

# the diplomat

it's your voice

Internal Newsletter of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation

May 2009



**Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane during her swearing-in as Minister of International Relations and Cooperation**



8



8



10

inside:



**international relations  
& cooperation**

Department:  
International Relations and Cooperation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Dear Colleagues**

**W**elcome to the new edition of the new look Departmental newsletter, *“the diplomat”*. With the changes in the name of our Department, it became essential that even the newsletter reflects these developments.

The new name emphasises what all of us should remember in our daily undertakings, that as an official of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation we are all indeed Diplomats even if we are placed here at Head Office.

This month we bring you the following: profile of our Minister Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Freedom Day celebration report-backs by our Missions, elections 2009 report by our Missions, High Commissioner Mabuza’s top award, tourism fair in Punta Del Este, a view on the world – living in Gaborone, as well as the Zakumi parade through the streets of Brussels.

Until next month, happy reading! ■

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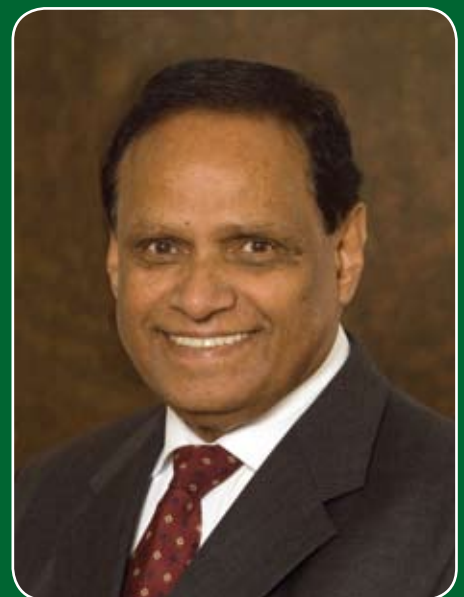
**Ministry: International Relations and Cooperation**



Deputy Minister  
Sue van der Merwe



Minister  
Maite Nkoana-Mashabane



Deputy Minister  
Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim



## PROFILE OF THE MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION MS MAITE NKOANA-MASHABANE

**Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane was born on 30 September 1963 at Ga-Makanye Village in the Limpopo Province. She was married to the late Mr. Norman Mashabane.**

During the 1980s, she was an active member of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and served in the various structures of the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) and the ANC underground structures.

After the unbanning of the ANC in 1990, she served the party in various structures including the ANC Women's League and actively participated in the re-launch of the ANC Women's League in the country.

**1992 – 1995:**

Chairperson of the ANC Women's League in Limpopo and also served as a member of the National Working Committee of the ANC Women's League.

**1994 – 1995:**

Served as a Member of Parliament in the National Assembly.

**1995 – 1999:**

Appointed as High Commissioner to Malaysia, accredited to the Philippines and Brunei.

**1999 – 2004:**

Appointed High Commissioner to India, accredited to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Maldives and Nepal.

**2004 November:**

Appointed MEC for Local Government and Housing in the Limpopo Province and resumed her duties in January of 2005.

**2004 – 2008:**

Deputy Secretary-General of the ANC in the Limpopo Province

**2004 – 2008:**

Member of the National Executive Committee (NEC) and National Working Committee (NWC) of the ANC Women's League

**2007 to date:**

Provincial Convener of the Progressive Women's Movement, Limpopo Chapter

**2007 to date:**

Member of the ANC NEC and NWC

**10 May 2009:**

Appointed Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa

During her term as the MEC for Local Government & Housing in Limpopo the Department won the National Govan Mbeki Housing Award for "Best Provincial Housing Department in South Africa 2008". Ms Nkoana-Mashabane was named newsmaker of the year for 2008 by the Polokwane Chamber of Business. The Department also won 7 other awards including "The department doing the most to accelerate service delivery".



*Deputy President (then President) Kgalema Motlanthe, then Premier Sbusiso Ndebele, then Minister of Arts and Culture Dr Pallo Jordan and Ethekwini Mayor Obed Mlaba at the National Freedom Day celebration in Durban*

## NATIONAL

In celebration of our resilience and maturing democracy, national Freedom Day is annually celebrated on 27 April, commemorating the first democratic elections held in South Africa on 27 April 1994.

