

# the diplomat

it's your voice

Internal Newsletter of the

and Cooperation

February 2010



**INSIDE**



## **INTERNATIONAL Ubuntu-ness** *Having dinner with the Minister*



international relations  
& cooperation

Department:  
International Relations and Cooperation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**the dirco**  
 The Department of International  
 Relations and Cooperation  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

18 MARCH 2010

**DIRCO  
 CAREER  
 EXHIBITION**



**OR TAMBO BUILDING**  
 460 Soutpansberg Road  
 Rietondale  
 PRETORIA



**international relations  
 & cooperation**

Department:  
 International Relations and Cooperation  
 REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**EDITOR'S NOTE**

Welcome to another edition of *the diplomat*. The month of February was another high-activity month for government, with the President's State of the Nation Address, his participation at the AU Summit and the annual Minister's dinner in Cape Town hosted in honour of the diplomatic corps. Let us familiarise ourselves with the subject matter of these addresses to ensure that we put all our efforts towards the achievement of the dirco objectives at home and abroad.

In this edition we bring you the following: President Jacob Zuma at the AU Summit, the annual Minister's dinner in honour of the diplomatic corps, profile of Nelson Mandela Bay as the 2010 host city and many more...

Enjoy.

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**Editor-in-Chief:**  
 Saul Molobi

**Editor:**  
 Paseka Mokhethea

**Compilation, Sub-Editing & Proofreading:**  
 Elion Von Wielligh & Siphokazi Mgudlwa

**Design and Layout:** Zimele Ngxongo, Shaune van Wyk, Pumeza Albert & Muzi Msimanga

**Pictures:**  
 Jacoline Prinsloo & Unathi Ngamntwini

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The deadline for contributions is 12 March 2010. Contributions may be sent to cbe000 or mokhetheap@foreign.gov.za

All enquiries: Paseka Mokhethea @ Tel: (012) 351-1569

**INSIDE**

**Articles**

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

- 4 AU endorses SA's candidature in the UNSC
- 6 International ubuntu-ness: Minister's dinner

6



4

**DEPARTMENTAL ISSUES**

- 10 Profile: Operations Centre
- 11 Sporting Council Awards
- 12 Profiles new officials
- 17 ICT tips
- Batho pele: Portuguese

10



**YOUR HEALTH**

- 4 GEMS: the value of Sapphire
- 6 Beat cancer

**2010 FIFA WORLD CUP**

- 4 Nelson Mandela Bay: Host city profile

**MISSION ACTIVITIES**

- 18 Q & A with Ambassador Tony Leon
- 19 Tel Aviv & Athens 2010 World Cup activities



14



# A SEAT at the UN SECURITY COUNCIL

The African Union Summit endorses South Africa's candidature for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council for the period 2011-2012

**T**he 14th Ordinary Session of the African Union held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 31 January to 2 February 2010,

endorsed South Africa's candidature for the non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council for the period 2011-2012.

South Africa's candidature for 2011-2012 will be guided by its commitment to strengthening the multilateral system and its support for a broader multilateral

approach to questions of international peace and security. Membership of the Security Council will present an opportunity to promote the African Agenda and to contribute to achieving peace and stability in the continent and in all regions of the world. In putting forward its candidature South Africa also recognises the necessity and importance of continuing

to work together with all the members of the African Union and United Nations in pursuit of effective global governance, multilateralism and the reform of the United Nations system, including the reform of the Security Council in order to make it more transparent and accountable to enhance its legitimacy, representivity and effectiveness.

The election for this African seat will be held during the 65th session of the United Nations General Assembly in October 2010. If elected this would be South Africa's second term as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. South Africa served its first ever term of the UNSC in 2007 and

2008. During that period, membership of the Security Council was seen as an opportunity to promote the African Renaissance, the African agenda and South Africa's national interests, whilst advancing the maintenance of international peace and security globally. The country also regarded the Security Council as a platform to help promote multilateralism and respect for international law as the most appropriate means of achieving global political and economic stability and security.

South Africa brought to the Security Council a strong reputation and track record as an 'agent of change' after its chairing of the Non-Aligned Movement, Commonwealth, African Union and G77 & China. South Africa had also contributed towards norm-

setting in the multilateral arena by hosting major conferences, such as the World Conference Against Racism and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. South Africa was also active in the subsidiary bodies of the Security Council such as the Rwanda Sanctions Committee. The country will continue to contribute to the deepening of the relationship and cooperation between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union – as this was the country's main theme during its last tenure.

South Africa's nomination to serve once again in the UNSC follows close on the heels of the AU Summit electing the country to serve in the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) for a second term. ■



President Zuma visits the exhibition stand promoting 2010 FIFA World Cup



President Jacob Zuma and Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane networking during the AU Summit



President Jacob Zuma and Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane attending proceedings during the AU summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



# INTERNATIONAL *Ubuntu-ness*

Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane hosted the annual Minister's Dinner at Vergelegen Wine Estate in honour of the Diplomatic Corps

By: Somkgele Mnguni







From left to right: Guests arriving at Vergelegen Wine Estate for the Minister's dinner.



Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane addressing guests

**V**ergelegen Wine Estate in Cape Town on 13 February 2010 was the place to be as Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Cabinet, Business, Academics, Civil Society and the Department of International relations and Cooperation (the dirco) Senior Managers descended on the beautiful and magnificent wine estate to attend the Minister's Dinner. The dinner is hosted annually and gives the Minister an opportunity to thank and acknowledge the Diplomatic Corps for their diplomatic partnership and work within South Africa.

