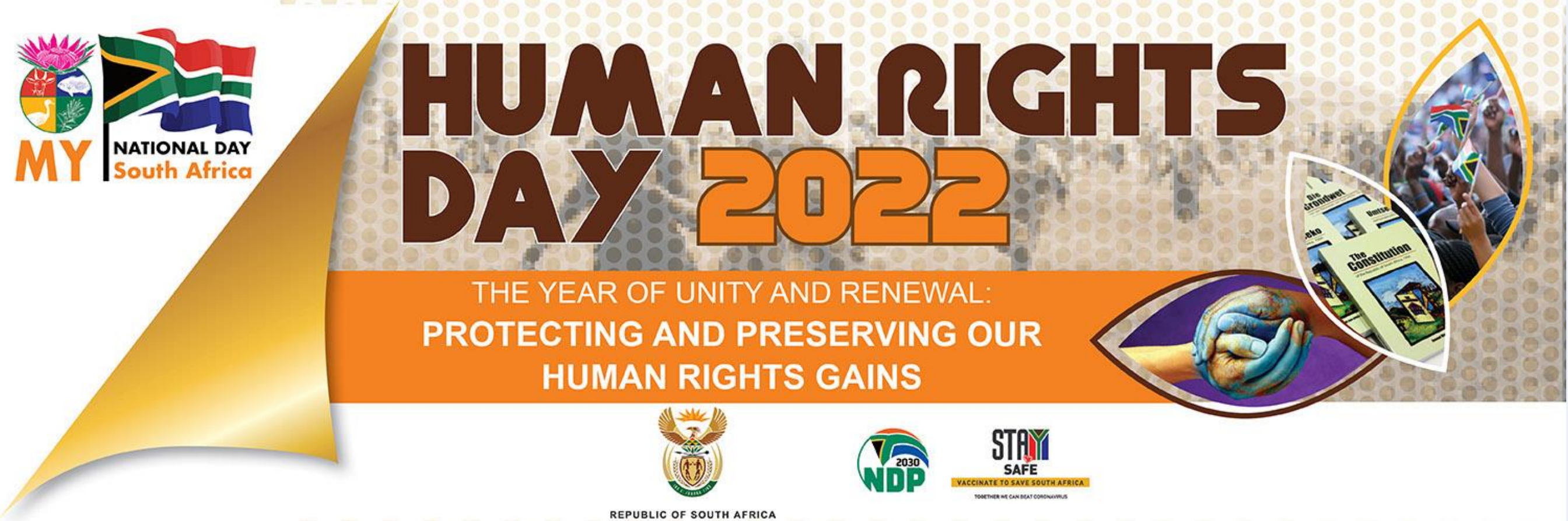
**INVEST TO
ENSURE ACCESS**

TB preventive treatment to stop TB infection from turning into disease.



**INVEST
TO END TB
SAVE LIVES**





Send article contributions to motswaledim@dirco.gov.za