



IT'S YOUR VOICE

ubuntu diplomat

Internal Newsletter of the Department of International
Relations and Cooperation

30 April 2022 . Vol. 3



IT'S YOUR VOICE

Credits

Managing Editor

Mathapelo Monaisa

Guest Editor

Magedline Motswaledi

Copy Editor

Delien Burger

Design Concept

Mathapelo Monaisa

Photographers

Jacoline Schoonees, Katlholo Maifadi, Yandisa Monakali and Yolande Snyman

Contributors

Caren Kgomo, Denisha Reddy, Ray Medhurst, Graeme Bradley, Rokaya Adonis, Lerato Mashile and Maggie Motswaledi

Publisher

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation

For suggestions and contributions to the publication please e-mail:

motswaledim@dirco.gov.za

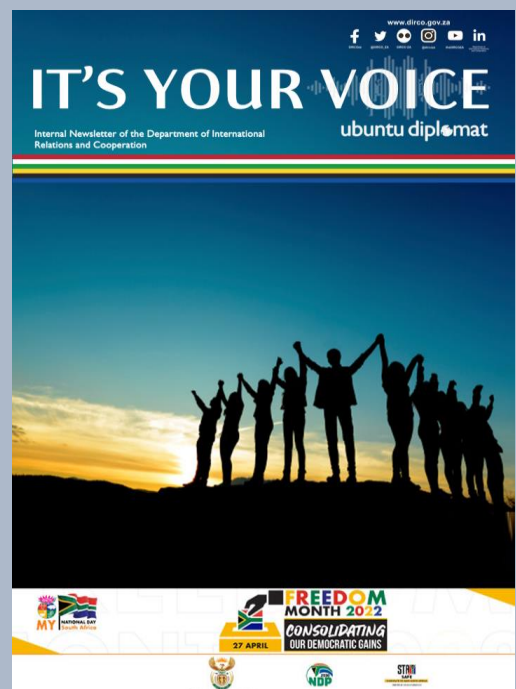
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**international relations
& cooperation**

Department:
International Relations and Cooperation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

ON THE COVER



South Africa celebrates Freedom Month under the theme: “Consolidate our Democratic Gains”, to mark the country’s transition from the oppressive apartheid regime to a free democratic country. The first democratic elections on 27 April 1994 gave birth to our constitutional democracy.



IT'S YOUR VOICE

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Editor's Desk

On 27 April 1994, South Africans of all colour and creed lined the streets armed with hope and elation. Men and women, 18 years and above, queued to make a historical mark on the ballot during the first elections in a democratic South Africa. This was a seminal moment for the country, given that the dignity of the majority of South Africans who had never voted before, was restored and the country transformed to a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society. Excitement overflowed that day as we looked towards a new South Africa. A South Africa that places humanity and Ubuntu front and centre. Today, we remember that day and the many sacrifices made by patriots to ensure our democracy and freedom. We celebrate our hard-won and deserved freedom. Our history abounds with selfless patriots who paved the way for a democratic and free South Africa.

Despite the remarkable progress South Africa has made since 1994, the triple threat of inequality, poverty and unemployment looms. It is a challenge that continues to lead to impediments to South Africa's goal of national unity and social cohesion. The situation was escalated by the COVID-19 pandemic that ravaged not only South Africa's economy, but that of the entire world. In 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa acknowledged the devastation that resulted in the wake of the Coronavirus scourge, and introduced to the nation a plan for the reconstruction and recovery of the country's economy.

The core elements of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan are as follows:

1. **Priority interventions for economic recovery:** The plan sets out eight priority interventions that will ignite South Africa's recovery and reconstruction effort. These are the flagship initiatives that all of society will rally around to build a new economy.
2. **Enabling conditions for growth:** These are the growth-enhancing reforms and other preconditions for an inclusive, competitive and growing economy.
3. **Macro-economic framework:** Economic reconstruction and recovery requires careful mobilisation of resources to ensure fiscal sustainability.
4. **Institutional arrangements:** The plan focusses on execution, and is supported by enhanced institutional arrangements to ensure implementation and accountability.