The Free State Department of Sport, Art and Culture hosted Freedom Day celebrations on 27 April 2009 in Jacobsdal at the Ratanang Stadium. It has been a tradition that the provincial Freedom Day celebrations would be staged at different districts on rotational basis. This year was the turn of Xhariep District and the identified town was Jacobsdal.

National and provincial government leaders as well as stakeholders from the private sector, religious community and non-governmental organisations, graced the occasion. The following national Cabinet Ministers and Deputy Ministers had been deployed by national Cabinet to be part of the event at Jacobsdal: Mr R M Baloyi, Minister of Public Service and Administration; Mr M M S Mdladlana, Minister of Labour; Ms B P Sonjica, Minister of Minerals and Energy; Dr S Cwele, Minister of Intelligence; Mr M van Schalkwyk, Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism; and Ms S Shabangu, Deputy Minister of Safety and Security.



The 2009 Freedom Day celebration was staged under the following guidelines adopted: celebration of the full diversity of culture in the province; promotion of unity and reconciliation; and elevation of private sector involvement in the celebrations.

The celebration was characterised by various activities that include messages from leaders of government, cultural performances, exhibitions and indigenous games.

In addition to the national celebrations, other provinces hosted their own events and cultural performances. This year's Freedom Day celebrations took place under the

theme: Together celebrating a vibrant democracy and building a better life for all.

## BELGIUM & LUXEMBOURG

The South African Embassy in Brussels celebrated a 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa themed National Freedom Day this year in both Brussels and Luxembourg where the promotion of the event was high on the agenda. The venue was decorated in colourful makarapa hats, vuvuzelas and banners showcasing the stadia where the games are going to be held.



*Dancers from the Tribhangi Dance Theatre performing in Delhi, during National Day Celebration*

The two events celebrating 15 years of freedom and democracy in South Africa were well attended by Ambassadors, officials of the European Commission, ACP, Belgium, Flanders and Luxembourg, members of the Diplomatic Corps, friends of South Africa, as well as South African nationals residing and working in Belgium and Luxembourg. They were all treated to a nice surprise when the 2010 FIFA World Cup Mascot, Zakumi, made an appearance.

Zakumi had been on an open bus tour parade through the streets of Brussels earlier in the day (24 April 2009), together with Embassy staff, South Africans based in Belgium and well-wishers, promoting the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa. He was an instant hit with the guests who all wanted to take pictures with the Mascot. Ambassador Anil Sooklal's speech was also a highlight of the evening, where he spoke on the strong and cordial relations South Africa shares with Belgium, Luxembourg and the European Union. He mentioned that as we continue to take our relations forward we do so with renewed vigour and a deep sense of understanding of the consequences of our endeavours. He took some time to speak about the successful elections held in both the Embassy and South Africa and assured the guests of South Africa's commitment to a

better life for all; at home, in Africa and the world at large under the leadership of the President, Mr. Jacob Zuma.

The second edition of the Embassy's Annual Report entitled 'The MOGOBAGOBA Dialogue' was also available to guests to learn more about the Embassy's activities and its relations with the different institutions in both Belgium and Luxembourg. The guests enjoyed South African fine wine and cuisine, as they toasted 15 years of freedom and democracy to South Africa.

## INDIA

The South African High Commission (SAHC) in Delhi, India, dedicated their 2009 National Day Celebration to the two FIFA tournaments that South Africa is due to host in 2009 and 2010 i.e. the 2009 Confederations Cup and, the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

In an unprecedented move, guests, who had been invited to the event, were asked to come dressed in their countries' national teams, soccer or other sporting codes or any other sport jersey or gear. Mission officials dug deep into their pockets to ensure that they and their families led from the front. They even went as far as asking

friends and relatives in South Africa to buy and send them official 2010 soccer jerseys or T-shirts. Even our invitations were soccer ball-shaped with 2009 and 2010 insignia which reflected the starting dates for both tournaments.

