

# IT'S YOUR

Internal Newsletter of the Department of International  
Relations and Cooperation

# VOICE

ubuntu diplomat



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## EDITORIAL TEAM

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<b>Guest Editor</b>	Peter Mafora
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<b>Designers</b>	Lerato Motubatsi, Muzi Msimanga
<b>Photographers</b>	Jacoline Schoonees
<b>Editorial Committee</b>	Linah Ledwaba, Daisy Motsisi Mapitso Rathabe
<b>Publisher</b>	The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) ©2015 Tel: +27 12 351 1000, www.dirco.gov.za Private Bag X152, PRETORIA, 0001 Republic of South Africa  460 Soutpansberg Road, Rietondale, Pretoria, 0084, Republic of South Africa

# Editor's Letter

## Dear Diplomats,



It is a great honour and a privilege to have been chosen to air my views in *It's your Voice-Ubuntu Diplomat Magazine*. Oliver Reginald Tambo once said: "We are not fighting against people, we are fighting against the system. Today's failures are tomorrow's successes, which simply means that, you can always learn if you have tried than to fail even before you try. Some of our diplomats are going through tough times, particularly those serving in the hardship missions, therefore, it is the responsibility of everyone to support our fellow compatriots as they are representing us.

In this edition, read about the second annual Ubuntu Awards that took place

on 13 February 2016 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre. The 2016 judges for Ubuntu Awards and their brief backgrounds are also reflected.

Also read about "A day in the life ..." by Gift Masina who has been posted to Malabo.

Ambassador Anil Sooklal, DDG for Asia and Middle East, shares his family background, educational background and the lessons learned from the missions when he was representing South Africa in the outside world.

You will also learn about beautiful things about Eritrea, *Globe at a Glimpse* and the Oslo Mission holding the Nordic-African Business Summit 2015 in the Norwegian capital. South African U23 should be saluted for the performance they displayed when they mesmerised the Senegalese. They were hosted by the South African Ambassador in Senegal after their resounding win.

This edition carries valuable information about the Minister's Working Visit to the Russian Federation to co-chair the 13th Session of the annual SA-Russia Joint Intergovernmental Committee.

Lessons learned from the missions with the experiences and knowledge acquired could help a lot in terms of knowledge management for the library and the department at large. Those experiences will be shared and documented for the institutional memory of the department and in future such information can be used for reference to other diplomats and officials of the department. Credit must be given to the pillar and the pavilion of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, the

Diplomatic Academy under Diplomatic Training, Research and Development. The academy makes sure that South Africa is well represented abroad. It is through the Diplomatic Academy that heads of missions are trained and given exposure to economic diplomacy and trade investments. Equally, the support given by other branches is also important, that is, by releasing the officials for orientation programmes.

I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate the efforts and the initiatives taken by the sports council through EWC for ensuring that officials are partaking in different sporting codes, encouraging fitness and a healthy society that would be more productive for delivering the services required.

Big thumbs up to "Toastmasters", a club that has been established in the department with the view to sharpen the communication skills of the officials, to be able to have interpersonal skills, which is to respond, behave and react in a prompt manner towards other people. This club inculcates the culture of "self-actualisers" – that is people who can utilise their abilities to the fullest and hopefully such initiatives will be taken into cognisance in future.

PM

Peter Mafora

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# THE 2016 JUDGES



**Dr Siphamandla Zondi – Executive Director: Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD)**

Siphamandla Zondi is an analyst focused on foreign policy and international diplomacy, a conference speaker and facilitator of strategic planning. He writes widely on Africa's international relations, South-South cooperation and South Africa's foreign policy.

He is currently the head of the IGD, a foreign policy think-tank based at the University of South Africa.

He is also a commissioner in the National Planning Commission of South Africa and a member of the SA Council on International Relations, which advises the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation on foreign affairs.



**Ms Zandile Nzalo – Founder and CEO – Zanenza**

Zandile is the founder and CEO of Zanenza, a consultancy which exists to empower clients, entrepreneurs and stakeholders with sustainable growth.

Established in August 2002, Zanenza specialises in strategic communication, enterprise development, public relations, event management and decor hire as well as fund-raising.

Together with PWC, Zanenza runs Tshepo 500 000, a provincial programme aimed at harnessing greater economic participation for young South Africans within the City of Tshwane.

A sought-after motivational speaker, Zandile is a Fellow of the African Leadership Initiative and Aspen Global Leadership Network.



**Ms Lindiwe Sangweni-Siddo – Divisional Director of Operations – City Lodge Hotel Group; founder and owner, Soweto Hotel**

Lindiwe Sangweni-Siddo has joined the JSE-listed City Lodge Hotel Group as a Divisional Director of Operations, with effect from 16 September 2015. Well-known in the hotel industry, she joins the group from the Birchwood Hotel and OR Tambo Conference Centre. She was MD of the Birchwood Management Company from July to January 2012, when she became CEO.

