

# UBUNTU

South Africa's Public Diplomacy in action



*"This work is not for  
yourselves,  
kill that spirit  
of self  
and do not live  
above your  
people  
live with them  
and if you can rise,  
bring  
someone  
with you"*

Charlotte Mannya-Maxeke



As one enters the Mapungubwe National Park and World Heritage Site, one of the things that first captures the eye is the architecture of the Museum and Interpretive Centre. The extraordinary curvature and lines of the building mesmerise visitors but the true treasures are located inside. The centre was constructed with the intention of merging the natural location with the park's cultural heritage, by using modern environmentally sensitive techniques. In 2009, the building won the World Architectural Building of the Year Award, outperforming buildings from New York, Singapore and China. The stone-walling technique used in the building of the centre was adopted from a native method prevalent in the Mapungubwe area.



# credits

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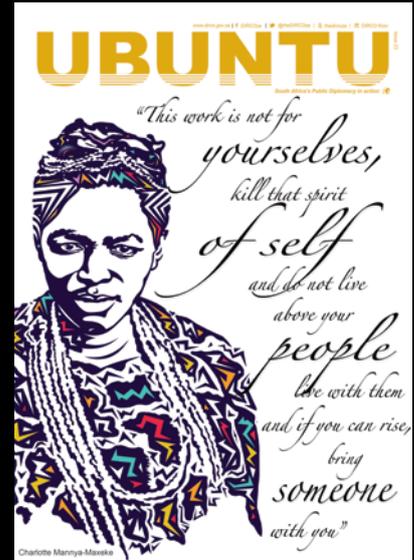
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## UBUNTU

a Nguni word meaning humanity  
The Department of International Relations  
and Cooperation's quarterly magazine



## ON THE COVER

In March 2021, government launched Human Rights Month under the theme: "The Year of Charlotte Mxheke: Promoting Human Rights in the Age of COVID-19".

This year's theme pays tribute to the liberation struggle hero and human rights campaigner, Charlotte Mxheke.

Mxheke (1871 – 1939) was a South African religious leader and social and political activist. She was the first black woman to graduate with a university degree in southern Africa with a B.Sc from Wilberforce University Ohio, United States of America, in 1901.

"The struggles of Mxheke has left us a legacy of never allowing your circumstances to determine your destiny. Throughout her life, she has fought for the restoration of human rights to Africans both at home and across the globe. She understood the nexus of race, class and gender in our struggles both at home and elsewhere in the world." – Sport, Arts and Culture Minister, Nathi Mthethwa.

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international relations  
& cooperation

Department:  
International Relations and Cooperation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



“  
**TALENT IS LIKE ELECTRICITY.  
WE DON'T UNDERSTAND  
ELECTRICITY. WE USE IT.**

Maya Angelou



**ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE:**  
Levers for Building the Africa we Want

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## LETTER FROM THE MINISTER

International relations have had to assume a key role in responding to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. Prior to the pandemic going global, multilateralism had been severely marginalised by isolationist policies and attacks on multilateral institutions.

Diplomacy is often the ability to build networks and to use them maximally when needed. Picking up the phone and calling colleagues for assistance and support may not be part of the political armour provided in training but for foreign relations it's an indispensable art.

The year 2019 signalled significant practical action in support of gender equality globally. 2020 was to be the year in which 20 years of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda would be celebrated and reinforced, 25 years since the Beijing Platform of Action and the beginning of the implementation of the Generation Equality Forum for practical action.

The United Nations (UN) Generation Equality Forum is one of the most promising international women's movements since Beijing. It is made more important by the advocacy and leadership young women worldwide have displayed.

These young women, supported by the UN Executive Director, Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, have decided they want to be the generation that concretises the achievement of

gender equality. Their initiative has highlighted important priorities as we grappled with COVID-19. Gender-based violence (GBV) and femicide are a global challenge that all societies must combat effectively and in unity. We incorporated this awareness into our strategy and programme of action as Chair of the African Union (AU) and as part of the African response to COVID-19.

Through the AU, we developed a coordinated and coherent response that we monitored consistently. We ensured that all member states were informed and involved by using all our structures on the continent and in regions. As Chair, South Africa inserted the priority of GBV response on to the AU agenda and promoted 2020 to 2030 as the Decade of the Financial Inclusion of Women in Africa.

Generation Equality has drawn the entire globe into the effort to combat inequality. All sectors are being addressed. From justice, education, labour laws, security and many others. The initiative draws together the public and private and civil-society stakeholders to establish inclusive collaboration and ensure that all role players contribute.

Responding to the pandemic also exposed Africa and the developing world's vulnerabilities and pointed to areas that we need to address speedily. Our public health systems are weak and vulnerable and must be supported by increased investment and an expanded, well-

trained pool of health professionals in a range of fields. Debates on treatments also exposed our research inadequacies and space for significant innovation capacity. Emergent vaccine nationalism means Africa should not rely on global goodwill to access new treatments or diagnostics. We should develop our own capacity and learn to produce what we need.

Governments have had to develop emergency relief measures and when we compare with the rest of the world, Africa had little room to manoeuvre. For example, while support was found for formal workers, women in high-risk economic sectors were hard hit by inequitable access to business relief and financial sector support. Women lost employment in larger numbers than men and as the International Labour Organisation has reported, the position of women as income earners has severely worsened. This has added to the burden of unpaid care work, unequal access to professional careers and unequal pay for women.

Leadership post the pandemic requires focussed attention on this discrimination. Countries such as Spain, Norway and Chile have passed laws outlawing these abuses and we should ensure women have similar protection in South Africa and Africa. ▮



## THE AFRICA WE WANT

### Our Aspirations for the Africa We Want

- A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development
- An integrated continent, politically united, and based on the ideals of Pan Africanism
- An Africa of good governance, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law
  - A peaceful and secure Africa
- An Africa with a strong cultural identity, Common Heritage, values and ethics
- An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential offered by African People, particularly its women and youth, and with well cared for children
  - Africa as a strong, united and influential global player and partner

Agenda 2063 is gaining momentum. It is time for action.  
Be part of the transformation!