The event takes place after the Opening of Parliament and affords the invited guests an opportunity to reflect on



the State of the Nation Address delivered during the Opening of Parliament. The dirco has over the years cemented relations with Anglo American who own the Vergelegen Wine Estate. The event is hosted every year at Vergelegen as the venue provides an appropriate atmosphere for the Minister to host the dirco's stakeholders.

In anticipation of the upcoming first ever 2010 FIFA World Cup in Africa this year's theme was centred around the 2010 World Cup and the set up and décor for the event was soccer themed as tables were named after 2010 soccer stadiums, Soccer Ambassadors and sports personalities.

This year the event was also graced by sporting personalities who have played a role in uniting people and countries through their sporting activities. The

sporting theme for the event was further complemented by the promotion and projection of brand dirco. The new dirco Head Office Building is named after OR Tambo and the set up at Vergelegen Wine Estate was also modelled around popularising the building and its name. This was through visual portrayals of OR Tambo as well as his international relations work.

In her key note address the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane emphasised the importance of the year 2010 for South Africa as we will be hosting the first soccer World Cup in Africa.

She also acknowledged the presence of the Diplomatic Corps and thank them for their continued diplomatic work in the country towards harnessing international relations. The tragedy that took place on

the Caribbean Island of Haiti was also mentioned by the Minister who reiterated South Africa's commitment to ensure the rebuilding of Haiti in order to help the citizens of that country.

The Minister further appealed to the international community to assist through humanitarian efforts in rebuilding Haiti.

The highlight of this year's dinner was the entertainment as the Cape Town Youth Ensemble played soothing music as guests were entering through the red carpet during the serving of pre-dinner drinks. It was later dancing all the way as Jonas Gwangwa performed as the main artist.

As per norm the SABC was the media partner as the event was captured on Motswako women's programme. This year's sponsors included Anglo American, BMW, MTN, Sasol and Brandhouse. ■



Jonas Gwangwa entertaining the guests



Top right: The Minister with the chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on International Relations, Mr Thulas Nxesi

Top centre: Minister sharing a joke with Ms Natalie du Toit

Right: Deputy Minister Sue van der Merwe socialising with guests





# PROFILE:

## Operations Centre



**I**n the early 1980s, the Department of Foreign Affairs set up the first prototype Operations (Ops) Room, which functioned on a part-time basis for specific purposes or events.

In 1986, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Pik Botha requested that the Ops Room be developed into a full-time structure so that it had the ability to support the work of the Minister, Deputy Minister and top management. Its function was to share information on all the activities and approaches of missions with Head Office so that the department could pursue a coordinated approach to foreign service work. A skeleton staff managed this Ops Room and it was staffed on a voluntary rotational basis by desk officials. In 1992 the Director-General of the time, Mr Rusty Evans reorganised the structure, setting up the Directorate Operational Services, and this had two sub-directorates under it: the Operations Centre and South Africa Desk.

The Operations Centre evolved into a 24-hour information and early warning centre. It provided the President, Deputy President, Minister, Deputy Minister, Department and Government with logistical support. The centre would gather information by ticker-tape from news wires that had to be read and from all kinds of media; this information would be relayed to principals. Officials summarised the Mission reports on their activities and on developments in their countries of accreditation. Once summarised the Mission reports were circulated to all Missions and the desks at Head Office. The daily news information provided by the Ops Room was of an early warning nature, and would alert top management as to the developing and changing nature of world events. This information afforded top management both a decision-making ability and a policy formulation capability.

The SA desk was responsible for sending



Above, from left to right: Operations Centre staff: Tebogo Tsekelele, Janette Joubert, Mahendra Shunmoogam, Regina Mofokeng, Elion von Wielligh, Mongezi Zithutha, Tshepiso Matlala, Gordon Ngoasheng and Tshireletso Nkaletse

internal news from the local media in South Africa, as well as general background information, mainly on government activities, to the Missions. The main product, then as now, was the Daily News Bulletin (DNB). The news sent to our Missions abroad was selected for suitability before it was sent. This information would be needed by the Missions in order for them to inform their countries of accreditation of the daily events occurring inside South Africa.

In 2000 the Operations Centre and the SA Desk were integrated into one, now generally known as the Ops Centre. The reason for the merger of the two functions was that more updated equipment had been obtained and it meant that there were shorter report-compiling times. More information was available from the internet, which broadened the sources of news, which could be copied directly into reports, instead of everything being laboriously re-typed.

Currently, the Ops Centre continues to function according to the original design specification, incorporating into its functions in the central distribution point (nerve centre) for internal communications – especially from Head Office staff. It also serves as the first point of contact for distressed citizens aboard, leading to close cooperation with the Consular Division, and helps coordinate official business.

It continues to be staffed on a 24 hour basis, 365 days a year, with the volunteer after hours staff contingency identified by application and selection process from within other Branches

and Business Units of the dirco at Head Office. Updated equipment has improved the monitoring ability of the staff, thus improving the monitoring capabilities with a special emphasis on South Africa's foreign policy. Both domestic and international media continues to be monitored on a 24-hour basis, daily news bulletins are compiled along with regional reports, mission media reports, and special news reports.