Lindiwe is one of the four divisional operations directors who oversee the running of the City Lodge Hotel Group's 52 hotels in South Africa, two hotels in Kenya and one hotel in Botswana. The group has announced plans to develop five other hotels in southern Africa and East Africa over the next two years.



**Ambassador Ebrahim Saley – Chief Operations Officer: Department International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO)**

On 1 August 1994, Mr Ebrahim Saley joined the South African Department of Foreign Affairs as Director: Foreign Service. He was first appointed as Ambassador to Tunisia in June 1996.

In 1996, Ambassador Saley was seconded to the United Nations as Organisation of African Unity observer in Western Sahara and from 2001 to 2005, he was appointed Ambassador to Libya.

From 2009 to 2012, he served as Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Upon his return to Head Office, Ambassador Saley was appointed Chief Director for East Asia, China, Japan and North Korea. He was appointed Deputy Director-General: Africa Bilateral from 2013 to 2014.

In 2000, he was awarded the First Order of the Republic of Tunisia by the President of Tunisia, HE Mr Zine Abdeen Ben Ali, for meritorious service in Tunisia.

Ambassador Saley currently serves as the Chief Operations Officer of DIRCO.



**Ms Danisa Baloyi – Executive Director, Glow Africa Investments, National Black Business Caucus**

Danisa Eileen Baloyi is the Executive Chairperson of Glow Africa Investments, a company that operates mainly in the energy, oil and gas, construction, media and mining sectors.

She is a management consultant by training and sits on the Council and Executive Committee of the Black Business Council of South Africa, an Apex business body that sits on the Presidential Working Group on Business. She also champions the cause of women in business in South Africa. Presently, she co-chairs the United Kingdom-South Africa Business Council and the Iran-South Africa Business Council.



**Mr Clayson Monyela – Deputy Director-General (DDG): Public Diplomacy at DIRCO**

Since 2011, Clayson Monyela has headed up South Africa's Public Diplomacy in his capacity as the Spokesperson and DDG: Public Diplomacy at DIRCO.

He currently serves as a Trustee of Brand South Africa, which is tasked with projecting a positive image of South Africa, both internationally and domestically. He is also the founder and Chairperson of Ubuntu Radio, the first Internet-based government radio station in South Africa. Under the Ubuntu Brand, DDG Monyela has been responsible for the creation of the Ubuntu Awards as well as *Ubuntu Magazine*, which he publishes.



**Ms Chichi Maponya – Maponya Group CEO and Chairperson of BrandSA**

Currently CEO of Maponya Group, Chichi Maponya is responsible for all business activities of the Maponya Group, its subsidiaries, management, growth and diversification strategy.

She is Chairperson of Brand South Africa, a body which is tasked with marketing and promoting South Africa both domestically and internationally, as a destination of choice for investment, and managing the reputation of South Africa.

She serves on the boards of the Consumer Goods Council of South Africa, Tourism SA and Barloworld, among others. Chichi is also Deputy Chairperson of the SA Council on International Relations. She also serves on the boards of various family-owned/related businesses.



**UBUNTU AWARDS**  
**SOUTH AFRICA 2016**



# The 2nd Ubuntu Awards “Celebrating Excellence in Diplomacy”

Launched last year on 14 February by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), the 2nd Ubuntu Awards took place on 13 February 2016 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre to recognise South African industry leaders and eminent persons for their distinguished service and contribution to promoting South Africa's national interests and values across the world.

The event was hosted by the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, and brought together captains of industry, leaders from civil society, members of Cabinet and eminent persons in addition to ambassadors and high commissioners accredited to South Africa. President Jacob Zuma delivered the keynote address and commended South Africans who had excelled in their respective fields of work.

President Zuma said this year's recipients had distinguished themselves in their service to the country.

Each award was bestowed on an organisation/individual who has, through excellence, innovation, creativity, inventiveness, social responsibility or patriotism, distinguished themselves as true ambassadors of South Africa.

Among the winners was rising athletics star, Wayde van Niekerk, who took home the Ubuntu Sports Diplomacy Award.

The Ubuntu Arts and Cultural Award went to two South African music heavyweights; multi-award winning record producer, DJ Black Coffee, was recognised for his successful career, which has grown since winning a DJ competition in the 1990s to an influential international DJ.

World-renowned trumpeter, flugelhornist, bandleader, composer and singer, Hugh Masekela, was recognised for his immeasurable contribution to arts and culture and to the liberation struggle through song.

The main award of the evening went to struggle stalwarts Agnes Msimang and the late Jonny Makhatini, who were both recognised under the OR Tambo Lifetime Achievement Award.



