

# IT'S YOUR

Internal Newsletter of the Department of International  
Relations and Cooperation

# VOICE

ubuntu diplomat



*Flame of Democracy at Constitution Hill*

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## EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor-In-Chief	Clayson Monyela
Managing Editor	Zengeziwe Msimang
Editor	Kgopotso Rapakuana
Guest Editor	Bingo Thamaga
Copy Editor	Delien Burger
Designer	Muzi Msimanga
Photographer	Jacoline Schoonees
Contributors	Daisy Motsisi, Laoura Lazouras and Mapitso Rathabe
Publisher	The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) ©2016 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,



I am highly gratified and privileged to be afforded this rare opportunity to introduce the third edition for 2016 of the *It's your Voice* publication to you, my dear readers and fellow travellers in our diplomatic journey.

Hey, this one is a must-read and indeed *unputdownable* ....

The sobering stories shared by our colleagues, Ms Nthabiseng Skade and Ms Katlego Mthelebofu, will inspire you.

Those of us who are still attending FAAC and in internship, please take cue from these illustrious articles.

Also please enjoy the information shared by Mr Georgino Beethoven Dala Cabimbinda under Q&A and *Things I like About Guinea* by BM Tiba. While still here, please learn Le Portuguese on page 5 to know how to drive in the Lusophone countries. You will soon be posted to Angola, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique or Sao Tome and Principe in Africa and this lesson will come handy.

Read about Deputy Minister Luwellyn Landers' recent Working Visit to Malawi during the Third Session of the Joint Commission of Cooperation between South Africa and Malawi.

Then, marvel at the prestigious Most Attractive Employees Award that Dirco won from UNIVERSUM under the category: Humanities/ Liberal Arts and Education. DIRCO is, indeed, an employer of choice.

Now, have a look at the cover page to reflect on the flame of democracy and, then ponder at the banner of the Freedom Day and think hard as our country marches on to achieve another milestone, the Local Government Elections on 3 August 2016.

Lastly, colleagues, please take a chill at home and go through a poem titled "*Hard-working Women*" in this edition. You will appreciate the toil of women in DIRCO and other departments, factories, mines, farms and any other work station. Put yourself in the shoes of the African women who are performing their daily chores and are hard at work making ends meet at the public stalls, informal markets and so on. That's a nation at work!

*BT*

Bingo Thamaga

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is Everybody's Business.**



**FREEDOM  
DAY**

# Deputy Minister Luwellyn Landers tours the new Chancery in Lilongwe

High Commissioner Cassandra Mbuyane-Mokone used the opportunity of the Third Joint Commission of Cooperation between the Republic of South Africa and the Republic of Malawi, held in Lilongwe from 6 to 7 April 2016, to take the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Luwellyn Landers, and senior departmental officials on a tour of the new Chancery that is currently nearing completion.

The construction project in Lilongwe began in March 2013 on land donated by the Malawian Government and includes the building of a new Chancery and three staff residences.

The building of the Chancery is in line with the South African Government's policy to move away from renting office space and accommodation, as a cost containment measure.

The new Chancery is testament to the warm and cordial bilateral relations the two countries have built and maintained over the years.

The Mission anticipates occupation of the Chancery before the end of June 2016.



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CAPE TOWN  
Gaylord Anderson

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gaylor@nedbank.co.za

DURBAN  
Rakesh Deochander

+27 (0)31 364 1171

rakeshd@nedbank.co.za

JOHANNESBURG  
Diana Perumal

+27 (0)11 667 9059

dianap@nedbank.co.za

PRETORIA  
Cindy Asamoah Awuah

+27 (0)12 366 7450

cindyas@nedbank.co.za

## DIRCO RECEIVES MOST ATTRACTIVE EMPLOYEE AWARD

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) has received the third place, according to 23 000 professionals, in the recent UNIVERSUM – Most Attractive Employees Awards for the category Humanities/Liberal Arts/Education. This is something to be proud of seeing that DIRCO was only surpassed by organisations such as Google.

The research survey indicated that DIRCO was perceived by other professionals as a desired place to work due to aspects like international exposure, training opportunities and travelling. Thanks to the work done by the whole DIRCO team, but specifically branches such as Corporate Management, Public Diplomacy and Diplomatic Training, Research and Development, DIRCO has a strong Employer Brand. 🌐



## Meet South Africa

Go to [www.southafrica.net](http://www.southafrica.net)

## 2015 FAAC class experience

By Nthabiseng Skade

Directorate: Decentralised Unit

“Im maintenant prêt à aller servir mon pays”



Having been part of the Foreign Affairs Attaché Course (FAAC) class of 2015 was one of the most important highlights since I've been in the department. I thought I knew what the department was all about but I was wrong. Attending this course was really an eye-opener and a great experience. We were 21 people in class, each with different personalities; one had to learn to be patient, to work under pressure and to work as a team to produce good results. Being a full-time student and a mother posed a huge challenge, but I learned that with determination anything is possible.

For me, the most challenging subjects were Finance and Security Studies. The last time I worked with calculations was at primary school and I thought I would never make it but through hard work, teamwork and dedication, one was able to rise above everything. Security Studies was one subject that dealt with my whole being, my physical strength, emotions, interpersonal skills, listening skills and paying attention to detail. At the end, we became well equipped to go out there to serve our country with distinction.