The National Day Celebration was held on Wednesday (29 April) at the Taj Palace Hotel. In keeping with the focus on sport the Mission in Delhi specifically made a special request to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to send the Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Dr. M.S. Gill as the chief guest but, owing to unforeseen circumstances, the celebration was honoured with the presence of the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi Mr. Tajendra Khanna.

On the day itself one could have been forgiven for thinking that it was a FIFA event. Better still, one could think the hotel was a gathering point for the fans that were on their way to a soccer stadium. More than 90% of the guests came clad in their countries' national team colours. Heads of Mission, members of the diplomatic corps, leading business people, academics and journalists were all in their national colours. There were soccer balls on every corner of the hall (even on the lights and ceiling). The melodic Vuvuzela was there. The colourful Makarapa was there. If only FIFA President Sepp Blatter, SAFA Presi-

... Continue from pg 5



High Commissioner Francis Molo, his wife Misiwe and other SAHC personnel and their spouses during National Day Celebration

dent, Molefi Oliphant and LOC's Danny Jordaan and Dr Irvin Khoza were there!!!

Entertainment was left in the capable hands (or should we say drums) of Drum Café who had performed at the 2008 National Day Celebrations in India and were back by overwhelming popular demand. There was also the Tribhangi Dance Theatre, a South African dancing group that is as adept in Zulu traditional dance, gumboots dance as they are in Indian traditional and contemporary dance. In keeping with the day's soccer theme Tribhangi even featured soccer balls in their choreography. At the end of their performance the audience spontaneously gave them a standing ovation.

The rest of the story will be told by the pictures. It is safe to say the Mission will continue to explore creative ways of making sure that people who live in its sphere of operation get a constant reminder about both the 2009 Confederations Cup and the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The aim is to make them take the logical decision – attend these FIFA tournaments hosted by a country that is alive with possibilities. All we can say in isiZulu is: Woza 2009 Confederations Cup, nawe 2010 FIFA World Cup!!!



Korean school children participating in the SA Week activities

## NORTH KOREA

The South African Embassy in Seoul celebrated Freedom Month in April, marking the 15th anniversary of South Africa's democracy. The Embassy, in collaboration with the MIZY Centre, (a youth cultural centre sponsored by the Seoul Municipality and UNESCO), coordinated a special cultural exchange project involving the South African and Korean youth.

In this regard, the Embassy worked with young South Africans living and working

as English teachers in Korea to render performances such as gumboot dancing, tin dance, poetry recitals, story telling, singing traditional South African songs, a fashion show featuring traditional costumes and martial arts. Every Saturday (except for 11 April) the Korean public including students and parents visited the Mizy Centre to have a glimpse of these performances. A young South African cellist from the Eastern Cape, Ha Man!, who had scheduled a few performances in Seoul, also rendered an outstanding performance at the Centre. South African

movies (with Korean subtitles), given Korean's limited knowledge of English, were also screened and were received in a positive light.

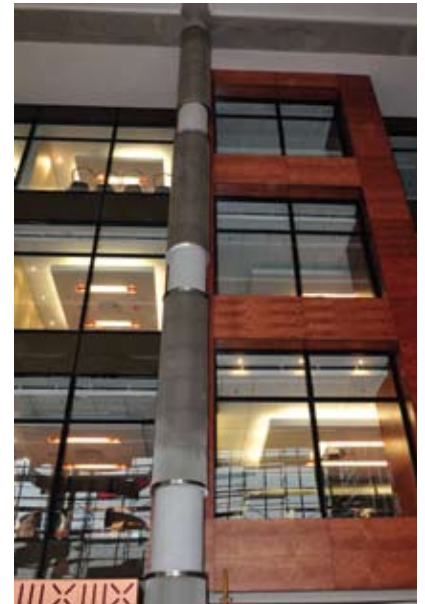
In order to expose the Korean public to South Africa's colourful art and diverse cultures, the Embassy exhibited artefacts, bead, clay, wire and wooden crafts, ostrich eggs, the hall of fame (with black and white photographs of former Presidents Nelson Mandela and FW De Klerk, freedom fighters, like Steve Biko and Chris Hani, among others, as well as a replica of the goal posts of a soccer pitch depicting the 2010 World cup.