### OPS CENTRE STAFF: PERSONAL EXPERIENCES:

#### JANETTE JOUBERT

I joined the then SA Desk in September 1992, when the Codesa and Multi-party talks were just getting under way. My first introduction to "Breaking News", in my very first week, was the 'ting-ting-ting' of the alert bell on the old Sapa mechanical ticker-printer, telling of the "Bisho Massacre" of 6 September 1992, when Mr Kasrils led a crowd of UDF supporters against the Ciskei Defence Force after a rally at the Bisho Stadium. Exciting times followed, monitoring and informing colleagues at Head Office and missions in the Daily News Bulletin of all the development in the talks and steady (and sometimes difficult) progress towards the eventual triumphant outcome in April 1994.

My experience in the Operations Centre has stood me in good stead in an overseas posting, since I was well-informed on SA events and issues, and also how they related to world-wide events. I am sure that the same will apply in a new posting soon.

#### TSHEPISO MATLALA

We are the face of the department, we happen to work with information as it develops at first hand and also it is a privilege for us as the staff to have been visited by the President to see the set up and what we do as we also render services to his office.

#### GORDON NGOASHENG

"I've been working in the Operation Centre for about five years and as result, I have gained a lot of experience in terms of the core functions of the Directorate such as 24hrs early warning service and related communication line support functions, including media liaison work.

The Operations Centre provides a challenging and interesting work environment due to varied facets you eventually get exposed to, for instance, in the event of a natural disaster like earthquake or tsunami overseas we become first point of call connecting South African citizens at home with their relatives abroad. We are the 'nerve centre' of the Department, especially afterhours, the Operations Centre becomes the main communication channel that relays information between colleagues across all time zones. ■

Contributed by: Operations Centre staff-Janette Joubert, Tshepiso Matlala, Gordon Ngoasheng & Mahendra Shunmoogam

## The dirco Sporting Council successfully hosted the Sporting Awards

By: Ambassador D. van Tonder



Front row: The new elected members of the Sports Council for 2010/2011

**T**he Sports Council of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (the dirco) held a successful Annual

General Meeting (AGM) followed by an inspirational Sports Council Awards Ceremony at the Multi Purpose Centre (MPC) of the new dirco's Headquarters on Friday, 12 February 2010. The purpose of the gathering was towards the promotion of sport and wellness among dirco officials.

In his "State of the Sports Council" address the outgoing Chair Ntando Maseko reviewed the achievements of the respective sporting codes during 2009 and stressed the importance of increased employee participation in the codes of soccer, netball, tennis, volleyball, golf, athletic and chess especially at the annual Winter Games. It was also pointed out that the Sports Council should strengthen its relationships with the diplomatic community in South Africa and with national and provincial structures as well as civil society.

The new elected members for the Sports Council for 2010/2011 are as follows:

- Chairperson:** Mr Marks Mmutlane
- Deputy Chairperson:** Ms Lesego Ramakgowa
- Secretary –General:** Mr Prince Masilela
- Deputy Secretary–General:** Mr Stanley Montsho
- Treasurer:** Ms Malebo Boshielo
- Public Relations Officer (PRO):** Mr James Mogale
- Deputy PRO:** Ms Mpho Lekalake

#### Additional Member:

Ms Kearata Motsemme

#### EWC Representative:

Ms Nompucuko Ndamase

The Programme Director Ambassador. Van Tonder congratulated the newly elected Executive of the Sports Council and challenged the new members to follow in the words of President Zuma during his State of the Nation address "work harder, smarter and faster" towards achieving the objectives of the Sports Council. The evening was concluded by the presentation of Sports Council Awards to deserving individuals and entities in the categories of Excellence, Leadership and Merit.

#### The Awards for 2009 were allocated as follows:

- Excellence in Sport
- Soccer Team
- Netball Team
- Merit in Sport
- Volleyball Team
- Diplomatic Tennis Association
- Embassy of the German Federal Republic:
- Promotion of Soccer at youth level
- Leadership:
- Aaron Modimeli (first Chairperson of the Sports Council)

#### Former Minister of Foreign Affairs

**Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma:**

- Promotion of South African Sport internationally

#### Director General of DIRCO, Dr Ayanda Ntsaluba:

- Facilitating the establishment of the Sports Council
- In his acceptance speech the incoming chair of the Sports Council, Marks Mmutlane reaffirmed the commitment of the new Executive to serve the principles and objectives of the Constitution of the Sports Council and to work hard in promoting broad participation in Sport among the dirco employees. ■



Officials receiving medals during the Sports Council Awards ceremony



# Nelson Mandela Bay a proud Host City



**N**amed after the much loved world icon, Nelson Mandela Bay, nestled on the south-eastern coastline of South Africa, is a fast-growing, family-orientated destination, sought after for its unique and relaxed African lifestyle.

Nelson Mandela Bay comprises the seaport city of Port Elizabeth, the inland towns of Uitenhage and Despatch, and, the villages of Colchester and Cannonville on the Sundays River.

Excellent road networks, linked to the centrally situated Port Elizabeth Airport, literally a couple of minutes' drive from the beach and city centre, make Nelson

Mandela Bay the Fifteen Minute City easy to access and get around. Port

Elizabeth boasts the highest per capita ratio of restaurants in South Africa!

## ON GOAL FOR 2010!

Ready and eagerly waiting to warmly welcome the thousands of 2010 visitors expected to grace it's shores, the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality's preparations are well on goal for the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ South Africa.

"The 2010 FIFA World Cup™ will provide an excellent opportunity for Nelson Mandela Bay to showcase itself to the world. All our programs and arrangements for the competition are on schedule and we are confident that we will be ready to host a successful event," says Nelson Mandela Bay Executive Mayor Zanoxolo Wayile.