South Africa has been at the forefront in mobilising international support and cooperation in the fight against the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic since President Cyril Ramaphosa assumed the Chairship of the African Union (AU) in 2020 and called for global solidarity in the fight against the pandemic.

South Africa took over the responsibility of Chairperson of the AU from Egypt in February 2020 under the theme: "Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development". During his inauguration, President Ramaphosa identified the following key priorities for South Africa's Chairship of the AU:

- promote peace and security and advance the efforts to silencing the guns
- support integration, economic development, trade and investment on the continent
- infrastructure development as a catalyst for the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)
- advance women empowerment and entrepreneurship
- support the good governance and democracy agenda
- strengthen cooperation between the AU and the United Nations.

These priorities were adversely affected by the disruption caused by COVID-19 as all available resources were redirected to fight the pandemic.

The Bureau of the AU Heads of State and Government, chaired by President Ramaphosa, coordinated the COVID-19 response at a continental level and appointed

special envoys to support the continent in the mobilisation of financial resources, maintaining economic activities and reviving African economies.

The AU also conducted several meetings with the Committee of Fifteen Ministers of Finance and the AU special envoys to reflect and provide a coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including mobilising emergency resources, opening borders and eliminating export restrictions on food and essential medical supplies, and implementing a harmonised approach in mobilising resources to support and sustain all sectors of African economies.

In line with President Ramaphosa's responsibilities as Chair, he convened and presided over several meetings to discuss Africa's strategy for financing COVID-19 vaccines. As an outcome of one of these meetings, the President established the COVID-19 African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team, in support of the Africa Vaccine Strategy.

South Africa was instrumental in ensuring that the statutory meetings of the AU were held virtually such as the 37th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and the Second Mid-Year Coordination Meeting between the AU, regional economic communities, regional mechanisms and member states.

One of the priorities achieved through South Africa's Chairship of the AU was the hosting of the 13th Extraordinary Summit of the Assembly of the AU on the AfCFTA. The Extraordinary Summit was held on 5 December 2020. One of the major outcomes of the meeting was the historic adoption of the Johannesburg Decision and Johannesburg Declaration on trading under the AfCFTA, which provided the technical and legal basis for the operationalisation and the commencement of trading under the AfCFTA on 1 January 2021.

This demonstrated Africa's recognition of the importance of the AfCFTA Agreement in stimulating the recovery of their economies during and in the post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery.

In his address during the start of trade of the AfCFTA ceremony, President Ramaphosa welcomed the opening of trade as the realisation of the dreams of a united, integrated and economically developed continent as espoused in the founding principles of the Organisation of African Unity and calibrated in Agenda 2063. The President appealed to his counterparts to spare no efforts in creating a conducive environment for youth and women to benefit from the fruits of the AfCFTA.

Another important message that the President expressed was an unwavering support towards small, medium and micro

enterprises (SMMEs) as appropriate beneficiaries from the AfCFTA. He urged that the AfCFTA must not only benefit the big corporates but that it should also be catalysts in the growth and development of SMMEs.

It is a welcomed development towards the implementation of the AfCFTA that by March 2021, 54 countries had signed the AfCFTA Agreement and 34 countries had ratified the instrument. Furthermore, 41 countries had submitted their tariff offers. Regarding the Rules of Origin (RoO), due to the pandemic, the AfCFTA achieved 81% of the targeted 90% in terms of offers made by member states on the RoO. South Africa will also be advocating for the finalisation of all outstanding Phase One issues, including the RoO by June 2021.

While a lot of work remains to be done to meaningfully implement the AfCFTA Agreement, a lot of progress has been achieved. In accordance with the outcomes of the 13th Extraordinary Summit on the AfCFTA, countries now have the legal basis to start trading under the AfCFTA.

This is by no means an indication that all the tariff schedules, customs requirements, systems and infrastructure, etc. are in place. It does, however, signify the commitment of the continent to facilitate and improve preferential trade while continuously working to conclude the outstanding negotiations as well as finalise the necessary requirements to effectively implement the agreement.

1 January 2021 signified a tangible leap towards the realisation of the African dream of an integrated continental market. This is the first step of a journey that will continue to require determination and commitment to attain the Africa We Want – a prosperous and economically integrated continent underpinned by industrial development and job creation.

President Ramaphosa has been a consistent moral voice globally speaking out against "vaccine nationalism" and related inequalities and inequities.

The President is the Chairperson of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator Facilitation Council together with the Prime Minister of Norway under the auspices of the World Health Organisation in Geneva.

At the recent AU Summit, held in February 2021, where South Africa handed over the Chairship of the AU, President Ramaphosa was also appointed as the AU Champion for the COVID-19 response.

It is important to take note and celebrate South Africa's global leadership in health diplomacy in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. 🇿🇦

@ClaysonMonyela

# UBUNTU

## RADIO

### SOUTH AFRICA'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN ACTION

Since its launch in 2013, South Africa's first, 24-hour online radio station has been setting in motion dialogue on South Africa's foreign policy.

In celebration of its first anniversary in 2014, UbuntuRadio launched on DSTV's audio bouquet, increasing its reach to over 45 African countries and over 10 million potential listeners. In addition to the mobile application accessible globally, the UbuntuRadio Mxit Application is also available to a potential 80 million users.

Follow the award winning station on Twitter and listen live on [www.ubunturadio.com](http://www.ubunturadio.com).



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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





Some 29 km from Oudtshoorn, at the head of the picturesque Cango Valley, lie the spectacular underground wonder of the Klein Karoo, the Cango Caves. Situated in a limestone ridge parallel to the well-known Swartberg mountains, the caves contain the finest dripstone caverns, with their vast halls and towering formations. Sculptured by nature through the ages, these fascinating limestone formations in a wide variety of colours are an underground wonderworld.