My mission visit was Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo. “Wooooow!” – one amazing experience. I'm glad I went to an African country because I learned the importance of working with what one had to produce results. Another thing that I realised was that being a Third Secretary in a mission meant that you should be a master of all trades and be willing to go an extra mile in getting the mission up and running. In a space of three weeks, I came back having learned basic French and a bit of their local language. I would like to say “merci beaucoup” to DTRD for awarding us with such an opportunity; it does not only benefit us as DIRCO employees but it also equips us with how to deal with issues in our personal life. I must say one has grown intellectually and emotionally.

Tips for the class of 2016:

Do not postpone studying or do your school work, sacrifice your time and work hard; it's only for one year and you will get good results. 🌐

South Africa  
Inspiring new ways

## LEARN A NEW LANGUAGE

## PORTUGUESE

## DIRIGIR UM CARRO

DRIVING A CAR



O carro	car
A caravana	caravan
O camião	lorry
Os veículos pesados	heavy vehicles
O trânsito	traffi
O pedestre	pedestrian
Siga	go, drive

Aluguer de carros	car rentals
Vamos para Pretoria	let's go to Pretoria

A estrada	road
A auto-estrada	highway
A portagem	toll gates
Desvio	off ramp
Obras, trabalhos	road works
Cuidado, atenção	caution, attention
Perigo	danger
Prioridade	priority (right of way)
Reduzir marcha	slow down
Pare	stop

A estrada nacional (N)	National road (N)
A estrada de Pretoria	The road to Pretoria

## BOA VIAGEM!

HAVE A GOOD TRIP!



A bomba de gasolina	petrol station
A gasolina com chumbo	leaded petrol
A gasolina sem chumbo	unleaded petrol
O gasóleo	diesel
O óleo	oil
A água	water
Os pneus	tyres

## A bomba de gasolina / Estações de serviço



Quanto custa?	How much?
Vinte litros faz favor	Twenty liters, please
Encha	Fill it up
Verifique o oleo, faz favor	Check the oil, please

O estacionamento	parking, car park
O parqueamento	parking, car park
O parcómetro	parking meter
A garagem	garage

Estacionamento proibido	No parking
Tow zone	Zona de reboque

## Vamos praticar

1. What are these called in Portuguese?
2. How do you ask the attendant to fill up?
3. How do you ask him to check the oil and the tyres?
4. He wishes you a good journey. What does he say?





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**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**



# Hard-working Women

BY MSANDI KABABA

**H**old on Women of great courage  
You have held on so bravely and  
tirelessly

Hold on Women of great courage, hold on.

Women have taken control of their families  
and their families are now living a better life  
than before.

Women no longer depend on their husbands to  
pay for their children's school fees

They have put poverty to an end

Jealous down, let us give credit where due

Women of this country, you have become  
bread winners for your families

Women of Swaziland, you do not ask for any  
favours but sought

for space to nurture, grow, and blossom in all  
areas of life . . .

A sister, daughter, mother, grandmother, a  
businesswoman, a teacher,  
a nurse the list is endless.

You have boldly attacked rough situations and  
you have conquered

You have stood for what you believe in

Your dreams have come true, your wishes have  
been fulfilled

Hold on Women of great courage, hold on.