A proud achievement was that Nelson Mandela Bay was the first of South Africa's nine Host Cities to complete its world class multi-purpose stadium. Uniquely nestled between a lake

and the warm waters of the Indian Ocean, the Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium will host eight games, including a quarter final and the 3rd/4th Place Playoff.

According to Nelson Mandela Bay 2010 Executive Director, Errol Heynes, the Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium and associated transport infrastructure which has seen the widening and upgrading of roads and the current bus and taxi operations combining (as part of a longer term project) to improve service delivery to the community has constituted one of the biggest single investments in the city.

Looking at its 2010 visitor strategy, Heynes said the municipality had established a special Task Team to ensure the city would be ready and well prepared.

Accommodation statistics released by Nelson Mande Bay Tourism (NMBT)

show that the city and surrounding towns within a 150km radius or one hour flight will have enough beds to accommodate its visitors. NMBT CEO Fezikile Tshiwula said the overall figure of more than 32 000 beds was divided into 393 facilities and 15 874 beds in Nelson Mandela Bay, 428 facilities and 9 435 beds within a 150km radius and 147 facilities and 7 047 beds within a one hour flight.

The historic St George's Cricket Grounds, situated in a beautiful urban park will be home to FIFA's Fan Fest. The park will allow visitors and locals not attending all games to meet in a safe, central surrounds and enjoy live broadcasts with friends and family.

"Big screens and hi-tech sound equipment will guarantee optimal viewing. Every football match will be aired live. There will

also be live musical performances and interactive activities for the whole family," said Heynes.

Nelson Mandela Bay was also the first of the nine host cities in South Africa to complete its comprehensive three-year 2010 Communication and Marketing Strategy and Plan, in line with FIFA's requirements. The municipality's aim was not to change the city's already successful marketing strategy but to build on it, using the World Cup as a vehicle to enhance its marketing profile.

The strategy has seen the development of electronic information systems, a website, information kiosks, a Host City guide booklet (detailing accommodation, transport, food, safety and security), an events calendar and more which will ensure tourist information is accessible to visitors to

the city. NMBM has also completed a comprehensive draft version of the Safety and Security Master Plan for the 2010 FIFA World Cup™. NMBM's ultimate goal is to deliver a FIFA World Cup™ of the highest world standards in a safe and secure environment.

"Our city's residents will also benefit from the enormous social and economic opportunities that the competition will bring before, during and after the event.

These benefits will of course be directly proportionate to the contributions and efforts that we all put into hosting it successfully," said Heynes.

The teams which will be coming to Nelson Mandela Bay drawn in December 2009 at the Final Draw in Cape Town are:



Date	Time				
12 June	13:30		Korea Republic		Greece
15 June	16:00		Côte d'Ivoire		Portugal
18 June	13:30		Germany		Serbia
21 June	16:00		Chile		Switzerland
23 June	16:00		Slovenia		England



# The value of Sapphire

If you speak to your family, friends and healthcare professionals they will strongly recommend that you join GEMS because of the tangible value for money and excellent medical coverage that the Scheme will bring to your family.

However, choosing to join a medical scheme is no small decision and therefore deserves a great deal of consideration and careful thought.

Before making such a big decision about your life and how best you can protect it, it is wise to consider the options and weigh up the facts. It is for this reason that the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) wants to tell you about its most affordable and therefore accessible option, Sapphire.

Sapphire is ideal for government employees who are operating on a slightly stricter budget but who are nevertheless requiring "all the essentials and more". This includes emergency medical care for that time when you might have a medical emergency or accident, hospital cover for the operation that you may unexpectedly need and treatment for chronic diseases

such as cancer, diabetes or HIV illnesses that are affecting the lives of more and more people every day. While it can be unpleasant to consider the possibility of such occurrences, it is foolish not to prepare oneself.

Being covered for emergencies and serious illnesses is not the only important and useful aspect of having a medical scheme. There comes a time in everyone's life when a visit to the doctor, prescription medication or a consultation with the dentist becomes necessary.

Many will be pleased to know that by purchasing healthcare cover you can not only minimise your own personal risks but also those of your family members by adding them as beneficiaries to your medical scheme. The option to do this is one of the most valuable aspects of joining a scheme and is available for Sapphire option members at highly competitive rates.

While some people expect this kind of service from their medical scheme, most will be overjoyed to hear that even though Sapphire is such an affordable option it also offers some helpful benefits that may not be expected such as maternity sup-

port and optical cover, as well as cover for over-the-counter medicines. This year a number of attractive new benefits were again added to the Sapphire option.

The highlights for Sapphire members is that they are now offered a private hospital maternity benefit that includes pathology and radiology. In addition, new mental health benefits including treatment by psychologists were introduced on the Sapphire and Beryl options while unlimited primary healthcare benefits were also added to these network options.

It is also usual that people require specialist attention, be it a visit to the gynaecologist or dermatologist, and Sapphire can cover you for medical services like this as well.

In short, investing in an affordable and accessible option such as Sapphire can reap rewards that will not only prove to be useful, but may also be life-saving for you and your family.

For more information on this and other options please call 0860 00 4367 or visit the website at [www.gems.gov.za](http://www.gems.gov.za). Make that call today and find out more about the Sapphire option from GEMS. ■

## ICT Tips

### OUTLOOK

Save the e-mail that you will need for future use in your folder instead of keeping it in your Mailbox.