At age 87, Msimang, who was honoured for her excellent contribution to the fight against the unjust laws of apartheid, received the award in person.

Makhatini, who died in exile, was honoured for his legendary and immense accomplishments which earned him a permanent place in South African diplomatic history. His wife, Valerie, received the award.

In other categories, Standard Bank won the Ubuntu Economic Diplomacy Award (Africa), while

Discovery was honoured with the global award in the same category.

Rescue SA and the Motsepe Foundation shared the Ubuntu Social Responsibility Award for their contribution through corporate social investment initiatives, while Ambassador Bene L M'Poko from the Democratic Republic of Congo, who also serves as the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, won the Ubuntu Ambassadorial Excellence Award. Former Miss Earth and Lead SA executive,

Catherine Constantinides, walked away with the Ubuntu Youth Diplomacy Award.

DIRCO presented its compliments to the heads of diplomatic missions and international organisations accredited to South Africa at the Minister's Brunch in honour of the Diplomatic Corps at the Cavalli Wine and Stud Farm, Somerset West, prior the Ubuntu Awards event.

## RETIREMENT



After nearly 38 years in the department, Ms Elise Haber retired at the end of July 2015.

### Tell us about yourself

Nothing special. Nothing exciting – just an average Afrikaans girl with a big sense of curiosity.

### What was your daily routine like?

Working in the Multilateral Branch meant that no day was the same as the previous day.

### How long were you with DIRCO?

Nearly 38 years.

### What did you enjoy most about working for DIRCO?

The past 13 years in multilateral were the best. It allowed me to insert creative thoughts into

national positions, influence policy development and do something for my country and the continent.

### Have you been on postings?

I had two postings; one as an unmarried diplomat to Greece and another as a married diplomat to Namibia.

### What did you do for relaxation after a day's hard work?

Cycle, climb mountains, gardening, pottery and writing when time allows.

### What do you plan to do during your retirement?

I want to spend time doing all the things that I never had time for during my working years. This includes travelling and exploring Africa together with my husband and good friends.

NOTICE BOARD



# The 2nd Annual Ubuntu Awards

## Celebrating excellence in diplomacy

### UBUNTU ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY AWARD (AFRICA)

LAUREATE: STANDARD BANK



Standard Bank has a 151-year history in South Africa and started building a franchise in the rest of Africa in the early 1990s. It currently operates in 20 countries on the African continent, including South Africa, as well as in other selected emerging markets.

Its strategy is to build a leading Africa-focused financial-services organisation, using all its competitive advantages to the full. Standard Bank will focus on delivering superior sustainable shareholder value by serving the needs of its customers through first-class, on-the-ground operations in chosen countries in Africa. It will also connect other selected emerging markets to Africa and to each other, applying its sector expertise, particularly in natural resources, globally. Standard Bank's key differentiator is people who are passionate about its strategy, wherever in the world they are based.

Standard Bank is organised into three business units but presents itself as one. Its three main pillars of business are Personal and Business Banking, Corporate and Investment Banking, and Wealth – Liberty.

### UBUNTU ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY AWARD (GLOBAL)

LAUREATE: DISCOVERY LIMITED



Discovery Limited is a South Africa-based financial services group that is listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) with its headquarters in Sandton.

Discovery Limited was founded in 1992 by Adrian Gore. In the same year, RMB Holdings (RMBH) acquired a stake in the business by making Discovery Limited its subsidiary through Momentum Group (now part of MMI Holdings Limited). In 1998, the Momentum Group became part of First Rand after the merger of the financial services interests of Anglo American Corporation of South Africa Limited (now Anglo American plc) and RMBH to achieve the objective of a unified financial services grouping, with First Rand Group owning 75% of Discovery Limited.

Discovery Limited was successfully listed on the JSE in October 1999 through a successful initial public offering. During the year, First Rand Group reduced its stake in Discovery Limited to 64%. In 2013, Momentum Group Limited transferred its investment in Discovery Limited to FirstRand Limited for R740 million. In November 2007, FirstRand unbundled all of its entire shareholding in Discovery Limited and allotted the shares of Discovery Limited to its shareholders. This led to RMBH receiving a 25% direct stake in Discovery Limited, making it the single largest shareholder.

On 7 March 2011, RMBH, Remgro and First Rand spun off their insurance assets to Rand Merchant Insurance Holdings and separately listed it on the JSE. This restructure led to the transfer of RMBH's entire stake in Discovery Limited to RMI Holdings.

In September 2015, Discovery Limited announced its intention to set up a retail banking subsidiary with an initial \$150-million investment. Discovery Limited engages in long- and short-term insurance, asset management, savings, investment and employee benefits through its various brands. The group has subsidiaries in South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, China, Singapore and Australia.