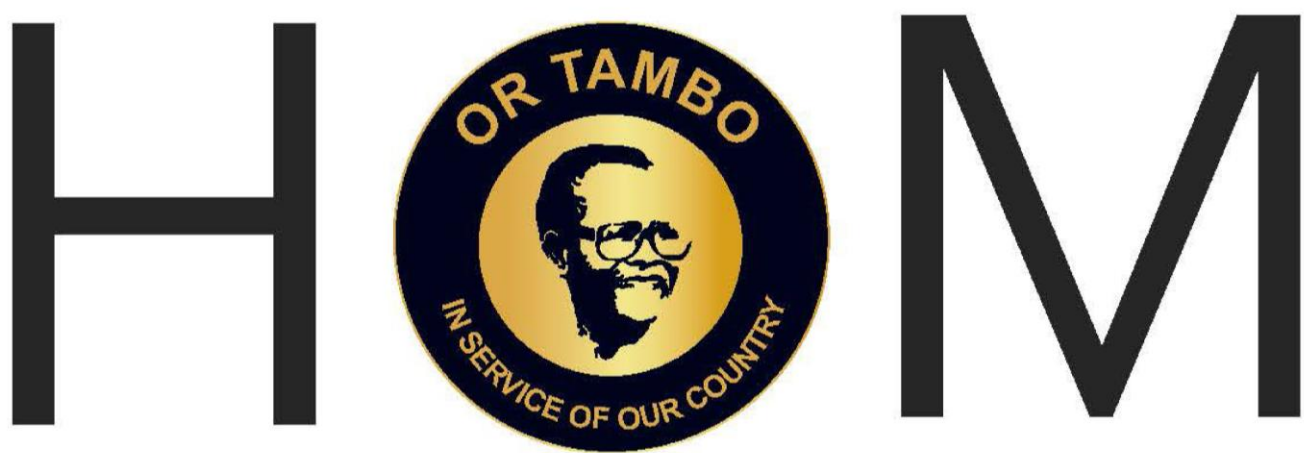


South Africa's economic reconstruction and recovery include myriad programmes that support the country's growth. Operation Vulindlela is a joint initiative of The Presidency and National Treasury to accelerate the implementation of structural reforms and support economic recovery. Read more about South Africa's economic recovery plan: <https://bit.ly/3wafKa4>

It is a time to recommit ourselves to the Constitution, which is the foundation of our democracy and the very essence of what freedom means.

In the spirit of Freedom Month, it is time to come together as one nation to rebuild our country from the devastating effects of the Coronavirus. We must work to create a nation that has equal opportunities across all areas of society.

MM



Heads of Mission Conference

7 – 10 April 2022



Heads of Mission Conference

2022 Heads of Mission Conference



After two years of lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, South Africa's Heads of Missions across the world finally had the opportunity to collectively report to OR Tambo Building physically for the bi-annual Heads of Mission Conference. The conference affords the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, and other relevant ministers, an opportunity to give the country's international envoys a review of the country's developments. It is also during the conference that South Africa's representatives are given a briefing and roadmap on government's strategic objectives that they are expected to implement. The engagement took place from 7 to 9 April 2022 with President Ramaphosa delivering the keynote address during the opening session of the 2022 Heads of Mission Conference.

South Africa's envoys were briefed on the strategic mandate and objectives of the current Administration, with a special focus on the country's economic recovery initiatives outlined during the 2022 State of the Nation Address.

The discussions also included an assessment of the global situation and the identification of noteworthy trends and dynamics in the context of South Africa's foreign policy and DIRCO's programme of international relations. Various ministers also briefed the Heads of Mission on their departmental programmes and outline the expected support South Africa's representatives around the world can provide to the realisation of government's Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan to address the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality.

The conference theme was "Positioning South Africa's Diplomacy Globally to Advance Domestic Priorities in a post-COVID-19 Era".