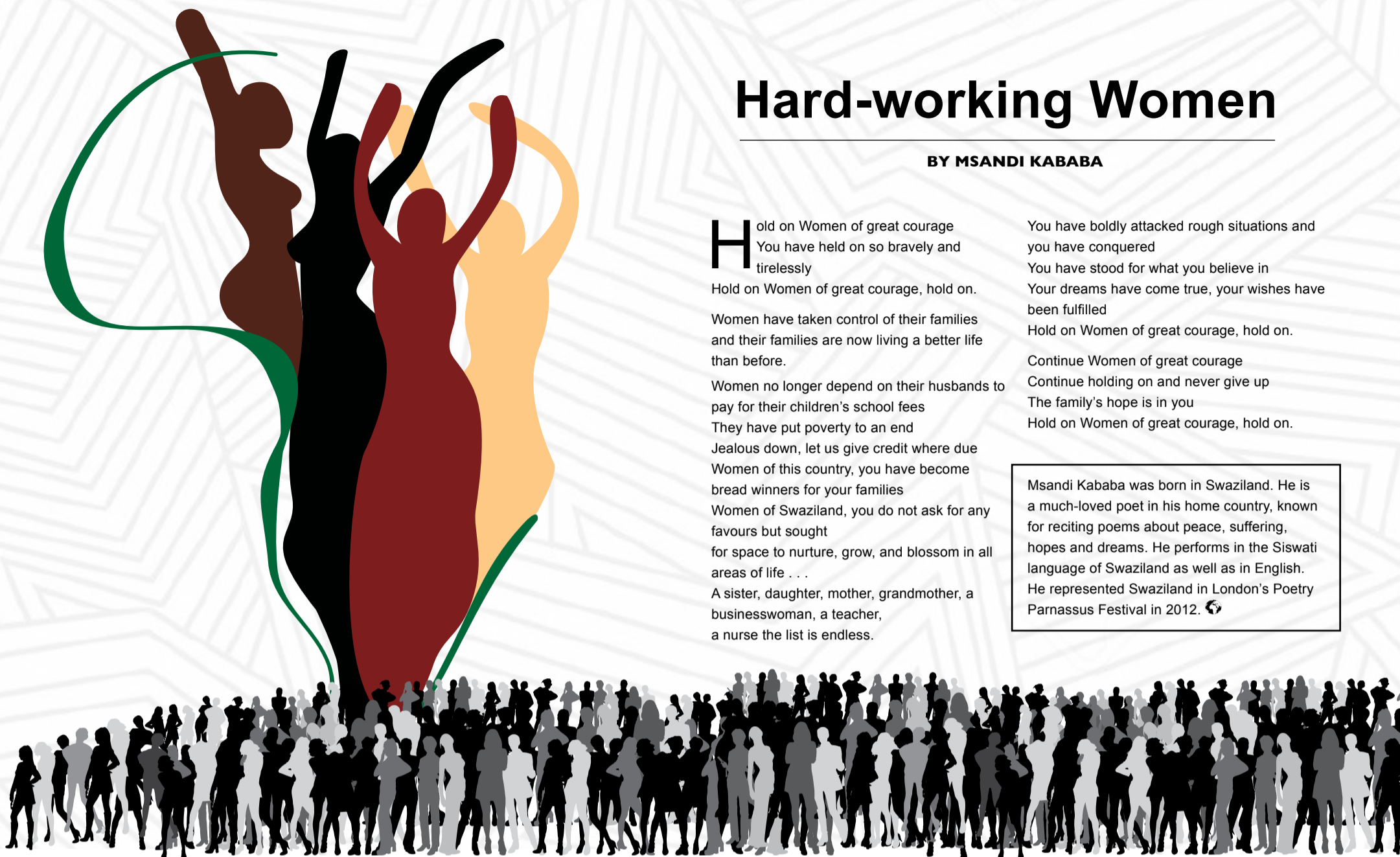
Continue Women of great courage

Continue holding on and never give up

The family's hope is in you

Hold on Women of great courage, hold on.

Msandi Kababa was born in Swaziland. He is a much-loved poet in his home country, known for reciting poems about peace, suffering, hopes and dreams. He performs in the Siswati language of Swaziland as well as in English. He represented Swaziland in London's Poetry Parnassus Festival in 2012. 🌍



## VOICES FROM DIRCO

### MY LAST DAYS AS AN INTERN AT DIRCO

BY KATLEGO M MTHELEBOFU

CHIEF DIRECTORATE: POLICY RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS (PRAU)

**A** colleague sent an e-mail indicating how we should start the countdown to the end of our internship. It then dawned on me how time really does fly. Just yesterday (figuratively speaking), we walked through the gates of DIRCO, we had access cards, PERSAL numbers and shuttle tickets issued to us and we officially became a part of the system. It would be improper to start this article without saying thank you to the Director-General, Ambassador Jerry Matjila, for extending our contract for seven months. Apparently, it was the first time in the history of the internship programme that such an extension was granted. So, thank you Ambassador Matjila. It really meant a lot.