### UBUNTU SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AWARD

LAUREATE: RESCUE SA



Rescue South Africa is a non-governmental organisation, registered in 2001 as a not-for-profit organisation whose goal is to develop the urban search-and-rescue capacity within South Africa, the Southern African Development Community region and internationally.

It organises and facilitates cooperation between all relevant bodies with the aim of rendering the best possible technical rescue and emergency medical care, should such a need arise.

### UBUNTU ARTS AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AWARD (CONTEMPORARY)

LAUREATE: BLACK COFFEE



Black Coffee (born Nkosinathi Maphumulo on 11 March 1976) is a South African multi-award-winning record producer and DJ. He began his career in 1994 and has released five albums and one live DVD under his Johannesburg-based record label, Soulistic Music. He is arguably one of the most influential musicians in Africa. He had his big break shortly after being chosen as a participant in the 2004 Red Bull Music Academy held in Cape Town. Amaru from Soulistic Music received the award on Black Coffee's behalf.

LAUREATE: MOTSEPE FOUNDATION



The Motsepe Foundation is focused on breaking down the vicious cycle of impoverishment and global disasters (disease); supporting South African and African economic developments; supporting global health research (HIV/AIDS, cancer); and empowering the eligible and destitute. Through its partnerships and stakeholder relations, it is able to engage and connect with private, public, community-based, religious as well as faith-based organisations to identify and support deserving causes and invest in talented individuals. With the support and commitment of these partnerships and organisations, it is able to develop innovative lucrative solutions, host leadership activities, award internships and create programmes which sustain businesses and communities that deliver lasting results.

### UBUNTU ARTS AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AWARD (VETERAN)

LAUREATE: HUGH MASEKELA



Hugh Masekela is a world-renowned flugelhornist, trumpeter, bandleader, composer, singer and defiant political voice who remains deeply connected at home, while his international career sparkles. He was born in Witbank, South Africa, in 1939. At the age of 14, the deeply respected advocate of equal rights in South Africa, Father Trevor Huddleston, provided Masekela with a trumpet and soon after, the Huddleston Jazz Band was formed. Masekela began to hone his, now signature, Afro-jazz sound in the late 1950s during a period of intense creative collaboration, most notably performing in the 1959 musical King Kong, written by Todd Matshikiza, and, soon thereafter, as a member of the now legendary South African group, the Jazz Epistles (featuring the classic line-up of Kippie Moeketsi, Abdullah Ibrahim and Jonas Gwangwa).

### UBUNTU YOUTH DIPLOMACY AWARD

LAUREATE: CATHERINE CONSTANTINIDES



Catherine Constantinides is the Executive Director of Miss Earth South Africa Leadership Programme.

Constantinides started her entertainment and event management business, SA Fusion, in 2001, which later evolved to include the day-to-day management of the Miss Earth South Africa Women Empowerment and Leadership Programme, for which Constantinides bought the licence in 2003. Since then, the organisation has worked tirelessly to empower women and school learners, especially from underprivileged and disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Miss Earth South Africa is a programme that aims to empower young South African women with the knowledge and platform to create a sustainable difference in its plight to combat the destruction of our natural heritage. The event helps create awareness of the environment, wildlife and the conservation of the natural legacy in South Africa, and ultimately the preservation of Mother Earth.

The goal is to create sustainability, citizenship and stewardship through its environmental work. Now, more than ever before, South Africans are experiencing the effects of global warming, climate change and sustainability issues. Energy and water have also become crucial denominators and we need to adapt to these changes and build better infrastructure within communities. The aim is to promote peace, respect and humility towards one another.

### UBUNTU SPORT DIPLOMACY AWARD

LAUREATE: WAYDE VAN NIEKERK



Wayde van Niekerk (born 15 July 1992) is a South African track and field sprinter who competes in the 200 m and 400 m. He holds personal bests of 19.94 seconds and 43.48 seconds for the distances, respectively. He has held South African records for both but currently he holds the record for the 400-m event. He is the first athlete from Africa to run the 400 m in under 44 seconds.

Van Niekerk was the silver medalist in the 400 m at the 2014 Commonwealth Games and took bronze in the 4x400 metres relay at the 2013 Summer Universiade. He also represented South Africa at the 2013 and 2015 World Championships in Athletics. At the latter event, he took the gold medal in the 400 m and is the reigning world champion.

### OR TAMBO LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

LAUREATE: JONNY MAKHATINI (POSTHUMOUS)

LAUREATE: AGNES MSIMANG



The main award of the evening went to struggle stalwarts Mme Agnes Msimang and the late Jonny Makhathini, who were both recognised under the OR Tambo Lifetime Achievement Award. At age 87, Msimang was honoured for her excellent contribution in the fight against the unjust laws of apartheid.

Makhathini, who died in exile, was honoured for his legendary and towering accomplishments which earned him a permanent place in South African diplomatic history. The award was received by his wife, Valerie.