# STATE OF THE NATION

## UPDATES



**GROW  
SOUTH  
AFRICA**



## Multilateralism is the only credible and just instrument for addressing global challenges

What the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored is the imperative for multilateralism, solidarity and collaboration, and the benefits of sharing best practices, financial and human resources, formulating early warning systems and response mechanisms to fight this war and improve the health of millions of people globally.

**By Dr GNM Pandor  
Minister of International Relations and Cooperation**

South Africa remains committed to a better Africa and to the reform of global institutions of governance and global equity, the promotion of international human rights, upholding the principles of international law, multilateralism, conflict resolution and reconciliation through dialogue and focussing on transitional justice and the rights of victims.

This is why, during our service as African Union (AU) Chair, we devoted close attention to the cause of the people of Palestine and the struggle of the people of Saharawi. The return of the United States (US) to the community of nations has pointed to the emerging signals of more positive attention to these struggles. We hope to work with the new US Administration to ensure positive progress, including for the people of Libya.

Nothing has illustrated our commitment to Africa more than the positive role South Africa has played in supporting the continent in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As Chair of the AU, South Africa gave life to a most impactful coordinated African response to COVID-19.

The pandemic struck Africa just as the global community was weakened by unilateralism, conservative nationalism and unwarranted attacks on global United Nations (UN) institutions.

The reality that only a global response would work, drove our AU responses led by the AU leadership.

While creating the Africa COVID-19 Fund was critical and while support to the Africa Centres for Disease Control (CDC) was imperative, much more is needed.

The focus on innovation, research, vaccines development and a robust African innovation platform are very important – Pan-African advice for greater African economic freedom and prosperity. The inclusion in the African CDC agenda of a focus on African indigenous remedies and treatments augurs well for the development of institutions and businesses in this sector.

We are working hard to raise South Africa's global visibility, promoting our strengths as the best place to be, to do business, to visit, to work, to study and to live. We are also responding

to new opportunities and harnessing the collective capabilities of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation's resources both at home and abroad. The agenda we seek to support has been clearly outlined by President Cyril Ramaphosa during the State of the Nation Address on 11 February 2021.

We will identify new opportunities and expand those that have benefit for South Africa. In pursuit of this objective, South Africa has created a significant footprint in Asia, which is the continent showing the most promise of a speedy return to pre-COVID-19 levels of economic growth.

**GROW  
SOUTH  
AFRICA**

Last year, South Africa acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation to take up significant trade and development opportunities available in this region. We will also benefit from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership of these countries. This partnership created the world's biggest trading bloc, estimated to account for about US\$26 trillion or 30% of global gross domestic product (GDP) and 28% of global trade.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries have a total population of 650 million people and a combined GDP of US\$10 trillion. South Africa will leverage engagement with ASEAN to enhance mutually beneficial trade, investment and tourism ties and to support skills development and training for South Africans and building the capabilities of the State through cooperation with partners in the region.

South Africa secured significant beef export opportunities to the Malaysian market as of November 2020. Market access was also obtained for fruits to Thailand. Product protocols are being negotiated in the region and are at an advanced stage; these include table grapes to Vietnam and South Korea, avocados to India and Japan, and pears to China and India. Total two-way trade with Asia



and the Middle East (inclusive of Oceania) breached the important milestone of R1 trillion for the first time in 2019 and is set to grow further.

Many companies from the Asian region have made significant investment pledges during President Ramaphosa's investment summits and state visits. Companies such as Toyota, Isuzu, Tata Motors, Mahindra and Motherson Sumi have expanded their investments in the country. China has pledged to invest US\$14 billion, and Saudi Arabia

and the United Arab Emirates US\$10 billion each. We aim to build on these successes, ensuring growing global trade, which is one of the best ways to fight poverty, inequality and unemployment in our country and our continent.

**Africa's response to COVID-19**

South Africa and the African continent have had to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic within the context of the need for a better global health governance. ►►



While commendable multilateral cooperation between states has been witnessed, the pandemic also raises the question of how the world should be organised in its aftermath. Some negative trends that already existed before the pandemic, such as racism, xenophobia, populism, nationalism and some major geopolitical tensions may worsen.

South Africa has called for a model of response that would allow the world to collaborate and deliver fair outcomes for all states following the pandemic. A robust socio-economic response is required, with additional assistance to developing countries. In this regard, the G20, international financial institutions and some bilateral donors have provided assistance but much more is needed. African countries are calling for a debt standstill, as well as the issuance of additional special drawing rights by the International Monetary Fund. These measures will free additional resources for developing countries to respond to the pandemic.

South Africa's confidence in the World Health Organisation (WHO) and its ability to promote universal health coverage is in part motivated by the benefits it has enjoyed since the outbreak of COVID-19. Among others, the WHO has supported South Africa and all African governments with early detection of the pandemic, the training of health workers, enhancing surveillance in communities as well as working with a network of experts to

address the containment and prevention of the pandemic.

Under the leadership of President Ramaphosa, the AU has established the COVID-19 Emergency Fund, which included additional funding to boost the capacity of the Africa CDC. The President's leadership was acknowledged by AU leaders through his appointment as AU COVID-19 Africa Champion.

We believe it is of utmost importance for everyone, from governments, international organisations, public-private partnerships, technical experts as well as ordinary citizens to come together in solidarity and collaboration with one another to ensure global peace, health and prosperity, and to ensure that no one is left behind.

What the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored is the imperative for multilateralism, solidarity and collaboration, and the benefits of sharing best practices, financial and human resources, formulating early warning systems and response mechanisms to fight this war and improve the health of millions of people globally.

South Africa has just concluded its two-year term as an elected member of the Security Council (UNSC). Foremost in our approach was the promotion of multilateral perspectives to international peace and security. South Africa is a firm believer in the utility of multilateralism as the only credible and just instrument for addressing global challenges, ensuring just

transition as well as bringing about lasting and sustainable peace.