Furthermore, the Embassy identified 27 April to 1 May 2009 as "South Africa Week" and to mark this occasion, the Embassy hosted Prof Thomas van der Walt of the University of South Africa and Dr Felicite Fairer-Wessels of the University of Pretoria. The two academics gave lectures to primary and middle school students at the MIZY Centre in the mornings, while five of Korea's prominent Universities were given lectures in the afternoons. These were not one way lectures as students became active participants by giving presentations on Korea. The young learners also replied to the letters brought by the two academics from the South African learners; in this way, 'pen pals' were formed. University students, on the other hand, will communicate with their South African counterparts through 'facebook'.

The theme of lectures varied from a general introduction of South Africa, to its history and the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The Korean students, who had already experienced the heat of the 2002 FIFA World Cup as a host country together with Japan, have high expectations and seemingly want to be involved in any way such as voluntary work during the season.

In his speech at the opening ceremony of the SA Week, Ambassador Schoeman mentioned that "this year is more meaningful as South Africa had held a new general election on 22 April 2009 and elected the 4th President since the end of Apartheid. South Africans are very proud of their achievements and the smooth process towards a mature democracy", he said. The Freedom Month celebrations received wide media coverage.

## "Siya vaya" we are moving...





1



2



3

(1 and 2) Voting at our High Commission in New Zealand • (3) Voting in Brussels • (4) Voting in Berlin

## ELECTIONS 2009 IN MISSIONS

Voting in the 2009 elections came early for South Africans abroad, as thousands made their way to voting stations in the different South African Embassies, Consulates and High Commissions around the world on Wednesday, 15th April 2009.

### Belgium

In Brussels, the Embassy opened its doors at 7:00 in the morning to high spirited voters, eager to be part of the democratic process. There were 180 people registered on the voters' roll with 132 voting by the end of the day. The process was handled with professionalism and friendliness by the competent Embassy staff, both local

and transferred, under the supervision of the Chargé d' Affaires, Ms. Pinkie Moleko.

The voting material from the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) arrived early in the week prior to the elections, affording the Embassy staff ample time to ensure a smooth voting process. The IEC remained available to the Embassy to offer support and assistance before and during the elections. The knowledge that there was an IEC Helpdesk situated at Head Office ready to assist was very comforting to the Embassy staff.

There were no disgruntled voters and nobody was sent away without voting. There was a steady flow of voters throughout

the day and all thanked the Embassy staff when leaving for handling the process with the same commitment as outlined in the Batho Pele policy. This was essential as many voters made an effort to travel from all over Belgium and Luxembourg to arrive in Brussels on time.

The ambience at the Embassy was a happy and friendly one. The election not only allowed South Africans abroad to exercise their democratic right, but it brought an opportunity for fellow South Africans to make new acquaintances, catch up and chat about home. Seeing groups huddled outside the Embassy in the warm Brussels' spring sun was not a rare sight throughout the day.



Chargé d' Affaires, Mr Ben Joubert with Minister Lescano (top left) and speaking at the prize giving ceremony (top right)

## TOURISM FAIR IN PUNTA DEL ESTE

The South African mission in Uruguay participated in the International Tourism Fair in the city of Punta Del Este during January 2009.

Various embassies, tourism operators from Uruguay, and several international operators participated in the event that welcomed more than 5 000 international visitors over three days. The event took

place in a prominent hotel complex in the resort town of Punta del Este from 22 to 24 January 2009. The South African Embassy made optimal use of the opportunity to promote the new South African Airlines route that started its operations in April 2009 from Buenos Aires to South Africa – in time for the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

The Embassy won first prize for the stand with the best visual impact. The prize was handed over to the Chargé d' Affaires by the Uruguayan Minister of Sport and Tourism, Mr Hector Lescano.



The Embassy Stand where staff attended to prospective travellers





4

The doors closed at 19:00, with the courier service picking up the ballot box at 21:00 for dispatch to South Africa.