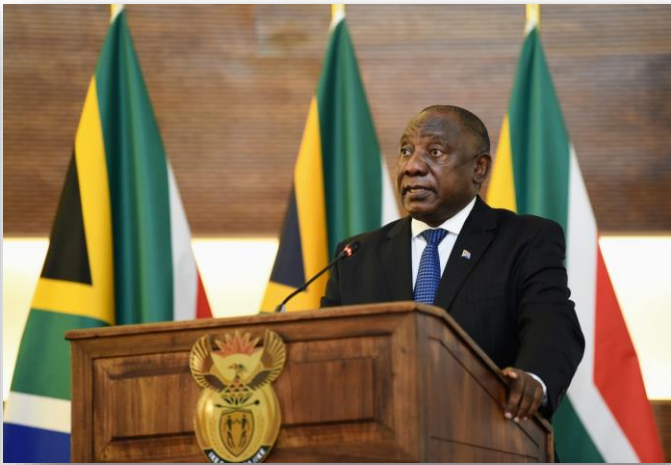
"Some Heads of Mission have taken the initiative in recent years to bring business delegations to our Investment Conferences and to our tourism and mining indabas, film festivals and aerospace shows. This is the type of initiative we want to see." – President Ramaphosa

Remarks by President Cyril Ramaphosa at the South African Heads of Mission Conference, 7 April 2022.
<https://bit.ly/38HnrLE>

2022 Heads of Mission Conference



President Cyril Ramaphosa is welcomed by Minister Naledi Pandor to the Heads of Mission Conference



President Ramaphosa addresses the Heads of Mission Conference



Minister Pandor addresses the Heads of Mission



Minister Pandor in conversation with Khaya Khumalo on SABC's "Morning Live"



Deputy Ministers Candith Mashego-Dlamini and Alvin Botes in attendance on Day Three of the conference



DIRCO Director-General, Zane Dangor, attending the Heads of Mission Conference Breakfast

2022 Heads of Mission Conference



Minister Pandor addresses the Heads of Mission on Day One of the conference



Ambassadors Mxolisi Nkosi, Mathu Joyini, Xolisa Makhaya and Tebogo Seokolo making presentations and inputs during a session

2022 Heads of Mission Conference

Heads of Mission Dinner Hosted by the Director-General



Minister Pandor is honoured at a dinner hosted by the Charlotte Maxeke Institute

In 2021, the year that government declared “The Year of Charlotte Maxeke”, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation developed a range of organic, transformative and impactful legacy projects. The decision to celebrate Mama Charlotte Maxeke beyond 2021 has turned the celebrations into a living legacy in a manner that captures her life stories, lessons and memories.

In July last year, President Cyril Ramaphosa joined other Heads of States and organisations at the Paris Generation Equality 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 African Women’s Economic Justice and Rights (AWERJ) Initiative as one of the programmatic commitments. This initiative was endorsed as a collective commitment by



the Generation Equality Forum in Paris. Mme Charlotte Maxeke is now recognised as a global icon and symbol of women’s economic empowerment. This creates an opportunity to collaborate with global stakeholders to enhance and amplify the legacy of Charlotte Maxeke during this period in an impactful manner.

The year 2022 was earmarked by the Charlotte Manny-Maxeke Institute as the year to continue the work and legacy in line with the principles of #Maxekism, meant to assist with building and sustaining a nation that develops its communities towards education, value-based leadership and a just and equitable society. The gala dinner was attended by the family of Charlotte Manny-Maxeke and dignitaries from the South African Heads of Mission deployed across the globe, who were in Pretoria attending the 2022 South African Heads of Mission Conference.

In her opening remarks, Minister Pandor mentioned that the department was working with relevant stakeholders to organise and prepare for the African Women’s Leadership Award in August this year. The awards will recognise and honour exceptional African women leaders whose achievements, mentorship, influence and contributions have advanced Africa’s development in various sectors of society.

Minister Naledi Pandor’s keynote address at the Gala Dinner hosted by the Charlotte Manny-Maxeke Institute in partnership with Freedom Park.