Through the elevation of preventative diplomacy mechanisms as well as post-conflict reconstruction and development, South Africa's approach is driven by its constitutional values, which put a premium on seeking diplomatic political solutions to human conflict.

We are confident that the partnership between the UN and the AU that we advanced during our term for the prevention and peaceful settlement of disputes on our continent will continue to provide a platform to address African conflicts. The benefit of this partnership and cooperation resides in its promotion of the principle of comparative advantage, complementarity and burden-sharing.

**Continental economic integration**

On Saturday, 6 February 2021, during the 34th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU, held virtually under the theme: "Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want", South Africa handed over the Chairship of the AU to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

South Africa presided over the AU at a momentous time, which heralded the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), a major achievement towards the economic integration of our continent. Even though the disruptive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to move the launch from July 2020 to 1 January 2021, the landmark African step has finally been realised.





The founding fathers of African unity have been vindicated in the most glorious terms. With a population of more than one billion people and a combined GDP of US\$1 trillion, an AfCFTA-driven Africa is widely seen as the largest common market in the world.

We are looking forward to enhanced intra-Africa trade, reignited industrialisation and notably meaningful integration into global value chains and the global economy in general.

In addition, the AfCFTA will provide a stimulus to African economies to catalyse diversification, which will in turn minimise Africa’s vulnerability to the vagaries of commodity and resources price fluctuations.

Our approach recognises that our agenda have to be set by the imperatives of the South and should continue to be guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty, national ownership and independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit, including the recognition that South-South cooperation should not be seen as official development assistance and further stressing that it is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation.

In this regard, the country continues to play a leading role in the subregion, the African region and the broader Global South.

South Africa’s active participation in the Southern African Development Community; AU; India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA); Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa (BRICS) initiatives demonstrates in no uncertain terms this global commitment.

We are confident that the ground we have laid during our terms as the AU Chair and a non-permanent member of the UNSC will go a long way towards enabling both our country and continent to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, bring about a progressive global agenda pivoting on fair representation of the interests of the South, and create conditions for the economic reconstruction and development of both South Africa and the African continent. 🇿🇦



Long-held traditions associated with the State of the Nation Address (SONA) were not on display on 11 February 2021, as President Cyril Ramaphosa addressed the nation at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic continued to have an impact on everyday life.

The annual SONA is called by the President in terms of Section 42(5) of the Constitution.

It is a joint sitting of the two houses of Parliament – the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) – and one of the rare occasions that brings together the three arms of the State under one roof.

However, SONA 2021 was delivered under strict COVID-19 regulations with only 50 people allowed in the National Assembly chamber and while the President addressed the joint sitting of Parliament physically in Parliament, most Members of Parliament, some from other arms of the State, the Diplomatic Corps, premiers, speakers and other delegates representing provinces in the NCOP, eminent persons, distinguished guests and members of the public formed part of the event virtually.

There was no red carpet and procession of the three arms of the State; physical participation of the junior and civil guard of honour; eminent persons; *imbongi* (praise singer) and military parade that normally lead the presidential procession onto a saluting dais on the steps of the National Assembly.

Despite the break from the traditional aspects of the address, the SONA provided President Ramaphosa with an opportunity to speak to the nation on the general state of South Africa and to reflect on a wide range of political, economic and social matters within the domestic and global context.

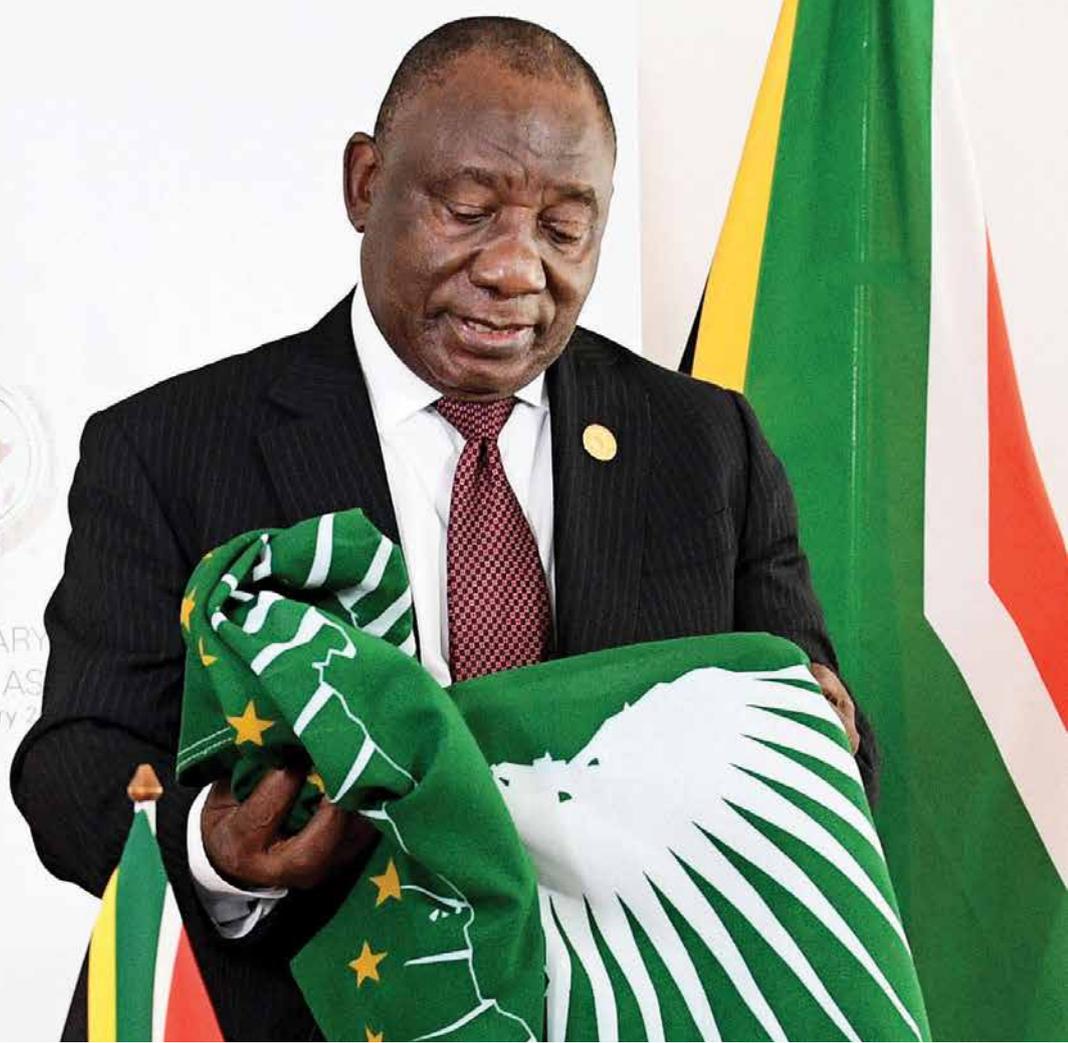
This important joint sitting also provided an opportunity to account to the nation on the work of government and to set out the programme of action for the coming year.