### Germany

In Berlin, Germany about 150 people registered to vote. The atmosphere was very pleasant. Some people travelled more than 600 km to cast their votes and it was clear that people felt proud to be able to be part of the election process and committed to the democracy of their homeland. With 2 hours remaining to vote, only 2 people were rejected because they did not produce the identification documents as required by the Act. The atmosphere of the day was one of pride and camaraderie.



## HIGH COMMISSIONER MABUZA WINS TOP AWARD

**South African High Commissioner in London Lindiwe Mabuza was honoured by the prestigious Diplomat Magazine and presented with the 'Diplomat of the Year from Africa Award'.**

On receiving the award the High Commissioner said: "It is a great honour to be acknowledged in this way. I am very proud of all my staff at the High Commission, present and past, who continuously work tirelessly towards the objectives set out for them by the government of South Africa. This award reflects the long hours and hard work that has contributed to the success that is the South African High Commission in the UK'. The High Commissioner went on to say "what makes this award particularly special is that I am receiving it today, on South Africa's national day, a day where all South Africans celebrate the birth of democracy for all in our country."

The annual Diplomat Magazine's awards ceremony was held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in London and is the first of its kind in the UK. Other awards included: Lifetime Contribution to Diplomacy which went to the Ambassador of Kuwait Mr Khaled Al-Duwaisan. Other regional awards were awarded to China for Asia, Venezuela for the Americas, Lebanon for the Middle East and Turkey for Europe.

In presenting the award, Martyn Lewis CBE, former British television news presenter and journalist for the BBC said "This diplomat has made great strides in representing the problems that her country and the continent of Africa faces regarding humanitarian work, AIDS and promoting African culture throughout the UK. As a celebrated poet, it is no surprise that this Head of Mission has forged crucial relationships throughout the cultural and educational community here in the UK".

High Commissioner Mabuza went on to say that she "accepts the award on behalf of the Continent of Africa and the African Union Heads of Mission in the UK as it reflects their continued support of one another and determination to improve the lives of all people living across the Continent." Ms Mabuza further noted that under the objective of improving the lives of all on the Continent, the AU Heads of Mission in the UK were currently engaged in preparations for hosting an Africa Infrastructure Conference in November this year. "We are exhibiting the highest levels of collective responsibility towards meeting the objectives of developing infrastructure in all the regions of Africa", said High Commissioner Mabuza.

Contributed by our High Commission in London.



*Ambassador Anil Sooklal and Zakumi together with Embassy staff and well-wishers painting Brussels in South African colours*

## THE ZAKUMI PARADE THROUGH THE STREETS OF BRUSSELS - 24 APRIL 2009

**T**he streets of Brussels were not only painted a hot red on April 24th, but yellow, blue, green, black and white, by South Africans and well-wishers based in Belgium, wearing colourful soccer helmets embarking on an exhilarating Zakumi open-top bus parade. With the temperature at a golden 25 degrees Celsius, the day delivered on the entire exciting fanfare planned by the Embassy.

The crowd of well-wishers led by the 2010 FIFA World Cup mascot, Zakumi, and Ambassador Anil Sooklal came out in numbers to support the South African Embassy in launching the Embassy 2010 FIFA World Cup campaign. The launch was aimed at the general Belgian public, with particular attention paid to the Ambassador's counterparts and Embassy interlocutors.

The day commenced with a press conference, where the various media houses based in Belgium were briefed on South Africa's preparations and readiness to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup, including the Embassy's planned activities geared towards building awareness and promoting 2010. The SABC Brussels-based Bureau also attended the press conference which served as a platform to introduce Zakumi to the journalists.

The crowd of well-wishers who spent part of their morning getting their faces painted in SA flag colours and FIFA logos were enthused when the time came to get on the bus. There were sixty people adorned in colourful shirts, makarapa hats and armed with their vuvuzelas who hopped on a branded (South African flag colours and soccer-related branding) open-top

bus. The crowd did not waste any time before breaking into song. Their singing accompanied by an orchestra of vuvuzelas ripped through the warm Brussels air. A DJ was also on board spinning South Africa's favourite songs such as Shosholoz, to ensure the continuation of excitement throughout the parade.