### UBUNTU AMBASSADORIAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

LAUREATE: HE AMBASSADOR BENE L M'POKO

HE Ambassador Bene L M'Poko is the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Ambassador to South Africa.

He studied in the United States of America and holds a Master's of Business Administration (MBA) in Economics and a second in International Finance.

He subsequently worked for Citi Bank in New York for 12 years and thereafter joined the World Bank as a consultant for five years. He then served the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for 15 years, which included moving to South Africa in 1995 to open the UNDP offices here.

In 2001, he was appointed DRC's ambassador to South Africa.





# MEET THE MEMBERS OF THE DIRCO SPORTS COUNCIL



Mr Patrick Moropene  
Chairperson (Athletics)



Ms Sibongile Mabasa  
Deputy Chairperson (Netball)



Mr Bright Mnisi  
Secretary-General (Men's Soccer)



Ms Ninzi Hanxa  
Deputy Secretary (Tennis)



Ms Tlou Kgomo  
Treasurer (Ladies Soccer)



Ms Lerato Mokemane  
Special Projects (Tennis)



Ms Masedi Lonkokile  
Public Relations Officer (Athletics)



Mr Errol Lebea  
Deputy Public Relations Officer (Volleyball)

## SPORTS LEADERS



Ms Lusanda Dube-Ntsaluba (Athletics)



Mr Thulani Phiri (Volleyball)



Mr Thabo Khoza (Aerobics)



Mr Kgolofelo Masia (Men's Soccer)



Ms Mafusi Mahloane (Netball)



Ms Gugu Skosana (Pool)



Ms Mavis Chuene (Aerobics)



Mr Tebogo Vilakazi (Pool)



Mr Phineas Matlala (Chess)



Mr Gary Smith (Golf)

### DIRCO Sports Council (DSC) on the move

The DSC was established in 2009 and has grown from having two to 12 sporting codes, including Chess, Golf, Netball, Soccer, Tennis, Volleyball and Athletics. The Sports Council's objective is to promote the health and well-being of employees through sports and participation in the departmental wellness days to raise awareness on the value of physical activity.

The current elected council is focused on making DIRCO officials realise the importance of personal fitness. The belief of the DSC is that each and every employee within the department can make small strides daily in living a much healthier life. Fitness should be about having fun, while achieving one's own personal goals that should extend into one's physical and mental well-being.

In taking part in the various sporting activities planned for the year, from the regular league games played by the various sporting codes to the bigger tournaments, our ultimate goal is for all employees to sign up for just one sporting code and regularly participate in the training sessions of that chosen sporting code. We also want employees to support the community development initiatives that will form part of our annual programme.

In the words of the most famous basketball player to have ever played in the NBA, Michael Jordan: "Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it". This adage is what the DSC wishes each employee to realise for themselves in 2016.

**Masedi Lonkokile – Public Relations Officer: DIRCO Sports Council**



# Know our Ambassador



## 1. Tell us about yourself?

I am Anil Sooklal. I am married to Nelistra and we have three children. I have a PhD in Oriental and Religious Studies from the University of Durban-Westville (KwaZulu-Natal).

I joined government in 1995 and currently serve as the Deputy Director-General for the Branch: Asia and Middle East at DIRCO.

I represent South Africa as the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) Sous Sherpa, and the India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) and Indian Ocean Rim Association focal point. I have also served as Counsellor in Geneva and New Delhi as well as Head of the Parliamentary Office in Cape Town.

Between 2006 and 2012, I was given the unique privilege of representing South Africa as Ambassador to the European Union, Belgium and Luxembourg.

## 2 What is your daily routine?

I start my day at 5 am. I meditate for about 15 minutes and exercise at least four times week to manage stress levels. Fortunately, I have a home gym which allows for flexibility in my routine.

A routine is impossible, as a day in the life of a DIRCO official can be very unpredictable. However, despite this, I try as much as possible

to find time for leisure through reading and spending time with my family.

## 3.What do you like about DIRCO?

The fact that every day comes with unique challenges and opportunities. I believe that we are very privileged in that we are exposed to issues and people from a very interesting and diverse spectrum of society, both from South Africa and the outside world. This is very rewarding, and on a personal level, it is very enriching. I really enjoy the DIRCO office environment. It is conducive to being productive as well as creative. It is very inspiring.

I thrive on the ongoing learning and exposure to new horizons as well as being at the cutting edge of global developments in our dynamic and changing world. This for me is the best and most exciting part of our work.

## 4. One thing that people in HO should know about your work?

My day is often filled with issues that range from basic management decisions to providing high-level political input and advice.

Dealing with such a wide spectrum of issues is not humanly possible for any individual, so the key to getting our work done is swift, clear and effective communication with a wide range of

individuals and organisations. These range from meetings to e-mails to letters. Communication is an aspect of our work that requires a great deal of time, discipline, dedication and an excellent team.