Before he delivered his address, President Ramaphosa took part in a candle-lighting ceremony to mark all the lives lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A recording of a poem by Eastern Cape poet, singer and film producer, Siphokazi Jonas, was played during the ceremony.

African Union



34<sup>th</sup> ORDINARY  
OF THE AS  
6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> February 2021



## 34th AU Summit strives to ensure that no country is left behind in the COVID-19 responses “as we enhance integration”

The Assembly of Heads of State and Government, during the opening of its 34th Ordinary Session, held virtually on 6 February 2021, committed to strengthen the collective response to the crisis, marshalling resources for the benefit of all and striving to ensure that no country is left behind.

The COVID-19 pandemic remains a severe health emergency that has caused great suffering and hardship across the African continent and globally. The African Union (AU), however, is committed to ensure all its member states are part of and benefit from the continental efforts to prevent and contain the pandemic, especially with the roll-out of the vaccination programme. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government, during the opening of its 34th Ordinary Session, held virtually on 6 February

2021, committed to strengthen the collective response to the crisis, marshalling resources for the benefit of all and striving to ensure that no country is left behind.

Outgoing AU Chairperson, President Cyril Ramaphosa, invited the participants to observe a minute of silence for the victims of the COVID-19 pandemic since the start of the crisis in March 2020. He commended the efforts by the AU to address the grave economic and social crisis posed by the pandemic, stating that, “despite the upheaval caused by this

disease, our response as a continent has been about partnership, resilience, innovation and the sharing of strategies and resources. The people of this continent have shown themselves to be resourceful and agile. Significantly, this pandemic has demonstrated the importance and the value of our continental body, the AU. As we prepare for the massive task of vaccinating our populations against COVID-19, we are looking to the AU and its partners to provide the assistance and support we need.”



Although relatively less affected than other parts of the world, Africa has not been spared by the deadly virus. The incoming Chairperson, Felix Tshisekedi, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, applauded the ingenuity and resilience shown by African countries in the fight against the pandemic.

"Let us organise together, with our international partners, for a great offensive against these various scourges. It is imperative that our organisation can strengthen the African Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) in order to respond effectively to emergencies and complex health challenges, as a specialised technical institution of the AU", he stated.

The new AU Chairperson announced that he was delighted to make his predecessor, President Ramaphosa, the Champion for the COVID-19 vaccine strategy and acquisition by AU member states.

President Tshisekedi observed that collaboratively with the regional economic communities, the AU would:

- strengthen peace and security
- pursue the operationalisation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (Af-CFTA)
- promote a renaissance of African culture, arts and heritage
- combat climate change
- accelerate integrative projects, including the construction of the Inga Dam
- consolidate the AU's initiatives in the fight against COVID-19 and in the prevention of other diseases.

He further added that drawing on the lessons of the pandemic, in addition to strengthening health systems, the time had come to invest more in education and scientific research. He observed that it was of highly strategic interest that each member state earmarked a large part of its income for the development of its human capital, which was the main wealth, and the only one that could be effectively mobilised to solve its specific problems and face global challenges.

"The people of this continent have shown themselves to be resourceful and agile. Significantly, this pandemic has demonstrated the importance and the value of our continental body, the AU. As we prepare for the massive task of vaccinating our populations against COVID-19, we are looking to the AU and its partners to provide the assistance and support we need."

The new AU Chairperson then highlighted his plan of action during his mandate as Chair of the union.

"It is from this perspective that, to honour the memory of all Pan-Africanists, I intend to anchor the theme of my Chairship of the AU in the following vision: An African Union at the service of the peoples.

"This specific vision, which is part of the First 10-Year Implementation Plan 2014 – 2023 of Agenda 2063, will be structured around nine strategic pillars that are better detailed in my action plan. My vision is to see an AU at the service of the African peoples, I strive with the support of every one of you, to take our organisation out from the conference rooms, the hard drives of our computers and the well-crafted files of our secretariats, into the classrooms, the refugee camps, the markets







# 34<sup>th</sup>

## ORDINARY SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY

6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> February 2021

34<sup>th</sup> #AUSummit

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## **ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE: Levers for Building the Africa we Want**

of our cities and in the fields of our respective villages.”

Echoing similar sentiments was the AU Commission (AUC) Chairperson, Moussa Faki, who observed that collaboration and coordination, coupled with shared responsibility based on the principle of subsidiarity, enabled the continent to withstand the impact of COVID-19.

“This is the moment for me to salute the competent organs of the union which, through the Africa CDC, are making a remarkable contribution to our fight against this scourge.”

The assembly also restated the AU’s development priorities, including trade, integration and peace and security. The commitment to drive trade and integration has been demonstrated by the progress in making the AfCFTA a reality for all African citizenry. The assembly noted the correlation between peace and security issues and economic exchanges, development of infrastructure and the individual and collective development of citizens, and the involvement of young people and women in socio-economic development. Terrorism,

community conflict, violent extremism, violent electoral crises, transnational crimes and trafficking were also cited as challenges that had hampered the development of the continent.