The bus made stopovers at the EU Commission; where the Ambassador, Zakumi and well-wishers were met by Mr. Louis Michel and his staff, then the Belgian Football Association where they were met by Messrs Wijnants and De Keersmaecker, the ACP where they were met by Sir John Kaputin and his staff, the AU where they were met by H.E Ambassador Annadif and his staff and finally the Africa Museum where they were met by the curator and museum staff. At all the stopovers the Ambassador introduced Zakumi, presented the heads of the institutions with 2010 promotional gifts and requested them to autograph a soccer ball which will be kept at the Mission as part of the permanent World Cup 2010 exhibition.

Well-wishers on the bus interacted with the public and provided them with a card containing a website where they could search for more information on South Africa and the 2010 FIFA World Cup. They were open to answering questions from the public and sharing facts about South Africa. All elements to make the day perfect were there; information sharing, people-to-people interactions, as well as dance and music.

Zakumi and the colourful crowd were a big hit in all of Brussels; they literally stopped traffic and contributed to the joyful mood that is associated with springtime in Brussels.

Ke nako: "Celebrate Africa's humanity"



Botswana Parliament

## A VIEW ON THE WORLD - LIVING IN GABORONE

This month *the diplomat* brings you a view on life in Gaborone, Botswana as part of a regular series to share with you how colleagues live at missions abroad. The transferred staff at the Embassy all contributed to a combined effort to answer the set questions.

**You are stationed at the South African Mission in Gaborone. Tell us more about life in the city, its people, the food and the culture.**

Gaborone is generally the point of entry into Botswana, providing access for tourist to the main attractions of the Okavango Delta, the Chobe, Tuli Block and the more remote desert areas. Gaborone, which is affectionately known as Gabs amongst the locals, is the hub of activity in Botswana and is often referred to as the fastest growing city in Africa.

It is a modern city, which became the capital when Botswana gained independence with a population of only 340 000 people. The Batswana are a proud nation and have been successful in marrying traditional culture and modern living. In general the culture and languages are quite similar to those found in South Africa.

The community is closeknit, but welcomes new friends. People tend to entertain at home and do not go out as much as we do in South Africa. Friends think nothing of dropping in after work and will equally

welcome you for unexpected visits, inviting you to share meals and a drink.

Dishes which are staples in Botswana include Seswaa (slow cooked and pounded beef); Papa (Porridge, made from Mealie meal or Sorghum); Serobe (offal); Phane Stew (Moephane worms); and "Botswana" Chicken (slow cooked chicken). Any of these dishes can be bought from street vendors, and all hotels and restaurants serve it.

**Describe a few of the major tourist attractions in and around the city and their significance, e.g. historical, architectural, etc.**

Gaborone Game Reserve was opened in 1988 and is situated on the western side of the city and offers a perfect break-away from city life, while Mokholodi Game Reserve is situated on the outskirts of the city. They offer game drives and elephant rides and run Botswana's first and only Environmental Education Centre

Gaborone is dominated by Kgale Hill on the western edge of the city which offers a pleasant climb with great views of Gaborone Dam and the city.

Approximately 20km outside Gaborone is the village of Oodi, which is best known for the internationally acclaimed Lentswela-Oodi Weavers, a co-operative where women from the local community produce the most beautiful woven items.

**What were the biggest challenges you had to overcome to live in Gaborone?**

Botswana is very similar to South Africa in most aspects. The Batswana, however, are much more patient people with a slower pace of living, who don't appreciate being rushed. This filters through to customer service and service delivery which takes some getting used to.

**What are the barriers/hurdles that make day-to-day living as a foreigner in Gaborone difficult? e.g. language, culture?**

From a South African point of view, there are no real hurdles/ barriers as it is quite similar to SA. The closeness of the community means, however, that everybody knows everyone else's business, and it can be intrusive at times. On the other hand the diplomatic community is far more supportive of each other than what you would find in bigger countries

**What do you miss most of South Africa?**

Although the cultures of South Africans and Batswana are similar, South Africans share an uncanny sense of humour and a friendliness which is unsurpassed.

**How many people work at the South African consulate?**

We have a total staff component of 36 people of which 14 are transferred officials.