<https://bit.ly/3LSbnp5>

Deputy Minister Mashego-Dlamini attends the Raisina Dialogue



The Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Candith Mashego-Dlamini, travelled to India on an Official Visit where she represented South Africa at the Raisina Dialogue, which took place in New Delhi from 25 to 27 April 2022.

The Raisina Dialogue is India's flagship conference of geopolitics and geo-economics and annually attracts high-level participants from all over the world. The theme for the 2022 edition of the conference was "Terra Nova: Impassioned, Impatient and Imperrilled". In line with the theme and the dialogue conversations, Deputy Minister Mashego-Dlamini engaged on the issue of communities as first responders to health, development and the planet.

On the sidelines of the dialogue, the Deputy Minister also participated in the Young Fellows Programme, where she engaged on the subject of "Women in Policy and Politics".

The Deputy Minister took the opportunity of the platform of the conference to highlight key issues at the heart of South Africa's foreign

policy, including advancing development and economic recovery and pressing for equitable access to healthcare in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the visit, Deputy Minister Mashego-Dlamini also had a meeting with the Minister of State for External Affairs, Minister Vellamvelly Muraleedharan, and focussed on issues of mutual interest such as further enhancing the solid bilateral relationship between South Africa and India, to promote trade and commercial engagement, growing foreign direct investment and partnering in areas beneficial for both countries, such as skills exchange.



Deputy Minister Botes on the occasion of the presentation of credentials by Mr Menghestab Haile of the World Food Programme

By Lerato Mashile

Directorate: Humanitarian Affairs

On 13 April 2022, Deputy Minister Alvin Botes received Letters of Credence from the newly appointed United Nations (UN) World Food Programme (WFP) Regional Director, Menghestab Haile.

Mr Haile is a British national of Ethiopian origin and has extensive experience in the area of food and nutrition security and related fields. He has served in various leadership positions, including WFP Representative and Country Director in Egypt, WFP Deputy Country Director in Egypt, Deputy Director of WFP Africa Office in Ethiopia, Senior Policy Adviser to the Deputy Executive Director of Hunger Solutions at the WFP Headquarters, Regional Officer with the Eastern Africa Intergovernmental Authority on Development, Government Civil Servant in Ethiopia and Research Scientist in the United Kingdom.

During the ceremony, Deputy Minister Botes extended South Africa's heartfelt congratulations to Mr Haile on being nominated to take up the leadership position as the Regional Director for the United Nations WFP Regional Office in South Africa. He also assured him and his office of DIRCO's support. The WFP continues to find relevance in the region, strengthening the work that is already underway and in achieving the strategic goals the Regional Director has set to achieve for the country and the broader Southern African Development Community region.

The Deputy Minister also reiterated South Africa's commitment towards hosting the UN Humanitarian Response Depot and assured that the country looked forward to strengthening the collaboration towards achieving this goal. In concluding, the Deputy Minister invited the Regional Director to explore and enjoy the cultural diversity that South Africa had to offer.



Supporting the fight against hunger

Proceedings report of the Hybrid Dialogue on Solidarity with Women in Areas Affected by Conflict, in commemoration of International Women's Month

By Caron Kgomo

Deputy Director: Gender & Diversity Management



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

Accordingly, as part of our dissemination and implementation of our NAP on WPS and commemoration of International Women's Month, we hosted a dialogue on "Solidarity with Women in Conflict Areas".

International Women's Month is taking place in the context of the escalating conflict in Europe in which we have seen hundreds of thousands of women and children from Ukraine rendered internally displaced or 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 are still with us and the women there have, and continue, to be targeted, displaced and live 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.

Background

South Africa adopted a 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 demonstrated by the South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID). It has also been at the forefront of implementing the WPS agenda, especially regarding women's engagement in peace processes. The Gertrude Shope Women's

Objectives of the dialogue:

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

The hybrid dialogue was facilitated by Prof. Cheryl Hendricks, Executive Director of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR). It brought together a panel of high-level speakers, civil-society representatives and youth to address the issues outlined in the objectives.

As women, we stand for peace
and we all seek ways to move
processes forward through
pathways that enable
peacebuilding.