“We must put an end to these tragedies that stick to the continent and degrade its image, in order to restore hope to Africans and build the Africa We Want”, the assembly heard from the AUC Chairperson.

The AU Summit also signified the launch of activities to mark the 2021 theme of the year: “Arts, Culture and Heritage: A Lever for Building the Africa We Want”. The theme will seek to consolidate and support the growth and recognition of Africa’s cultural and artistic riches as a common unifying foundation that can galvanise the common will of the African people, those of the continent as well as those of the Diaspora.

The President of Mali, Bah Ndaw, is the AU Champion for the Theme of the Year. He noted the inadequate budgetary allocations to the sectors of culture, arts and heritage and urged member states to allocate at least 1% of their national budgets to these sectors by 2030 in order to enable the arts and culture sectors to be solid vectors of peace, integration, growth and development in Africa. 🇲🇱



The heads of state and government of the African Union (AU) elected Felix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), as the new Chairperson of the African Union (AU) for the year 2021.

The event took place on Saturday, 6 February 2021, during the 34th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU, held virtually under the theme: “Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want”.

The President of the DRC took over the baton of command from President Cyril Ramaphosa.

In his handing-over speech, President Ramaphosa wished the new AU Chairperson a successful Chairship and thanked the heads of states of AU member states as well as the AU outgoing bureau, for their support during the tenure of his mandate, which he said, was marked by the prevailing crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. President Ramaphosa highlighted some of the achievements under his Chairship, notably, the efforts to reduce conflict on the continent under the theme of silencing the guns; the economic empowerment of the women and the youths, the enhancement of democracy and good governance, among other development programmes under Agenda 2063.

The outgoing Chair further underlined the initiatives undertaken under his leadership to address the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. These include:

- the establishment of the Africa Task Force for Novel Coronavirus
- the Partnership to Accelerate COVID-19 Testing in Africa
- the Consortium for COVID-19 Clinical Vaccine Trials
- the appointment of special envoys to mobilise international support for the continental fight against COVID-19
- the establishment of the African Medical Supplies Platform, a platform developed to assist the AU member states to tackle issues on the supply side of the continent’s response to COVID-19 and access to medical supplies and equipment
- the development of the vaccine strategy for the continent, which was endorsed by the AU Bureau of Assembly
- the establishment of the COVID-19 African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team, in support of the Africa vaccine strategy with the objective that no country and no one should be left behind
- the initiative to engage international partners and financial institutions to support countries whose economies have been devastated by the pandemic.

Outgoing Chairperson Ramaphosa noted with satisfaction the fact that when the AU COVID-19 Response Fund was launched, the first contributions came from the AU member states, which was a demonstration of “the African ideals of unity and solidarity to fulfil our common objectives”.

# Igniting Connections

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# This time of great trial and difficulty has been among the AU's finest hours

Our most pressing task was to steer the focus of the AU to addressing the worst global emergency in over a century.

**By President Cyril Ramaphosa**

South Africa's term as Chair of the African Union (AU) came to an end on 6 February 2021. As we reflect on our year in this position, I am reminded of the old saying that "in crisis lies opportunity".

Ours was a baptism of fire, having assumed the Chairship in the same month the first case of the Coronavirus was reported on the continent.

The priorities we outlined for our term, among them furthering peace and security, the economic empowerment of women and deepening economic integration, had to be immediately and dramatically reoriented to deal with the pandemic.

Our most pressing task was to steer the focus of the AU to addressing the worst global

emergency in over a century. COVID-19 has affected all the countries on the continent. By the first week in February 2021, there were more than 3.5 million confirmed cases in Africa and more than 88 000 people had died.

It has been a health, humanitarian, social and economic crisis for African countries, most of whom are inadequately resourced to manage a health emergency of this size.

And yet, as unprecedented as the nature of the pandemic has been, so too has been the manner in which African countries have come together to fight it.

In doing so, we have drawn principally on the continent's own expertise, capabilities and institutions such as the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC). Africa did not sit passively as the true extent

and danger of the pandemic unfurled. From the earliest days of the pandemic and led by the AU, we swiftly developed a continental response strategy, driven by the Africa CDC and regional task forces.

We realised that every country on the continent would be severely affected by the pandemic. Most would not have the resources needed to meet the public health challenge or to protect their economies. We therefore agreed as African countries to appoint several prominent Africans as special envoys, who would engage with international funders and multilateral institutions to make the case for financial support and debt relief on Africa's behalf.

In this way, working as one continent, we were able to achieve debt relief for many countries and financial assistance towards

We have acted as one to protect health, people and livelihoods on the continent. In doing so, we have demonstrated our capacity for self-reliance and our ability to be the drivers of our own development.

our COVID response and economic recovery. But much as African countries went to the international community for support, we first helped ourselves – establishing and capitalising a continental COVID-19 Response Fund.

For every partnership forged with better-resourced nations and the international donor community, we set up our own innovative and groundbreaking African Medical Supplies Platform to enable all African countries to quickly secure personal protective equipment and other medical supplies in an equitable, affordable manner.

And now that the COVID-19 vaccine is available, we have worked as a collective to ensure that the continent gets its fair share, working with the COVAX Facility and led by our own African Vaccine Acquisition Task

Team. We aspire to have the majority of the continent's population vaccinated by the end of 2021 to achieve herd immunity.

We have acted as one to protect health, people and livelihoods on the continent. In doing so, we have demonstrated our capacity for self-reliance and our ability to be the drivers of our own development.

Despite the dominance of COVID-19, we have still managed to make advances in several of our key priorities.

During our term, the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was finally launched, heralding a new era of intra-African trade and economic integration.

Even under the difficult conditions posed by the pandemic, the continent has pushed ahead towards the goal of "silencing the guns" on the continent. The AU has been actively involved in negotiations around the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, in achieving a ceasefire in Libya and promoting peace in South Sudan.