I mention communication because I believe that this is the most important part of our work and potentially most enjoyable. However, it is often taken for granted.

I believe in leadership by example, therefore, in the first instance I tend to place high expectations on myself and then my colleagues.

My management approach is consultative and I try to incorporate the views of all colleagues on major decision-making processes. I believe that this ensures a team spirit, which is a fundamental building block for any successful outcome.

## 5.What is your favourite spot and restaurant?

My favourite spot is on the beach in Umhlanga, Durban, my hometown. These days, some refer to it as "Sandton by the sea". My favourite restaurant is Bite Your Tongue in Broadway, Durban. It has the best Chinese and Sushi menu in town, and for the best curries and bunny chow, I go to Indian Delights. 🌍

I believe that we are very privileged in that we are exposed to issues and people from a very interesting and diverse spectrum of society, both from South Africa and the outside world ...



# Q&A

## A day in the life ... Gift Masina

### 1. Tell us about yourself

I was born and raised in the small town in Mpumalanga, called Ermelo, 28 years ago.

I joined the Department of International Relations and Cooperation in August 2009, and served at the East Africa Desk as Personal Assistant to Gabriel Sethloke, now our Ambassador to South Sudan. In welcoming me to the Chief Directorate: East Africa, I recall so vividly, Ambassador Sethloke said: "Welcome to the Department of Dreams". After deep consideration in acquainting himself with my CV, he was quick to point out that I should never look down upon myself; however, I should strive for growth within the department. Twenty-four months later, I enrolled for the Foreign Affairs Attache Course (FAAC) training, following his recommendation, while simultaneously doing my Honours Degree at UNISA, specialising in Business Management. During tea breaks, I would sit alone and do my UNISA assignments; classmates would come and ask me how I cope with two "rigorous classes" simultaneously.

In responding to my classmates, I would say that: "In order to succeed, your desire for success should be greater than your fear of failure".

Eventually, at the end of December 2012, I passed both the FAAC training and my four modules at UNISA, for which achievement I will forever be grateful (and more than a little proud of myself, I must confess). The next piece of good news came through when the Chief Directorate: Human Resources informed me that I had been posted to Malabo with effect from January 2014.

### 2. What is your daily routine?

Honestly speaking, I do not have or follow a precise daily routine; however, being in a Mission has taught me to be both flexible and adaptable, due to the varied and often unpredictable nature of our work.

Normally, I wake up at 6:00 am and prepare myself for work. Since I do not own a car, I leave my apartment at 7:30 so that I arrive at the office at 7:45. Upon arrival at the office, I normally prepare my "to-do list", which I then later discuss with the Corporate Services Manager when she arrives so that she should be aware of the day's schedule because I don't like being disrupted – one disruption changes your entire day's schedule.

After work, I go to gym, after which I go home and relax or cook. I have to admit that being alone in a foreign country is not easy. I have been here for almost two years now, yet still I can't get used to the food. I used to buy take-aways, however, after contracting typhoid, I completely ceased that practice and now I far prefer cooking for myself; although this becomes a bit difficult during visits or summits when time is limited.

During my spare time, I do UNISA assignments, watch movies (especially romantic ones), or read a wide variety of books on politics, leadership and spirituality. Who said diplomats can't be romantic?

### 3. What do you enjoy most about working for DIRCO?

Honestly speaking, DIRCO is a very dynamic and unique department – perhaps I should say that it is incomparable.

Personally, DIRCO has accorded me the opportunity to grow, showcase my potential and of course meet different and very interesting people from all walks of life. Surely also, representing one's country abroad is a tremendous honour and privilege; no amount of money can buy that or even come close. Being a member of the African Union Observer Team to South Sudan in 2011, injected the desire in my heart to serve my country abroad and since that visit, I have never looked back.

Being abroad always reminds you that in whatever capacity you are, you are carrying the wishes and aspirations of the entire South Africa; therefore, each one of us has an obligation to make a humble contribution.

### 5. What do you like about your job?

I love everything about my job; however, spending some time with the Minister of Sports, Minister Fikile Mbalula and Bafana Bafana in Mongomo during the Africa Cup of Nations in January 2015 was one of the most difficult, yet rewarding, times in my career as a diplomat, particularly here in Malabo. Due to lack of proper accommodation, I had to spend a number of nights sleeping on the floor just to ensure that the Minister and the entire national team were well looked after. That was until the Minister recommended that I move in with him into the guest house that I had reserved for him and the delegation. Subsequent to that quandry, I learned that "challenges are what make life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful". A big thank you to the Minister and the team! 🙏





**1. Background**



Eritrea is strategically located in the Red Sea within the Horn of Africa. It is bordered on the west and north-west by Sudan, on the south by Ethiopia and on the south-east by Djibouti. The total population is 5,58 million. Asmara is by far the largest city in Eritrea, with a population of some 600 000. There are beautiful jacaranda trees lining Eritrean cities and the bougainvillea flowers covering the villas.