In her welcome remarks, Prof. Hendricks shared that the dialogue was significant as they were now embarking on implementing the South African NAP on WPS. She stated that the intention was not only to inform the public about the NAP but to also demonstrate solidarity with women in conflict areas.

She said “As women, we stand for peace and we all seek ways to move processes forward through pathways that enable peacebuilding. We may have taken very long to produce our NAP; 11 years have been a long journey but we have produced a substantive NAP and we are certainly going to make sure that it is not another document gathering dust.” Prof. Hendricks thanked the donors, gender activists, and government officials who made the development of the NAP a reality and those who are assisting with popularising and implementing it. She called others to join in this endeavour so that change, peace and security can be realised by all women, not only in South Africa but all women, in their diversity and in the many different locations where they’re besieged by war. This international month, she shared, was marked by arm conflict waging in Europe between Russia and Ukraine. “We’ve seen the suffering of women there beamed into our living rooms much like as we’ve seen in Ethiopia, Sudan and Syria and Palestine and Western Sahara and many other countries. War always takes its tolls on the vulnerable, on women and children, they’re displaced losing everything, including their husbands, fathers, brothers, material possessions and their dignity. Sexual violence has been and remains an integral part of the conflict context. As peacebuilders, we have to call on all countries to

find a peaceful resolution. The carnage must end. The rape of our mothers, our sisters, our children, and yes our brothers too, must end. We as women must be at the forefront of calling for peace, in all its dimensions and we must be included in peace processes too. Include us in all the mediation teams, as special envoys, as negotiators. Employ us as peace agents. We have been training, advocating and engaging in this for years, we are ready. We can make change possible. We will listen today, to how conflict has impacted women, but we will also hear how we can further support each other to be the change that we want to see.”

Prof. Hendricks further noted that the meeting had been convened by several stakeholders, who had been part of the development action plan and were now part of its implementation. Particularly, the South African Government, through DIRCO, and the Gertrude Shope Women’s Mediation Network, located in DIRCO; the South African National Defence Force (SANDF); the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities; United Nations Women with the support of Norway, which carried the project through much of its journey of the development of the NAP and added organisations which had done much of the training and support of our women in Africa; Foundation for Human Rights (FHR), which convened civil society when they were drafting the NAP and now Institute of Justice and Reconciliation; South African Women In Dialogue, the Human Rights Institute of South Africa; Lady of Peace Community Foundation; and ACCESS Chapter 2, with general support from Ireland and Netherlands for hosting these kinds of engagements and for their support with the implementation of the NAP.



She concluded her welcome remarks by saying: “We are hoping to come out of this meeting having recommitted to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. An agenda that is not separate from the main peace and security agenda, but one that is a key heart of creating and sustaining peace and security globally. Our impact is in making our voices heard, in our solidarity with each other, and in doing what is necessary to attain to bring about peace. We pulled this meeting in less than a week. As we did with the July unrest, that is to show that if we work together we are stronger and we can go far.”



FREEDOM
MONTH 2022

CONSOLIDATING
OUR DEMOCRATIC GAINS



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

2022 Freedom Day celebrations in São Paulo, Brazil

By Denisha Reddy

First Secretary: Political

South African Embassy, Brasiliat, Brazil



Consul-General Tinyiko Kumalo hosted a cocktail reception in honour of South Africa's 28th Freedom Day in the city of São Paulo on 29 April 2022. The event was held at the Espaço Itahy, under the theme "Consolidating our Democratic Gains". Over 120 guests representing government, the consular corps, the business community, civil society, academia and media attended the reception. The reception was hosted in collaboration with the South African Embassy in Brasília and Ambassador Vusi Mavimbela delivered the keynote speech. Officials from the South African Embassy in Brasília also participated in the reception.

Guests were served South African wines, Amarula and traditional South African cuisine with South African music in the background, and tourism-related videos and photographs on display throughout the evening. A local youth group, Super Staff Brazil, performed a fashion show to showcase South African and African designs.