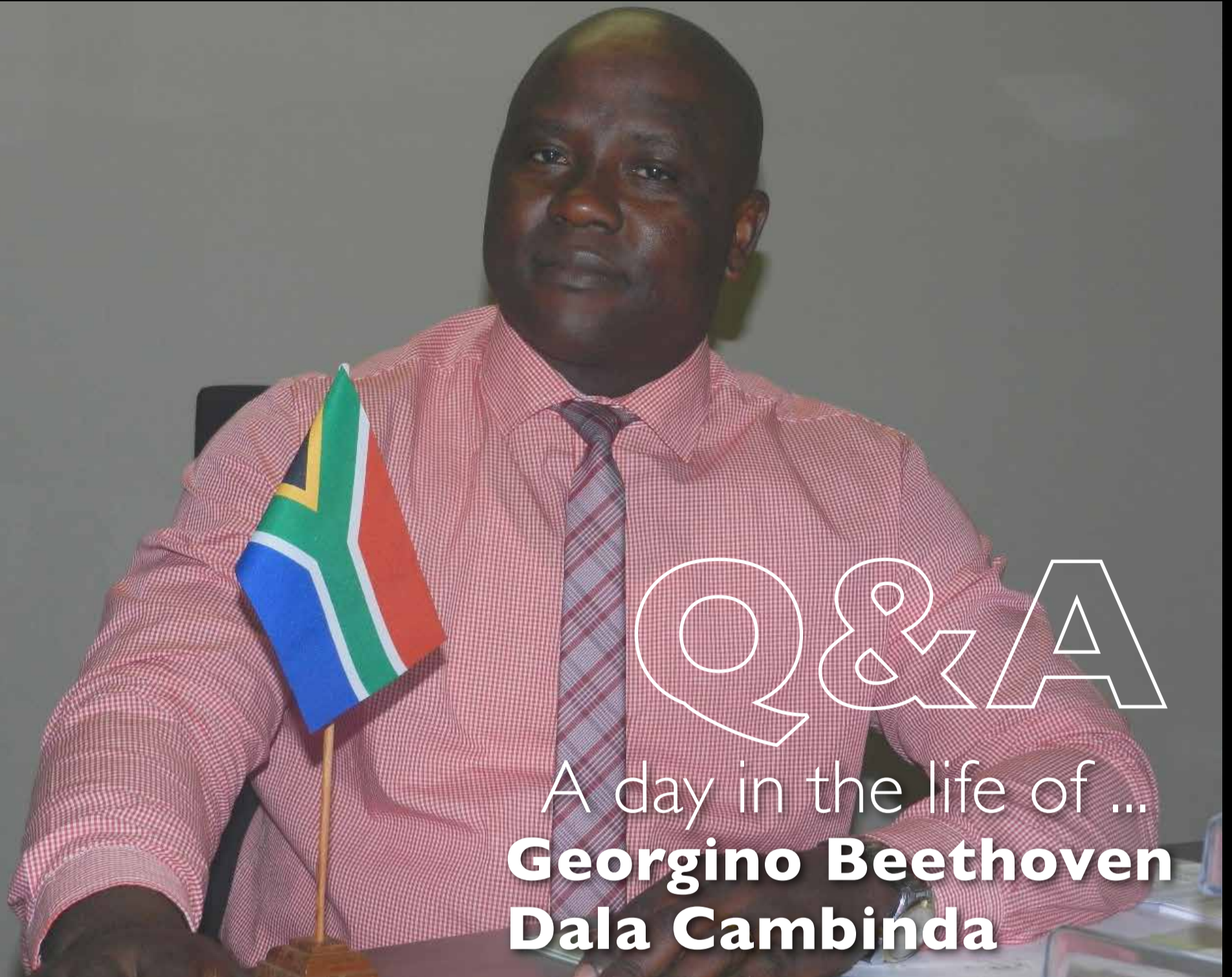
Apart from being equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills so that one can enter the formal working environment, life lessons were also learned.

From learning about the work conducted by the department with its various stakeholders; listening to the colleagues' experiences who went on posting to become diplomats; meeting former ministers, deputy ministers and ambassadors and how they groomed the colleagues in the department; submissions and memorandums being sent up (and down); participating in supply chain processes – the list is just endless. Needless to say, it was an introduction to the working world as well as the culture of government.

Experiencing the joy that has and is still being brought to the department through the Adult Basic Education and Training Programme is but one of the few initiatives that needs to be commended. A dream (education) deferred is not a dream denied.

From being left behind while you were running for your dear life to catch the shuttle in the morning, to being told that the regulations do not allow for us to be dropped near the building entrance, to waiting at the bus stop until the shuttle comes back – all I can say is that I will definitely not forget these interesting times.

By the time you read this, we would be well on our way. A word of thanks should be extended to our intern coordinators for their assistance during our stay here. I think it is safe to say that we appreciate every single effort it took to make our stay a memorable one. To my colleagues, go on to be great as your futures await you. DIRCO was our stepping stone to greatness, don't forget that. To the colleagues in the department who provided much-needed guidance through this journey, thank you. Your teachings will be put to good use, no doubt about it. 🌍



# Q&A

## A day in the life of ... Georgino Beethoven Dala Cambinda

### 1. Tell us about yourself ...

Déjà vu? I guess it is just a friendly reminder of the first day and the first question asked by the chair of the panel during the job interview at OR Tambo Building. Getting back to the question, I am Georgino Beethoven Dala Cambinda, a loving husband and a proud father of two boys and a girl. I am stationed at Branch: DTRD, under the Directorate: Language Services and Training as a Deputy Director: Portuguese, responsible for translations and interpreting services as well as training.

My previous employer was the North West Department of Basic Education. I was employed as an educator for over a decade and a half – the last five of those years, as a school principal. It was an experience that shaped and moulded me into the person I have become. I am a big believer in persistence and perseverance. I am of the opinion that when you want something and that very thing is meant for you, the whole universe will connive to ensure you get it. My other philosophy is that it is extremely important to be useful and kind to a fellow human beings. For a simple reason – people do not care how much you know until they know how much you care. I always strive not to be a success but rather to be of value to the directorate.

### 2. What is your daily routine?

Each sunrise brings a new day filled with new hopes for a new beginning. There are no repetition of routines in this dynamic department. I will therefore give a brief overview of activities taking place on a daily basis. Upon arrival at the office, I

have the habit of reading devotions extracted from the book of life and thank Him for a new day. Thereafter, I go through new e-mails to be informed of what the day holds for me. Depending on the day, we would have a management meeting to keep track of the mandate of the directorate. Upon receipt of a translation request from other branches, it is attended to as a matter of priority. If the request is for interpreting, I would prepare a glossary of the terminology of the subject matter to be discussed or request the unit to provide briefing documents if any is available. That is to ensure that the service rendered to our clients is of the highest quality. I provide Portuguese language training for heads of mission, officials going on posting and special requests from other government departments.