### WORD 2007

What happened to the File menu? Where do I start in Word 2007?



## BATHO PELE 2010 STYLE

**Hi**  
Good morning  
Good afternoon  
Good evening  
Good night  
Good bye  
Cheers

Olá / oi  
Bom dia  
Boa tarde  
Boa noite  
Boa noite  
Adeus / Até logo  
Tchau

### Welcome to South Africa:

Welcoming a man:  
Bem-vindo à África do Sul  
Welcoming a woman:  
Bem-vinda à África do Sul  
When addressing more than one man/group of males and females:  
Bem-vindos à África do Sul  
When addressing more than one woman:  
Bem-vindas à África do Sul

### Enjoy your stay in South Africa:

When addressing one person, irrespective of gender:  
Desfrute da sua visita à África do Sul  
When addressing more than one person:  
Desfrutem da vossa visita à África do Sul

### May your team win:

When addressing one person:  
Espero que a sua equipa ganhe  
When addressing more than one person:  
Espero que a vossa equipa ganhe

### Good luck:

Boa sorte  
What was the score?  
Qual foi o resultado?  
How are you?  
Como está?  
My name is .....  
O meu nome é.... / Chamo-me

As a way of raising awareness of 2010 and the importance of making foreign visitors feel at home when they come to visit South Africa, *the diplomat* will run a series of phrases in different international languages for us to charm those visitors in returning to one of the friendliest countries on the globe.  
Our focus this month is on *Portuguese*.

### I am South African:

Male:  
Sou Sul-Africano  
Female:  
Sou Sul-Africana

### I am a diplomat:

Sou Diplomata

### Would you like to taste a South African wine?

When addressing one person:  
Gostaria de provar um vinho Sul-Africano? /  
Quer provar um vinho Sul-Africano?

When addressing more than one person:  
Gostariam de provar um vinho Sul-Africano? /  
Querem provar um vinho Sul-Africano?

### You must visit one of our game reserves before you go back 'home':

When addressing one person:  
Deve visitar uma das nossas reservas de animais antes de voltar para "casa"

When addressing more than one person:  
Devem visitar uma das nossas reservas de animais antes de voltarem para "casa"

Please  
Thank you  
Zero  
One  
Two  
Three  
Four  
Five  
Six  
Seven  
Eight  
Nine  
Ten

Por favor  
Obrigado  
Zero  
Um  
Dois  
Três  
Quatro  
Cinco  
Seis  
Sete  
Oito  
Nove  
Dez

## Choose life, beat cancer



This month we saw the acknowledgement of the disease cancer and the important positive and negative issues surrounding it on World Cancer Day, 4 February. Along with other important topics, this day gives recognition to how far we have come in terms of our knowledge of the disease, our awareness of it and ways in which we can beat it.

The world has suffered the loss of many truly great people to this terrible illness; many of them have been unsung South African heroes, right on our doorsteps. But global cancer awareness which has grown and continues to do so - has led to some wonderful achievements in the fight against cancer, making it far more possible to come to the aid of cancer victims.

As the second largest medical scheme in South Africa, the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) is proud to be able to contribute something positive towards this worldwide scourge that affects millions of

people across the globe by providing treatment, support and care to GEMS members with cancer.

The GEMS Oncology Disease Management Programme was created to offer members suffering from cancer with not only the clinical but also emotional support that they need to battle the disease and beat it. A partnership with the South African Oncology Consortium (SAOC) means that treatment is provided in the most cost-effective way possible.

The programme allows all costs associated with the disease such as therapy, the oncologist's consultations, related pathology and general radiology to be covered by the oncology benefit rather than the member's day-to-day benefit. The Oncology benefit also remains active for 12 months after the completion of treatment.

While there are many different types of cancer, there are some common symptoms including lumps that develop on the body, loss

of appetite and weight-loss, bone pain and severe internal discomfort. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms make an appointment to see your doctor immediately.

Prevention of cancer is always preferable to treatment but it is sadly not always possible. The many known and unknown causes of cancer make everyone vulnerable to the illness. Those who find themselves suffering from the disease, whatever the cause, will need a strong support system that can help them to make it through the difficult time and beat cancer.

GEMS is extremely proud to be able to play such an integral role in this system and encourages all government employees to choose life and join GEMS.

For more information about this programme or to register with GEMS please call 0860 00 4367 or visit the website at [www.gems.gov.za](http://www.gems.gov.za)







with Ambassador Tony Leon, Buenos Aires, Argentina



Left to right: Ambassador Leon with the staff & Mr. Joost van der Westhuizen, during the Invictus avant-premiere. Right: Ambassador Leon greeting resident Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner when he visited the State House to present his credentials

**Q** You are stationed in the SA Embassy in Argentina, tell us more about life in the city, its people, the food, and the culture?

**A** I have been here for nearly five months and am still acclimatising. At first, one suffers a sense of culture shock. Argentina is qualitatively different from most other places geographically and politically it is very much part of Latin America, yet it is also the most European country on this continent. The city life and the country's psyche is therefore very heavily influenced by the immigrant experience and the Spanish, and especially Italian provenance of most Portenos (as residents of Buenos Aires are called) is much in evidence. The city is a fairly hectic place, home to over 10 million people, including outer suburbs; it teems with traffic and people. The food is an interesting amalgam of local and international flavours. But don't plan to be a vegetarian here! Argentina produces arguably the world's best beef, and on every corner there is a "parrilla" or grill house, and the steaks are truly delicious and huge. The people are cosmopolitan and warm, there is a fair amount of street crime and there must be 30-plus theatres, so it's a cultural Mecca as well.