In her remarks, Consul-General Kumalo, spoke about the meaning of Freedom Day.

She stated that South Africa proudly celebrated its hard-earned democracy, it also honoured the memory of all those who left their footprints on the path of freedom that culminated in a democratic South Africa.

She quoted Nelson Mandela in his 1995 Freedom Day speech when he said, "... if any one day marked the crossing of the divide from a past of conflict and division to the possibility of unity and peace, from inequality to equality, from a history of oppression to a future of freedom, it is 27 April 1994".

The Consul-General also indicated that the Desmond and Leah Tutu Foundation captured the spirit of Freedom Day, in 2020, commenting that "Freedom Day brings in the promise of reaching beyond ourselves and rediscovering our interdependent souls, obligations and humanity." The Consul-General concluded her remarks by calling for a minute of silence for all those lives lost in the floods in KwaZulu-Natal.

In his keynote speech, Ambassador Mavimbela noted that the gathering was also an opportunity to acknowledge and appreciate the ties that bound the people of South Africa and Brazil. He reminisced about the visit of Nelson Mandela to Brazil in 1991, where the former President received numerous awards and distinctions. This visit paved the way for cordial diplomatic and political bilateral relations between Brazil and the new South Africa since 1994.

The Ambassador also highlighted Brazil's historic relationship, deep cultural heritage and people-to-people bonds with Africa, which had given added impetus to the bilateral and multilateral partnership. He also noted that the deepening of cultural, political and economic relations with Brazil's African Diaspora was a priority for South Africa.

On the margins of the Freedom Day celebration, the Consulate also arranged meetings for the Ambassador and Consul-General with South African Tourism's Agency in São Paulo, TI Communications, Distell, Brazilian NGO, Palas Athena and Standard Bank Brasil. *Revista Raça Magazine*, a media company, which focusses on the Afro-Brazilian community, interviewed the Ambassador and Consul-General on tourism opportunities, cultural diplomacy and people-to-people relations between South Africa and Brazil.

A visit to the EMEI Nelson Mandela School was one of the highlights of the Freedom Day programme. The school changed its name in 2016 to honour the global icon after it became the victim of racist graffiti. Two weeks later, a group of children painted over the hate messages with peace paintings. The school promotes the values, ideals and principles of Nelson Mandela, especially the fight against racism and prejudice.



South African Embassy Havana – Freedom Day Celebrations 2022

By Graeme Bradley

First Secretary: Political

South African Embassy, Havana, Cuba



Ambassador Phosa and Viktor Dreke Cruz, President of the Cuba Africa Friendship Association

The South African Embassy in Havana, Cuba, hosted two events to commemorate Freedom Day 2022.

The first event was a solemn wreath-laying ceremony at the busts of OR Tambo and Nelson Mandela in the African Founders Park in Havana. Ambassador Yvonne Nkwenkwezi Phosa, accompanied by the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Patricia De Lille, who was in Havana attending a Construction Fair, unveiled the wreaths in the presence of the African Group of Ambassadors in Havana.

Later that evening, a cultural political event was hosted by the Embassy at the Casa de Africa (Africa House) Museum in the Old Havana district in the presence of representatives of the Cuban Government, including the Minister of Construction and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Diplomatic Corps in Cuba and friends of the Embassy. Cultural acts performed by the medical students of the Nelson Mandela Fidel Castro Medicine Programme and the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) were followed by brief interventions by the Health Attaché, Dr SLM Madela, and a member of the SANDF officers training in Cuba, Col. L Mafune. Under the theme of “Consolidating our Democratic Gains”, Minister De Lille delivered a key-note address highlighting the historical role played by Cuba in South Africa’s struggle for freedom as well as developments in the infrastructure sector in South Africa. The evening concluded with the unveiling by Ambassador Phosa and Minister De Lille of Venda and Xhosa traditional outfits donated by the Embassy and Minister De Lille to the Casa de Africa in order to strengthen the South African presence in the museum’s displays.