I am also responsible for coordinating language training for officials in the missions to ensure that officials abroad live, work and participate effectively in a foreign environment and the diplomatic community. In a nutshell, all matters related to Portuguese language training falls within my scope of work.

### 3. How long have you been with DIRCO?

Well ... not long enough, that is in comparison to my previous job. This is the beginning of my fifth year with DIRCO.

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

As indicated earlier, DIRCO is very dynamic and there is always something new on a daily basis, unlike the yearly routine I was accustomed to at a school. It is not easy to pick

a particular or single event, because each has its own flavour of uniqueness. However, the opportunity of being able to represent the country abroad, as a country with a destination of choice for either business, tourism or even permanent residence – that is the cherry on top of the other cherries on the cake. And that is what I still need to accomplish in the far or near future.

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

I have a passion of working with people and it is my hope that there is reciprocity on their side too. On a daily basis, my work entails that I interact with people from all walks of life from the most important citizen of the country, the Head of State, to foreign nationals. Hence, I made reference earlier about the perceptions of people. The fact that I have colleagues in DTRD who are highly proficient at what they do, makes me like my job even more. The famous saying, "No man is an island" bears evidence to my fondness of working with people. With the stamp of approval by the famous saying, "Umntu umuntu ngabantu", a principle engraved in the hearts of many from across the length and breadth of our beloved country South Africa.

### 6. Anything else you would like to tell us about yourself

I am sure all I have said would be enough for this article. I am deeply honoured to have had the opportunity to feature in this edition of the *It's Your Voice*. In conclusion, "What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead." – Nelson Mandela 🌍





### 1. Work at the Mission

South Africa established diplomatic relations with Guinea in 1995 and has since then experienced warming of these relations, culminating in the signing in 2006 of the Joint Commission of Cooperation. Historical relations, however, date back more than 50 years when South Africa got support from Guinea during the days when it needed help the most. Of the 24 missions accredited to and resident in Guinea, South Africa is one of the two embassies from southern Africa, the other one being Angola. There are 11 African embassies thus far.

### 2. Cuisine

The staple food in Guinea is rice produced locally but mostly imported from countries such as Pakistan, India and China. The country is endowed with fish from which many dishes are offered by domestic and foreign restaurants. The added advantage is the prevalence of many varieties of fishing resources. I am also proud to mention that the local production of rice is now dominated by the tripartite alliance between South Africa, Guinea and Vietnam. Known Guinean dishes include Yam, Platin, Casava and sweet potatoes. However in Guinea, all dishes are usually served with rice.

### 3. Passion for soccer



Guinea is so passionate about football to the extent that most streets are turned into soccer stadia after school hours. The youth use very small improvised scoring goals made of nets.

### 4. Tourist attractions



Kinkon Falls

Post the advent of democracy in 2010, Guinea is hard at work constructing world-standard hotels, the likes of which include Sheraton. Guinea is proud of the Loos Islands off the coast of Conakry constituted of Kassa, Room and Fotoba while Coraille, Blanche and Cabris are smaller islands to the south. There are also other attractions countrywide, some of which are UNESCO heritage sites. There are also other historical and cultural heritage sites of slave trafficking in the coastal areas of Guinea and colonial jails in places such as Forécariah, Dubreka, Boffa and Boké. The fort of Boké is considered as one of the biggest and oldest slave houses in West Africa. Built in 1866, it was inaugurated during the reign of Napoleon III. It was a real pleasure and emotion, in equal measure, to visit this place together with Ambassador MM Mdingi in October 2015 while officially visiting the rice and vegetable projects in the region.

### 5. Youth and artist participation in democracy

It was impressive to see the youth of Guinea setting aside all their youthful activities and participating in their democracy during the period leading up to the October 2015 presidential elections. They did this by setting up kiosks along all the important streets in the towns, providing music and all in the name of engaging youth in the election process of their country. They encouraged youth to register for voting, explained the process and also canvassed for their respective parties.

For their part, musicians took the opportunity to compile songs about candidates of their choice. During important events,

especially organised by candidates, they performed and sang their songs in a manner that commended, supported and even recommended their particular candidate. It was a pleasure to witness such unique way of canvassing during the October 2015 presidential elections.

### 6. Traditional attire, music and hospitality

Guineans, like most West African countries, are known for their colourful dresses. Guinea took it a step further when the then head of state by the name of Sekou Toure issued a decree appealing to all Guineans to wear their Guinean attire on Fridays wherever they are, be it at public offices, mosques, churches or lazing around. All Fridays in Guinea look as if our State of the Nation Address is about to start. This instils pride in the citizenry.

Traditional/country or contemporary/modern music holds a very important place in the Guinean culture and a jaw-dropping experience listening live or on television to such instruments as the djembe, kora, balafon, to mention but a few.

Since being here, one has experienced hearty and warm welcoming attitudes of Guineans towards foreigners.

### 7. Easy access to authorities

In Guinea, it is easy to meet with the ministers and discuss issues of common interest regardless of rank as long as they recognise your mandate. This courtesy is also extended to members of the private sector paying business visits to the country. This, in most cases, facilitates processes as they also take it upon themselves to suggest further meetings depending on the issues under consideration. This is in the interest of being accommodative and welcoming to all whose intentions are to assist build the country.