**Q** Describe a few of the major tourist attractions in and around the city and their significance?

**A** Buenos Aires is a tourist's delight and you could easily spend a week here without being bored. My favourite places to visit include: San Telmo-an essential place to see on a Sunday where there are countless markets and antique (from the real things to junk bric-a-brac) wares to purchase. Other great areas for shopping are Calle Florida, a pedestrian walkway around the corner from the Embassy, crammed with discount stores selling impressive leather goods (another Argentine specialty) and clothes. More up-market shopping is to be found in the nearby suburb of Recoleta and Barrio Norte. Incidentally, Recoleta also houses the famous cemetery, which contains among other interesting mausoleums, the vault containing the last remains of Evita Peron. Her long historic shadow looms over other areas of note, especially the Casa Rosado, or government house, where her and her husband President Juan Domingo Peron spoke to the nation from the famous balcony, which can be visited together with a tour of the fasci-

nating government museum. Other areas to visit include the old working class area of La Boca, and the world-famous Boca Junior football stadium (well worth seeing in 2010 of all years is the soccer museum there; the Palza de Mayo, which contains many historic sites and the oldest coffee shop, Café Tortino, which first opened its doors 130 years ago and still serves the best cappuccino in the city. And, of course, no visit to this city is complete without an evening at a Tango show.

**Q** What were the biggest adjustments you had to overcome to live in Argentina?

**A** I'm still overcoming them! I think language is the biggest adjustment. This is an intensely Spanish speaking city and country. While most of the elite in government and business speak English, people on the street do not. So trying to learn a new language at the age of 53 is certainly a challenge. Another adjustment is the late hour of entertainment.

If you arrive at a restaurant for dinner at 8 pm, chances are that you, and a few other foreigners, will be the only ones there! Argentine dinner commences, earliest at 9 pm. But, of course, because of the time difference (South Africa is five hours ahead of Argentina) we need to be at the Embassy early in the morning. So there is a big time adjustment factor, and very late nights.

**Q** What are the barriers/hurdles that make day to day living as a foreigner difficult?

**A** I have spelt out the language problem, above. Another big challenge here is the traffic. Fortunately, our Official Residence is quite close to the Embassy, but even then the many strikes and pickets which are part and parcel of the open democracy here can paralyse the city and it can take an hour to travel 5 kms on a really bad day. Some of our staff with children attending the international school, live in the outer northern suburbs and the commute for them is even worse.

The best thing about life here, however, is the openness and warmth of Argentines. There is a genuine affection for foreigners-and South Africa, especially because of 2010 World Cup and the huge impact which the movie INVICTUS is having on this country, are held in very high regard.

**Q** What do you miss most about South Africa?

**A** Obviously the family, friends and our dogs (although the latter, two dachshunds are about to arrive). I also miss the familiarity and the ease of doing things. Try to set-up a voice mail message or do an ATM transaction in Spanish, and you will see what I mean! There are also cultural differences which have to be learnt-some are quite interesting (e.g. men kiss each as a matter of routine, and you are expected to kiss women on meeting them for the first time), and others (especially relating to time) can be irritating! When you are invited to an event at say 7 pm that is actually the time you should leave home; it probably will not get underway for another hour and a half! I miss, Highveld summer storms, the view of Table Mountain from the bedroom of my home and being able to watch plays in English! Strangely, I don't miss being well known in South Africa, and rather enjoy the anonymity of not being known by people in the supermarket!

**Q** What do you do when you get homesick?

**A** Put on a CD by the Soweto String Quartet! Fortunately, our Embassy is very busy, and we have regular visits and delegations from South Africa. In January we put on a fantastic premier of the movie INVICTUS, and we flew in Joost van der Westhuizen for the event so that was really a South African experience. Our transferred officials are all close to each other and we often do things as a team and we maintain close links with the SA businesses here, especially Standard Bank. These things tend to keep homesickness at bay. But I think the greatest cure to being homesick is that wondrous telephonic invention Skype this allows us, at low cost, to chat to and even see, friends and family back home.

**Q** What characteristic or attribute of the Argentines do you think we can learn from?

**A** I would have to put resilience at the top of the list. This country has been through a series of historical, political, and more recently, financial upheavals. And yet despite a tumultuous background, sectors of this country are world-class and world-beating, for example agriculture. The people, while passionate and intense, also love life and put that on display. ■



# Ke Nako!

**T**he South African Embassy in Tel Aviv, Israel, participated in the annual International Mediterranean Tourism Market Exhibition held in Tel Aviv Exhibition Centre from 09-10 February 2010. The Mission also utilised the exhibition to highlight South Africa's readiness to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The stand attracted many visitors who in addition to collecting tourism publications also enjoyed Amarula, Savannah and Biltong. ■



Ambassador Coovadia( Far left) Mrs Coovadia (Fourth from right) and staff

SA Embassy in Greece hosted a reception to congratulate the Serbian national team on qualifying for the 2010 FIFA World Cup



Above: Mission staff: Sophia Gogorossi, Ms Irene Stamatiou, Ms Onicca Moetle, Mr Antonis Mavrides, ambassador MD Marasha and Mr Johan Oberholzer. Left: Serbian Minister of Sport and Youth, Mts Snezana Markovic and Ambassador MD Marasha



**O**n 2 February 2010 the South African Embassy in Greece hosted a reception in Belgrade, Serbia to celebrate and congratulate the Serbian national soccer team on qualifying for the FIFA 2010 World Cup in South Africa. The Mission in Athens is also non-residentially accredited to Belgrade.