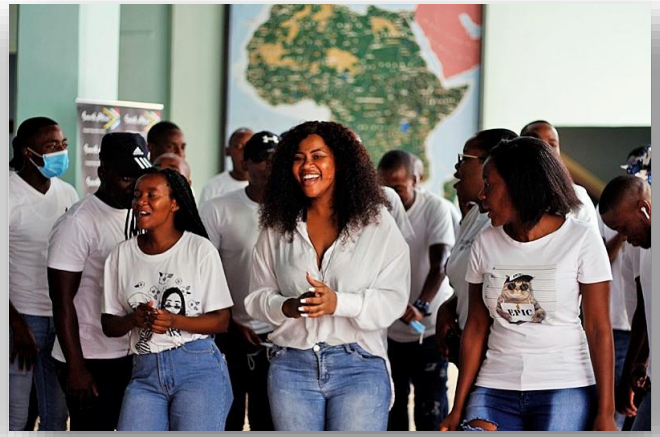
Dr SLM Madela, South African Embassy Health Attaché



Ambassador Phosa, Alberto Granado Duque, Director of Casa de Africa Museum and Dr Anna Morales



Ambassador Phosa, Minister De Lille and Ms Inaury Portuando, Senior Specialist at the Casa de Africa Museum



SANDF Students



Our road to democracy required untold sacrifices – many people paid the ultimate price for us to be free.

“It is not done until it is completely done.” – Minister Mondli Gungubele.

South Africa's Daan du Toit, awarded Belgian and French honours

Compiled using extracts from the speech of 21 April 2022 of Ambassadors D. Vanderhasselt and A. Lechevallier.”



On 21 April 2022, Daan du Toit, Deputy Director-General (DDG): International Cooperation and Resources (ICR) in the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI), was conferred the Belgian award of Officer of the Order of the Crown and the French award of *Chevalier dans l'Ordre national du mérite* by Didier Vanderhasselt, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium, and Aurélien Lechevallier, Ambassador of France to South Africa.

An advocate of science diplomacy, driven by the will to strengthen international cooperation to address global issues, such as climate change and public health. Du Toit was bestowed the awards for his tremendous contribution to South African diplomacy and has placed it on the scientific world stage.

Daan du Toit was born in Pretoria, where he grew up, advanced his tertiary education and career. In 1994, he joined the Department of Foreign Affairs as an Assistant Foreign Service

Officer and in 1997 was deployed to Brussels as Third Secretary, at the South African Diplomatic Mission to the European Union where Du Toit was given oversight of the coordination of South Africa's science and technology cooperation with the European Union (EU). It was in Brussels that Du Toit took a shift towards international scientific cooperation. Both ambassadors celebrated Du Toit during the ceremony.

In his remarks, Ambassador Vanderhasselt said, “We can say without any doubt that Brussels had an important significance in your life. We see of course many similarities with the career path you chose before, diplomacy. In fact you remained a true diplomat with all the characteristics and qualities it requires. Brussels was of quite importance on the personal level too.”.

Upon his return to South Africa in 2000, Du Toit launched, among others, a campaign to assist and guide South African diplomacy in promoting the country's science and technology abroad. As Deputy Director for Multilateral Cooperation in the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, he coordinated science cooperation with the EU, while also building projects with the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Ambassador Lechevallier highlighted the fact that Du Toit's “efforts ensured the strengthening of South Africa's relations with multinational organisations such as the Commonwealth Science Council and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States”.

“You remained a true diplomat with all the characteristics and qualities”

In 2006, Du Toit was once again in Brussels, where he contributed greatly to South Africa's bid to host the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) radio telescope, adding impacting significantly to its promotional efforts.

Ambassador Lechevallier further listed Du Toit's achievements in his work in South Africa's science diplomacy, which include, among others:

- The establishment of the European Science and Technology Advancement Programme in South Africa.
- The creation and coordination of the first network of national contact points dedicated to South Africa for the EU Research Framework Programmes.
- The establishment of the African Secretariat of the European Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership in South Africa.
- The development of scientific and innovation partnerships between France and South Africa.