### 8. Climate



Mount Nimba

The climate in Guinea is nowhere closer to South Africa's. It is humid tropical along the coast, tropical in the north, savannah in the north-east and sub-equatorial in the south-east. In Conakry, you have to get used to a dry season and rainy season. Full stop. For the rest of your sojourn here you have to forget about our spring, summer, autumn and winter. When you have run the full circle in one year, you enjoy the two seasons, more so that the rainy season culminates in an abundance of fruit varieties.

### 9. Rotation of hosting the national day celebrations

The national day celebrations in Guinea take place on 2 October each year. It was agreed that some towns be given an opportunity to also host the event. This was started in 2010 and some towns have already benefited by way of having their roads, city halls and other relevant buildings built, repaired or given a new face lift. National roads from Conakry to the chosen towns have also been improved remarkably. The idea was to use the celebration of national days as an opportunity to bring about development in the regions of Guinea which were left out in terms of infrastructure development. 🌍



# Globe at a glimpse

## Oslo and Sandefjord travel expos 2016: Successful promotion of South Africa

**A**mbassador Queen Anne Zondo and the Oslo Mission participated in the annual Oslo Travel Expo from 15 to 17 January 2016, which gathered 600 travel exhibitors and approximately 40 000 visitors in Norway's snow-drenched capital.

Oslo Travel Expo – Telenor Arena has become one of the most popular and important international meeting places for the travel industry worldwide, and hence it is the ideal platform for promoting South Africa to a large and travel-eager Scandinavian audience.

The Oslo Mission had a beautifully decorated stand with stunning images of the rainbow nation as well as flags and artifacts and an array of promotional material consisting of maps, DVDs and leaflets.

The stand received a lot of positive attention as well as a solid stream of pleasant visits from potential tourists to South Africa, and the staff provided information, inspiration and insights to a large number of globetrotters.

The South African Embassy also got the opportunity to showcase South African culture through a beautiful musical performance by Xoliswa Roaldsoy (vocals) and Zwai Mbula (marimba) to the great delight of the audience.

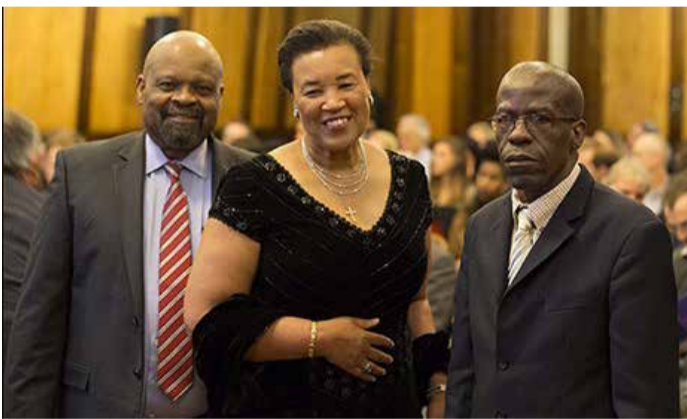
From 13 to 14 February 2016, the Oslo Mission continued their tourism promo trail – this time to the seaside city of Sandefjord. It was a lovely weekend in the name of tourism and the Embassy staff had great interactions with a number of travel-eager visitors.



The Oslo Mission at the Sandefjord travel fair



## Third International Day of Sport for Development and Peace



South African High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Obed Mlaba, (C) Commonwealth Secretary-General, Patricia Scotland QC and (R) South African Deputy High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Golden Neswiswi

**T**o mark the Third International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, the South African High Commission in London hosted the 2016 Commonwealth Debate on Sport and Sustainable Development at South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, on 6 April 2016. Delegates were welcomed by South Africa's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Obed Mlaba. The opening remarks were made by the new Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, Patricia Scotland QC. The well-attended debate was an opportunity to reflect on the potential contribution that sport could make to human and social development, and building peaceful and inclusive societies.

## Freedom Day celebrations in Berlin

The South African Embassy in Berlin, Germany, celebrated its National Day on 27 April 2016. The Vulingoma Youth Choir from Cape Town as well as hip-hop artist Yugen Blackrock and Mr Thusi's band, whose members also happen to be staff members, graced the occasion with their talent.

In his speech, Chargé d'Affaires a.i. Horst Brammer said that 2016 marked the 40th anniversary of the 16 June 1976 student uprisings in Soweto that proved catalytic to our attainment of freedom; 60 years since the women's march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to demand an end to the pass laws; as well as the 20th anniversary of the signing into law the Constitution of the Republic.

The keynote address was delivered by State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office, Maria Böhmer, who highlighted the good bilateral relationship between South Africa and Germany.

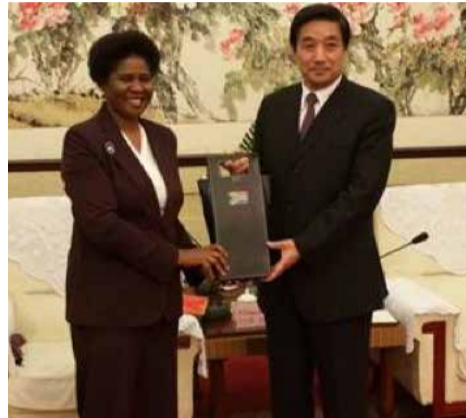
After the official programme, guests enjoyed South African food, wines and music.