**2. Climate**



The climate here is wonderful year round. May is the hottest month, when the temperature averages 80 – 90 F (26 – 32 C) during the day, and December is the coolest month, when night time temperatures can drop to 32 F (0 C). It's known as the land of "Three Seasons in Two Hours"; in the time you can descend from the cool grandeur of our mountain ranges, through the flowering orchards of the central plateau down to the warm year-long summer breezes of our Red Sea coast.

**3. People**



The population of Eritrea consists of Christians and Muslims with a few groups who have traditional beliefs. Eritreans greet each other and foreigners politely and courteously with a handshake, kisses on the cheek or the bumping of shoulders. The offering of tea or coffee is customary. Being asked to participate in a coffee ceremony is a special invitation involving a ceremony of washing, roasting and grinding the beans before making the coffee.

**4. Food**  
*A delicious tray of injera*



The food is delicious and fresh. The best organic food in the West doesn't compare in flavour to what grows or is harvested in Eritrea. The most common traditional foods are injera, derho and geat.

**5. Safety**

Eritrea is completely crime-free. It is the only country in the world where you can walk downtown without looking over your shoulder at night.

**6. Islands**



Massawa is regarded by many as "the pearl of the Red Sea" and is one of Eritrea's two ports. The ancient city is a centre for many activities available on the Red Sea coast and plays host to the many sun and fun seekers who visit the coast all-year round. With its exquisite Turkish-style architecture and shopping arcades, beautiful mosques, delicious seafood and famous nightclubs, Massawa is the perfect destination to cater for all tastes. In addition to the city's attractions, pristine beaches and world-class diving and snorkelling are available just a short distance from the city.

**7. Traffic**



In Asmara we have no traffic congestion throughout the day thanks to the road users we share the same road with, pedestrians, cyclists and donkey carts.

**7. Cycling**



Daniel Teklehaimanot and Merhawi Kudus returned to their home country after making history by becoming the first black Africans to compete in the Tour de France, with the former spending several days in the polka dot King of the Mountains jersey – enough to earn instant immortality in cycling-mad Eritrea. The pair was competing for the South African-registered MTN-Qhubeka. Eritrea's cyclists are among the best on the continent and have dominated African championships in recent years. Eritreans of all age groups are passionate about cycling.







# Globe at a glimpse

## Mandela Exhibition, Hong Kong



The South African Consul-General, Phumelele Gwala, and guests

The South African Consulate in Hong Kong and responsible for Macao recently organised a Mandela Exhibition at the Rui Cunha Foundation. Cunha offered the art gallery venue free of charge for this purpose as he was such an admirer of former President Nelson Mandela.

The exhibition was held from 1 to 5 December, in order to close on the day marking the second anniversary of his passing. In addition to drawing the people of Macao, the exhibition was visited by over 140 school students who learned about South Africa and the father of our nation.

The Apartheid Museum, the custodian of the exhibition, put together this collection to celebrate the man central to South Africa's fight against apartheid, as a struggle leader, the founder of Umkhonto we Sizwe and the first democratically elected president of South Africa. He built our nation into what it is and did so peacefully. In addition to the panels, the Consulate played three short films about Madiba: life on Robben Island, South Africa in the 1980s, and Madela's release.



## Oslo Mission: The Nordic-African Business Summit 2015



The Nordic-African Business Summit 2015, Nordic-African Business Association's annual flagship event, was held on 29 October 2015 in the Norwegian capital of Oslo.

Thirty-eight speakers and around 400 African and Nordic leaders, including more than 20 ambassadors from Africa, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark, discussed how Nordic capabilities could be linked with African opportunities.

The African continent hosts the world's youngest, fastest-growing urban population and Africa's economy must facilitate rapid growth and change in the coming years. This is why "Linking Nordic Capabilities to African

Opportunities" was the main theme at this year's Nordic-African Business Summit.

"Norway is committed to build further trade relations with the African continent. The Nordic-African Business Summit is one of the initiatives that helps Nordic industries navigate the new investment landscape in African countries," said Monica Mæland, Norwegian Minister of Trade and Industry.

"In 2011, the Norwegian-African Business Summit started with a simple idea: if we brought African and Norwegian business leaders together to share experiences, knowledge would increase, investments would accelerate and jobs would be created.

Today, in its fifth consecutive year, the biggest Nordic-African Business Summit hosts 400 participants from the Nordic and African markets. Due to its great success, the Norwegian-African Business Summit has now become the Nordic-African Business Summit," said Eivind Fjeldstad, Managing Director of NABA.