The event was very well attended and included, among others, the Serbian Minister of Sports and Youth, Mrs Snezana Markovic, the President of the Soccer Federation of Serbia, Mr Tomislav Karadzic, the Vice President of the Soccer Federation Mr Dragan Dorotevic and its General Secretary Mr Zoran Lakovic. Several players from Serbian national team, veteran players, referees, representatives from

the Serbian Foreign Ministry, the Director of the Serbian Chamber of Commerce and members of the media.

Ambassador MD Marasha gave an interview on the upcoming FIFA 2010 World Cup to the Serbian Broadcast Corporation. She stressed that this was Africa's World Cup and that the African Continent was looking forward to receiving and welcoming sports enthusiasts from all over the world in the spirit of Ubuntu.

The whole project was well attended and a great success and making the Serbians feel proud and honoured by our support and our presence in Serbia to celebrate their first participation in history to such an important international sports event. ■



# Profiles of new officials



**NAME & SURNAME:** Mahendra Shunmoogam  
**BRANCH, DIRECTORATE & POSITION:** Public Diplomacy: Ops. Centre: Deputy Director  
**CAREER INFORMATION/QUALIFICATIONS & WHERE WERE YOU WORKING PRIOR JOINING THE DIRCO?**

Prior to joining the dirco, I served as the media relations officer for the Western Cape Provincial Parliament, worked in the USA (Washington, DC) as senior programme associate for the National Academy of Sciences' Board on Science, Technology and Economic Policy (STEP), the WC Provincial Government and the Treatment Action Campaign. I attained a Bachelor's Degree in Social Sciences, majoring in Political Science and Governance from the University of Cape Town. I have also received qualifications from the USA's National Academy of Sciences in research, analysis, and writing and currently reading towards an LLB at the University of South Africa.

**WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO WORK FOR THE DIRCO?**  
To positively contribute to South Africa's development and be a component of the possibility that is South Africa, especially in a changing world, where better to accomplish this than at dirco?

**NOW THAT YOU ARE HERE, WHAT ARE YOUR FIRST IMPRESSIONS? ARE THEY IN LINE WITH WHAT YOU ENVISAGED WHEN YOU JOINED?**

Of course the OR Tambo building takes your breath away. It is a very impressive building and I feel thrilled to call this place my place of work. Complementing the physical beauty of the dirco's head office is the human capital that occupies the building, it's great to be surrounded by colleagues who are filled with passion for our country, eager to see a positive change and dutifully committed to our success. I feel privilege to be a part of the dirco family.

**WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?**  
To make a positive change in South Africa  
**DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE CORRECTLY PLACED? IF YES, WHY AND IF NOT, WHY NOT?**

Yes, I enjoy being in the Public Diplomacy Branch. There is much misconception of the power of "soft-diplomacy". I hope to help alleviate some of this misconception.

**ANY OTHER COMMENTS:**  
"I must work fast, faster than Scheherazade, if I am to end up meaning - yes meaning, meaning - something. I admit it: above all things, I fear absurdity." pg. 4 MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN, Salman Rushdie



**NAME & SURNAME:** Koketso Mafafo  
**BRANCH, DIRECTORATE & POSITION:** Decentralised: Office of the DDG: HR, ASD: Financial Management  
**CAREER INFORMATION/QUALIFICATIONS:** ND Cost and Management Accounting

**WHERE WERE YOU WORKING PRIOR JOINING THE DIRCO?** Department of Water Affairs  
**WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO WORK FOR THE DIRCO?** New opportunities and challenges

**NOW THAT YOU ARE HERE, WHAT ARE YOUR FIRST IMPRESSIONS? ARE THEY IN LINE WITH WHAT YOU ENVISAGED WHEN YOU JOINED?** Yes

**WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?** to complete Doctorate in

Cost and Management Accounting  
**DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE CORRECTLY PLACED? IF YES, WHY AND IF NOT, WHY NOT?** No, I specialise in payroll section and I was placed in Decentralised Unit which deals with budget, I don't have experience in budget but I am glad because it is in line with my studies.

**ANY OTHER COMMENTS:** I recommend that transferred officials from other Departments must get training before they can be placed to Decentralised Units at the dirco e.g. I didn't know what is Decentralised Unit when I started here, I was surprised why I was stationed at HR while I applied for a position at finance. I am the only person who is responsible for Decentralised issues at HR currently, if I never had theoretical experience in budget it would have been a disaster.



**NAME & SURNAME:** Khantse Sekatawa  
**BRANCH, DIRECTORATE & POSITION:** State Protocol, State Visits, ASD  
**CAREER INFORMATION/QUALIFICATIONS:** BA (International Studies) and pursuing a BA (Hons) International Relations

**WHERE WERE YOU WORKING PRIOR JOINING THE DIRCO?** British High Commission  
**WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO WORK FOR THE DIRCO?** Following and pursuing a career in diplomacy  
**NOW THAT YOU ARE HERE, WHAT ARE**

**YOUR FIRST IMPRESSIONS? ARE THEY IN LINE WITH WHAT YOU ENVISAGED WHEN YOU JOINED?** Impressions and expectations have changed.

**WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?** Working abroad - Africa in particular  
**DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE CORRECTLY PLACED? IF YES, WHY AND IF NOT, WHY NOT?** I am currently placed  
**ANY OTHER COMMENTS:** None

**NAME & SURNAME:** Patricia Pheladi Molekoa  
**BRANCH, DIRECTORATE & POSITION:** State Protocol, Decentralised Unit, Assistant Director  
**CAREER INFORMATION/QUALIFICATIONS:** Matric, studying towards an-Admin Degree through UNISA

**WHERE WERE YOU WORKING PRIOR JOINING THE DIRCO?** National Department of Education as a Chief Accounting Clerk (salaries)  
**WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO WORK FOR THE DIRCO?** Availability of a better vacancy and an offer to a different working environment.

**NOW THAT YOU ARE HERE, WHAT ARE YOUR FIRST IMPRESSIONS? ARE THEY IN LINE WITH WHAT YOU ENVISAGED WHEN YOU JOINED?**  
The environment is definitely different but not in line to my expectations

**WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?** To continue with my studies, build myself a secure and solid career, be a role model to my kids and my family that anyone can succeed by hard work

**DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE CORRECTLY PLACED? IF YES, WHY AND IF NOT, WHY NOT?** No, my idea was that I would be placed in the finance (salaries) according to the work experience stated on my C.V. instead I was placed in the decentralised unit where I am expected to work with budget related and supply chain matters

**ANY OTHER COMMENTS:** That people be placed according to their work experience in future, proper training should be offered to new employees if they are going to be placed in a Directorate that is different from their experience



**NAME & SURNAME:** Reginald Kutu  
**BRANCH, DIRECTORATE & POSITION:** Corporate services, Asset and Records management, Chief Library Assistant.  
**CAREER INFORMATION/QUALIFICATIONS:** Presently developing my career in the law stream with University of South Africa (UNISA)

**WHERE WERE YOU WORKING PRIOR JOINING THE DIRCO?** University of South Africa (UNISA main library) as Library Assistant then Junior Branch librarian.  
**WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO WORK FOR THE DIRCO?** The Department gives me an opportunity for growth of more

independence. My goal is to be at the dirco so that I could advance in my career  
**NOW THAT YOU ARE HERE, WHAT ARE YOUR FIRST IMPRESSIONS? ARE THEY IN LINE WITH WHAT YOU ENVISAGED WHEN YOU JOINED?** Yes they are and I can advance in my career and expand my knowledge.

**WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?** I intend to further my interest in the productivity sphere so that I could help the department with my contribution, in this respect, I aspire to an asset to the dirco and develop my abilities within the department and gain relevant experience.  
**DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE CORRECTLY PLACED? IF YES, WHY AND IF NOT, WHY NOT?** Yes with knowledge and experience that I have acquired in library services I feel correctly placed.



**NAME & SURNAME:** Mr Abram Mahlomuza  
**BRANCH, DIRECTORATE & POSITION:** Corporate Services, Asset and Records Management, Chief Library Assistant  
**CAREER INFORMATION/QUALIFICATIONS:**

Currently in developmental phase of my career with UNISA in the IT discipline.  
**WHERE WERE YOU WORKING PRIOR JOINING THE DIRCO?** University of South Africa (UNISA): Assistant Librarian and City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality: Assistant Librarian  
**WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO WORK FOR THE DIRCO?** It is a dynamic Department with a host of opportunities. One can develop innovative skills to the possible extent. With the dirco a static career is inexcusable!

**NOW THAT YOU ARE HERE, WHAT ARE YOUR FIRST IMPRESSIONS? ARE THEY IN LINE WITH WHAT YOU ENVISAGED WHEN YOU JOINED?**

The inviting gardens and building of the dirco definitely reflects the high order of management and the rest of the officials. The organisational structure is very impressive. That's exactly what I expected!

**WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?** To advance in my expertise and assist the Department to adapt to technological trends on an international scale.  
**DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE CORRECTLY PLACED? IF YES, WHY AND IF NOT, WHY NOT?** Definitely! As I aspire to scientific endeavour, these are thrilling times for me as our section is to undergo a tremendous change with regard to the implementation of the new technological system. I'm glad to be the part of the process, so that I could have a meaningful contribution.



**NAME & SURNAME:** Kgomotso Shai  
**BRANCH, DIRECTORATE & POSITION:** HRM, PMDS, ASD;  
**CAREER INFORMATION/QUALIFICATIONS:** B-TECH HRM  
**WHERE WERE YOU WORKING PRIOR JOINING THE DIRCO?** Department of Agriculture  
**WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO WORK FOR THE DIRCO?** I needed explore new horizons and utilise my potentials  
**NOW THAT YOU ARE HERE, WHAT ARE YOUR FIRST IMPRESSIONS? ARE THEY IN LINE WITH WHAT YOU ENVISAGED WHEN YOU JOINED?** This is far beyond what I antici-

pated the dirco has systems in place in terms of learning and growth  
**WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?** To grow in my job  
**DO YOU FEEL YOU ARE CORRECTLY PLACED? IF YES, WHY AND IF NOT, WHY NOT?** Yes, I have all resources to assist me to learn the job as quickly as possible.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

- National Water Week - 2-8 March
- International Women's Day-8 March
- Commonwealth Day - 9 March
- World Kidney Day - 11 March
- World Consumer Rights Day - 15 March
- International Earth Day - 20 March
- World Head Injury Awareness Day - 20 March
- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination - 21 March
- Human Rights Day - 21 March
- World Water Day - 22 March
- World TB Day - 24 March