## Ambassador Msimang visits Liaoning Province

On 15 March 2016, Dolana Msimang, South Africa's Ambassador to the People's Republic of China, visited Dalian, Liaoning Province, to deliver a keynote address at the rolling-out and ribbon-cutting ceremony of the first two Class D45 GFB diesel locomotives of the joint manufacturing project between China Rail Rollingstock Corporation and Transnet South Africa. Under this part of the project, 232 diesel locomotives will be manufactured. The total value of the project is R9,9 billion. The bulk of the locomotives, 212, will be manufactured in Durban, South Africa, contributing to the reindustrialisation of South Africa, the creation of sustainable jobs, the transfer of technology and expertise, the development of skills as well as stimulating downstream industries.



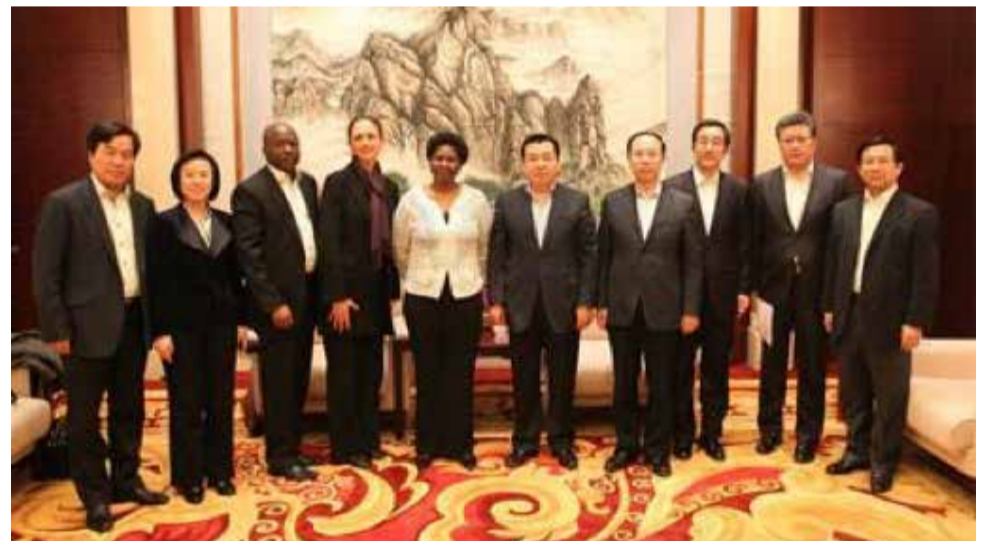
Ambassador Msimang also undertook site visits to the Dalian Shipbuilding Industry Corporation and Dalian Port. Following this visit, Ambassador Msimang visited Shenyang, Liaoning Province, from 21 to 22 March 2016, where she engaged the leadership of the province and municipal government. The purpose of the visit was to explore opportunities for future cooperation between South Africa, Shenyang City and Liaoning Province in the areas of the marine economy, manufacturing, agriculture, tourism, education and people-to-people exchanges. The Ambassador's programme included engagements with Governor Chen Quifa and Vice Governor Bing Zhigang; the Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the Shenyang People's Congress, Zhao Changyi; the Chairperson of the China Council for Promotion of International Trade Liaoning (CCPIT) Sub-Council; Han Qing; the Secretary-General of the Liaoning Provincial People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, Sun Delan; and various other high-level provincial and municipal officials.

Bilateral trade between South Africa and the Liaoning Province currently stands at US\$420 million, with 15 Liaoning enterprises having invested in South Africa and over 20 South African companies with a presence in Liaoning Province.

Ambassador Msimang also enjoyed informative guided tours of the Shenyang Urban Planning Exhibition Centre and the historical Shenyang Forbidden City.



Ambassador Msimang inspecting one of the locomotives



Ambassador Msimang following the meeting with Vice Governor Bing Zhigang

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T's & C's apply



# Head injuries can be dangerous

## Concussion patients should be closely monitored

A head injury is a potentially dangerous medical condition that can lead to bleeding in or around the brain, and even death. This is one of the reasons why all patients who have suffered a head injury should be closely monitored and receive urgent medical care.

One of the problems is that it can be difficult for the ordinary person to know exactly when trauma to the head is serious or not. However, even concussion, the most common but least serious of brain injuries, can cause damage to the brain and have a serious impact on the health of an individual. All head injuries, including concussion, should therefore be taken seriously.

For this reason, the Government Employees Medical Scheme (GEMS) highlighted this important condition on World Head Injury Awareness Day, 20 March, advising any individual who had sustained a trauma to the head, and possible brain injury, to be assessed by a doctor.

### What is concussion?

Concussion is described as a traumatic brain injury that alters the way the brain functions. Concussion is often difficult to diagnose, particularly because not all concussion-related injuries result in loss of consciousness or show immediate effects.