Another focus of our term has been on the economic empowerment of women, which we will continue to champion even beyond our term and throughout the Decade of African Women's Financial and Economic Inclusion to 2030.

As we handed over the baton to the Democratic Republic of Congo, we left this preeminent continental body in a position of greater strength.

South Africa will continue to play its part to foster integration on the continent, and support

the incoming Chair and the organisation in its efforts to meet the aspirations of the AU's Agenda 2063.

When the Organisation of African Unity was founded in 1963, member states planted the seeds of cooperation and solidarity in pursuit of a better life for all the peoples of Africa.

They affirmed that African unity was paramount if the welfare and well-being of Africa's people were to be assured.

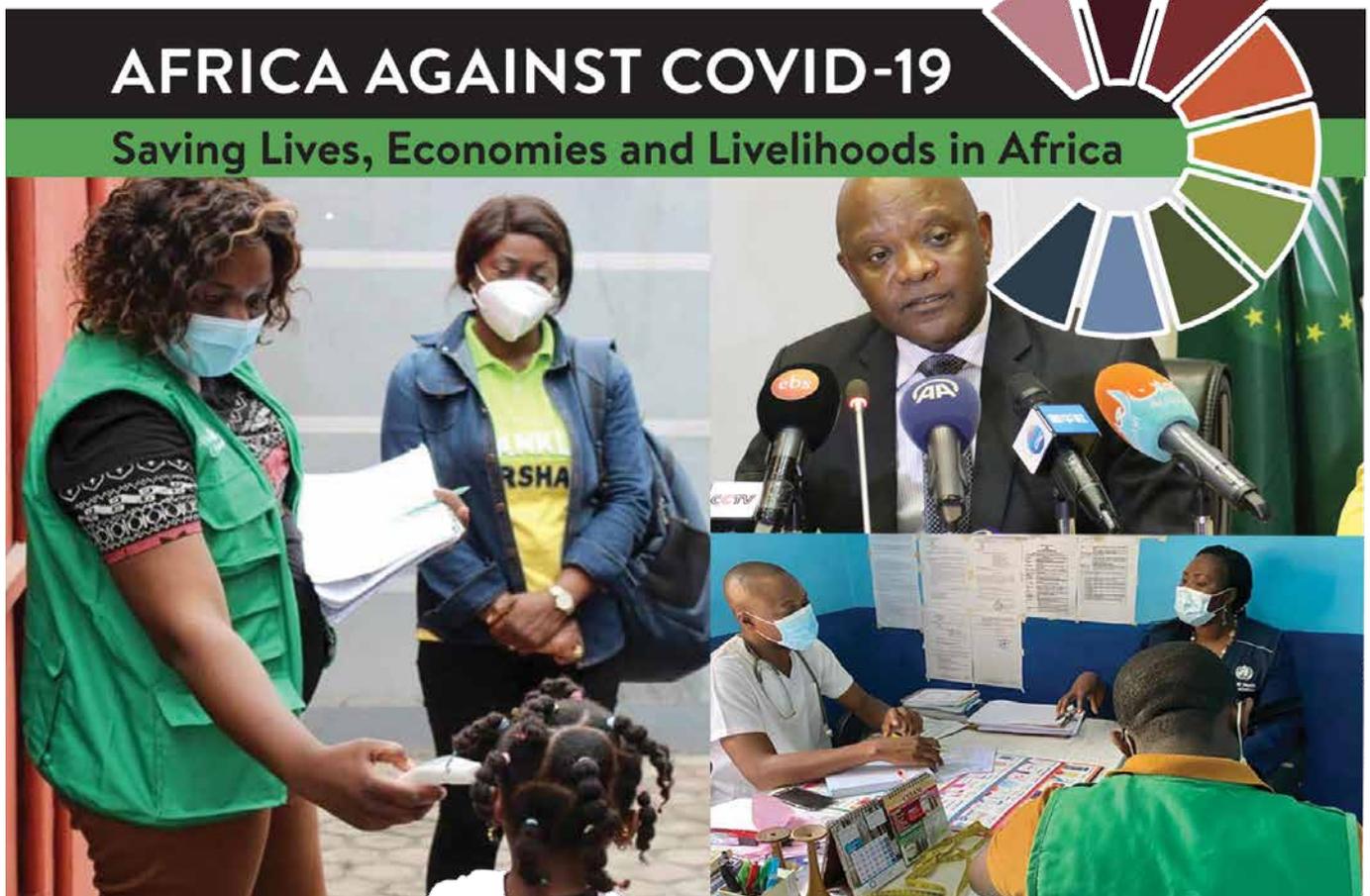
History bears witness that these seeds have not always fallen on fertile ground, and over the years, the continental unity project has experienced many hurdles and false starts.

But the grave threat posed by this pandemic has galvanised African countries to collective action. In the hot-house of the COVID-19 crisis, the seeds of unity and cooperation planted by our pioneering forebears have come to life and flourished.

This time of great trial and difficulty has been among the AU's finest hours.

We are honoured to have been given the opportunity to lead the organisation through this period, when it practically demonstrated the true meaning of the words *African Union*.

This is an accomplishment for which all the citizens of our continent Africa should feel proud and from which they should draw encouragement. 🙏





**AUDA-NEPAD**  
AFRICAN UNION DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

## Working together towards global recovery

As we battle to contain and eradicate COVID-19, we at the same time have to renew our focus on meeting our developmental aspirations as a continent. Strengthening the work of the African Union Development Agency – or AUDA-NEPAD – is more important than ever.

**By President Cyril Ramaphosa**

In January 2021, the African Union Development Agency (AUDA) held a symposium on the first 20 years of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

The Coronavirus pandemic has had a severe impact on African economies, on public health and indeed on the AU system itself. It has cost many lives and threatens many more.

It has also served as a stark reminder of our global interconnectedness. What impacts one, impacts all.

It is therefore more critical than ever that we step up our collaboration on all fronts as we drive the global recovery effort.