- Support to mobilise South African funding for partnership research programmes of the French National Centre for Scientific Research and the French Research Institute for Development.
- Fostering a Memorandum of Understanding on scientific cooperation with the Belgian Federal Government.
- The launch of innovative trilateral cooperation in scientific research between South Africa, Belgium and China.
- Cooperation between the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and, the Flemish Institute for Technological Research. New and exciting common research projects will be set up: battery storage, green hydrogen, marine science, and so much more.

Daan du Toit is a loyal, humble, hard-working and passionate civil servant. We congratulate you on your wonderful achievements.

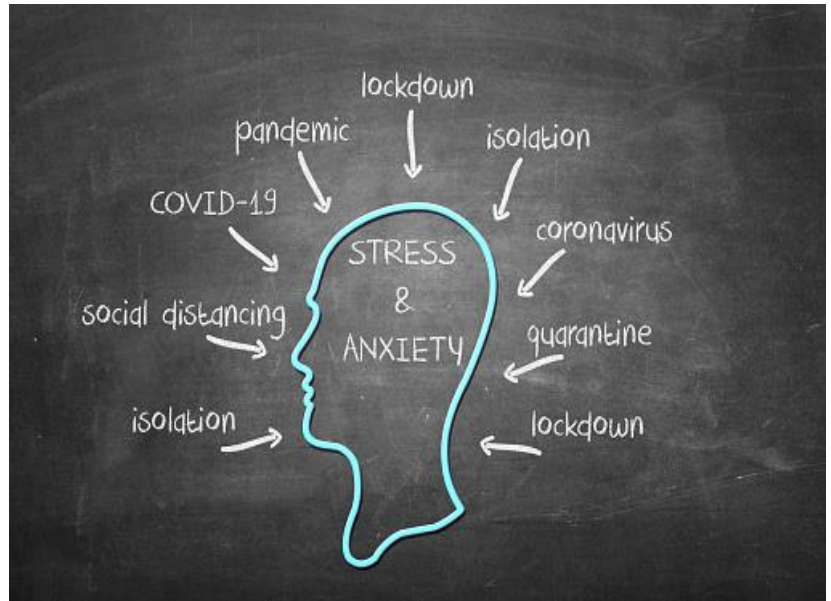


From left to right: Ambassador Didier Vanderhasselt, Ambassador Aurélien Lechevallier and Mr Daan du Toit



Ambassador Didier Vanderhasselt, addresses the guests, while Mr Daan du Toit stands next to him

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 has 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 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

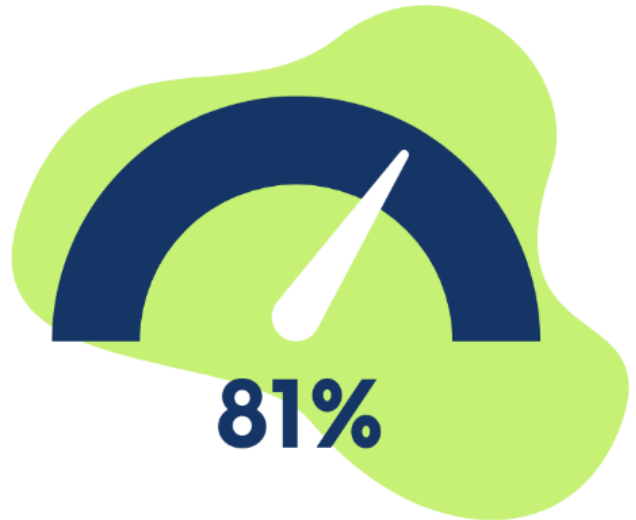
Focus on the positive and things for which you are grateful.

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EXPENSE MANAGEMENT

Project Status

We are making very good progress on the rollout of the Expense Management System.



81%

User Acceptance Testing

The User Acceptance Testing (UAT) will be kicking off soon with the relevant stakeholders.



Loading...

Refresher Training

Once the UAT is completed, refresher training will be presented to all users. The purpose of this training is to ensure that everyone is ready to work on the new system with the DIRCO related data.