However, it should be reiterated that all brain-related injuries, including concussion, can be dangerous and should receive due care. A first, concussion usually does not cause permanent damage, but a further head injury, even if it is not severe, can have serious consequences.

Concussions can happen during an accident or even a sports game where there is a heavy blow to the head. People often do not realise that a high-contact sport like rugby or football can easily result in players and school children becoming concussed.

### What should you do in the event of a suspected concussion?

After a suspected concussion, the affected individual should be in the presence of an adult who can record and monitor symptoms related to a concussion.

The initial treatment of concussion should include basic life support and cervical spine protection while the level of consciousness is assessed.

The patient should be taken to a medical practitioner for a neurological examination soon after the injury. During this assessment, coordination and motor functioning will be assessed with attention paid to cognitive function.

Medical assistance should urgently be sought if the person loses consciousness, has a seizure,

experiences visual disturbances, balance problems or if their headache becomes severe.

If a young child falls on his/her head from a height higher than one metre, it is normally advised to seek medical assistance as soon as possible so the necessary precautionary assessments can be undertaken. A child that loses consciousness should be taken to an emergency facility immediately.

The patient should avoid taking excessive amounts of painkillers, or any anti-inflammatory medicines following a suspected concussion, but rather follow doctor's orders when it comes to treatment. The individual should also not attempt to work on a computer, study, exercise or be environments where there is excessive light or loud music.

Rest is important for people with concussions and during the recovery period a person may experience difficulty concentrating, mild headaches, sensitivity to light and irritability.

The treating medical practitioner may decide that the patient should undergo a CAT or MRI scan of the brain to assess possible damage to the brain and provide emergency care if symptoms worsen.

### What are the symptoms of concussion?

The symptoms of a concussion can include the following:


- nausea
- dizziness
- headache
- memory lapse
- mood swings
- poor concentration
- fatigue.

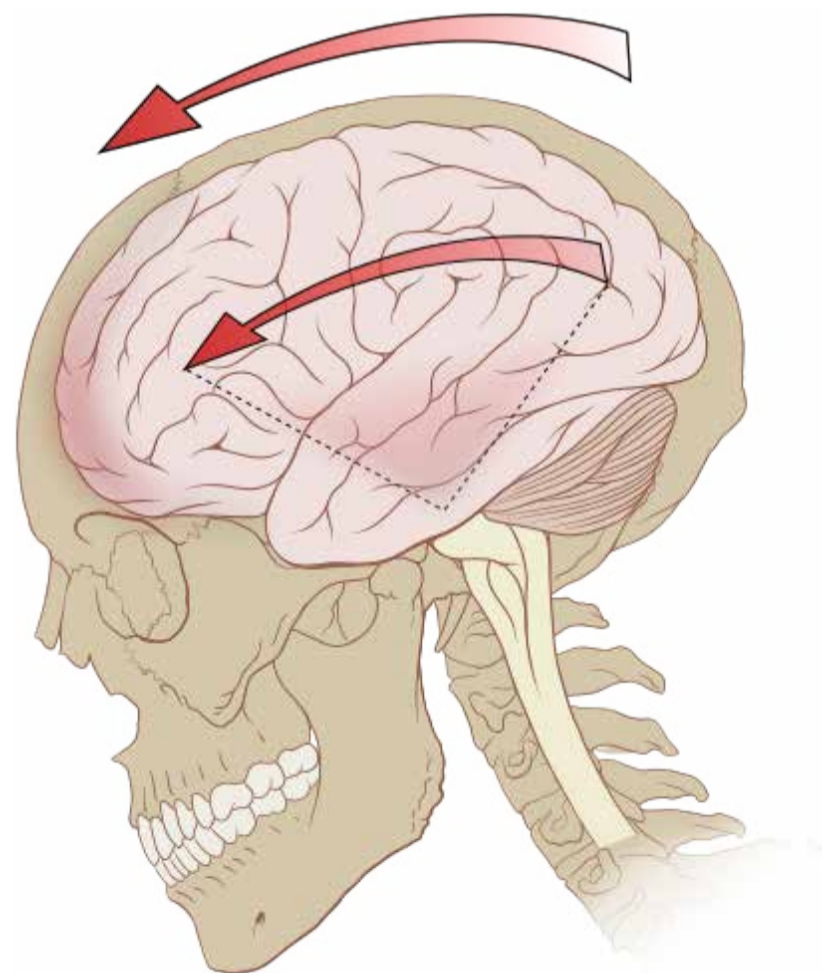
Symptoms such as prolonged drowsiness and confusion may develop soon after a head trauma incident or only become evident later.

### Five grades of concussion

There are five grades of concussion, the first being the least serious. The grades are as follows:

1. mildest grade and involves only confusion
2. involves confusion and amnesia that last less than five minutes
3. involves the symptoms of grade 1 and 2 as well as retrograde amnesia and unconsciousness for less than five minutes
4. includes the above symptoms as well as unconsciousness that last between five and 10 minutes
5. includes the symptoms of grade 4 however, the unconsciousness lasts longer than 10 minutes.

The American Academy of Neurology guidelines suggest that permanent brain injury can occur with either a Grade 2 or a Grade 3 concussion. 



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