The popular speed-meeting session in the afternoon offered a great networking arena. Ambassador Queen Zondo and more than 20 ambassadors/embassy representatives were present to discuss opportunities in their respective African countries with potential business partners.

## Tourism promoted in Brazil



The Deputy Minister of Tourism, Tokozile Xasa, visited Brazil to attend a number of important tourism activities, which took place from 22 to 26 September 2015 in São Paulo. The tourism activities mainly focused on tourism-promotion events such as the South African Airways (SAA) Meet Africa Workshop, South African Tourism (SAT) Ubuntu Awards and the ABAV Tourism Trade Show, where South Africa had an opportunity to create awareness and showcase the destination among the biggest players in the tourism trade. At the ABAV, Deputy Minister Xasa was accompanied by 21 premium South African businesses. The

event was a success as the tour operators were presented with an opportunity to expand their businesses through interacting and forming joint ventures with other tourism professionals who were present at the event.

The Deputy Minister also engaged the Brazilian authorities on the implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Tourism, signed in 2014 by the two ministers of tourism, Derek Hanekom and his Brazilian counterpart, Vinicius Lages. These interactions further fortified the relations that exist between the two countries and opened more opportunities in relation to

partnerships, businesses and sharing of information on promoting and developing tourism.







## South African Ambassador to Senegal hosts SA U23 after their win against Senegal



South Africans in Senegal supporting SA Under 23

SA U23 won 3-1 against Senegal on 12 December 2015, which led them to qualify for next year's Olympic Games. South Africans in Senegal came in numbers to support this winning team, which was later hosted for a braai by Ambassador Mxolisi Shilubane.



Ambassador Shilubane with coach Owen Da Gama, deputy coach Molefi Ntseki, the SA Under 23 team and South Africans in Senegal

## Minister Nkoana-Mashabane on Working Visit to the Russian Federation



Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane with Sergey Lavrov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, paid a successful Working Visit to the Russian Federation on 12 November 2015. The purpose of the visit was to co-chair the 13th Session on the annual South Africa-Russia Joint Intergovernmental Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) with the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation, Sergey Donskoy.

The ITEC serves as a framework for economic and trade relations between the Republic of South Africa and the Russian Federation and focuses on the following sectors: trade, investment and banking; mineral resources; energy; transport; agriculture, forestry and fisheries; water

resources; education; justice and constitutional development; and business.

The 13th Session of the ITEC reviewed progress made since the last session held in South Africa in 2014. Discussions were fruitful and all subcommittees committed to strengthening implementation of all the existing commitments with the aim of producing tangible benefits for both countries.

Minister Nkoana-Mashabane also held bilateral talks with her counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. The two ministers exchange views on political developments on their respective continents and also deliberated on global and multilateral matters of interest and concern.

## Gramado Tourism Trade Fair, 6 to 7 November 2015



The Mission in São Paulo collaborated with South African Airways and SA Tourism to collectively promote destination South Africa in one of the largest tourism trade exhibitions in Brazil known as the Gramado Tourism Trade Fair. The fair was held in the city of Gramado in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, south of Brazil. The Mission also invited the local (Brazilian) tour operators who are actively involved in promoting South Africa in Brazil as well as South African hotels to join efforts in promoting the country in the South Africa stand.

The fair takes place annually and is among the largest tourism trade exhibitions in the Latin American region. In 2015, the fair attracted more than 2 000 trademarks and more than 14 000 professionals from the tourism trade. People from over 50 countries visited the Gramado Tourism

Trade Fair 2015. The main brands included airlines, hotels, resorts, spas, restaurants, tourism sectors, international services, tourism services, lodges and the winery sector.

At the conclusion of the Gramado Tourism Trade Fair 2015, the Mission noted through its partners, local tour operators and the South African hotels which participated in the South Africa stand that there was an increase in the number of deals that they concluded during this year's event. In light of the above, the Mission is of a view that South Africa should continue maintaining its presence in the Gramado Tourism Trade Fair as it provides us with the platform to reach both the Brazilian tourism trade and consumers from the southern part of the country.



# Inspiration for this year Being and staying active

For most people, the benefits of exercise are to have well defined muscles, be it legs, biceps or even the most talked about six pack (abdominal muscles). They are not aware that exercise can also lift your mood, ward off depression and help the brain age more gracefully – free of memory loss and dementia.

According to researchers, even a short intense exercise can improve mental focus and cognitive performance for any challenging tasks faced.

DIRCO Sports Council, in collaboration with Employee Health and Wellness, encourages all employees, regardless of their age, to join any of the sporting codes, be it athletics, ladies soccer, male soccer, netball, pool, volleyball, tennis, aerobics, chess or golf.

Let's all make commitment to exercise, get healthier and look and feel better. 🏃



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