This is particularly important as the countries of the world undertake the massive task of procuring, distributing and providing vaccines to their people.

We will continue to work through the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility – known as COVAX – to ensure equal access to the vaccine, and that the needs of poor countries are taken into account.

At the same time, we will pursue our efforts through the African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team to complement the COVAX arrangements and to secure enough vaccine doses for our continent.



An impressive accomplishment of NEPAD has been the strengthening of partnerships with the rest of the world. NEPAD has engaged the G20, G8, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Tokyo International Conference of African Development and the United Nations system on a new development cooperation and aid architecture for Africa.

Over its 20 years, NEPAD has promoted programmes in areas such as agriculture, health, education and training, the environment, information and communications technology (ICT) and infrastructure development.

It has inspired the Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative and prioritised the development of regional infrastructure in sectors such as transport, energy, ICT and transboundary water.

Significant progress has also been made in the implementation of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa, which has the potential to facilitate continental integration in support of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

An impressive accomplishment of NEPAD has been the strengthening of partnerships with the rest of the world.

NEPAD has engaged the G20, G8, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Tokyo International Conference of African Development and the United Nations

system on a new development cooperation and aid architecture for Africa.

Throughout these engagements, NEPAD has been steadfast on the principle of an Africa-led and Africa-owned development agenda.

The transformation of NEPAD into the AUDA is an opportune time to reflect on the implementation of the NEPAD agenda.

We need to strategically position the agency to be even more responsive to the continent's development aspirations.

While it is entrusted with ensuring that Africa harnesses the benefits of new sciences, technologies and innovation, it also has to ensure that historical inequalities and inequities, including gender disparities, are addressed.

The symposium reflected deeply on the successes and challenges experienced in implementing NEPAD over the past two decades and will help to guide the work of this flagship programme for African development well into the future. ►►

As we battle to contain and eradicate COVID-19, we at the same time have to renew our focus on meeting our developmental aspirations as a continent.

Strengthening the work of AUDA-NEPAD is more important than ever.

At this milestone in the life of NEPAD, I wish to pay tribute to presidents Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Thabo Mbeki, Hosni Mubarak, Olusegun Obasanjo and Abdoulaye Wade.

In 2001, they created this Pan-African institution as a flagship to eradicate poverty, promote sustainable growth and development, integrate Africa into the world economy and accelerate the empowerment of women.

Together with their fellow African leaders, they developed NEPAD as a new vision and programme of action for sustainable socio-economic development.

This aimed to enhance the capacity of African states and regional institutions to fulfil the collective vision of an integrated, peaceful, united and prosperous Africa.





At the 31st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of African Union (AU) Heads of State and Government in Nouakchott, Mauritania, in June 2018, a decision was taken to transform the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Planning and Coordination Agency into the AU Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD). The establishment of AUDA-NEPAD is part of the global reforms geared at improving the union's impact and operational efficiency.

The mandate of AUDA-NEPAD is to:

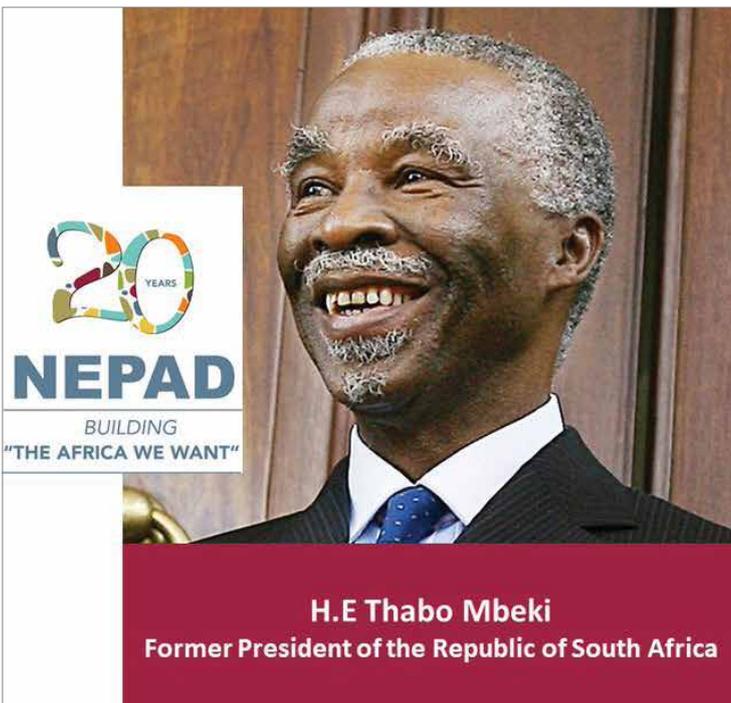
- coordinate and execute priority regional and continental projects to promote regional integration towards the accelerated realisation of Agenda 2063
- strengthen the capacity of AU member states and regional bodies, advance knowledge-based advisory support, undertake the full range of resource mobilisation and serve as the continent's technical interface with all Africa's development stakeholders and development partners.

The agency implements its mandate through six broad thematic areas, namely:

- economic integration
- industrialisation
- environmental sustainability
- technology, innovation and digitisation
- knowledge management
- human capital and institutions development.

The AUDA-NEPAD mandate gives the organisation a wider role in terms of providing knowledge-based advisory support to AU member states in the pursuit of their national development priorities. The core functions of the agency are to:

- incubate innovative programmes in various fields, including technology, research and development, knowledge management and data analytics
- provide technical and implementation support to regional economic communities (RECs) and member states in the development and execution of priority projects and programmes
- assist member states and RECs to strengthen capacity in key areas such as food and nutrition, energy, water, infrastructure, information and communications technology and the digital economy, natural resource governance, climate change and institutional and human capital development and innovation
- provide advisory support in the setting up and application of norms and standards in thematic priorities of the AU to accelerate regional integration
- provide technical backstopping to the AU in implementing policy recommendations at the continental, regional and national levels
- monitor and assess Africa's development trends and progress with the view to achieve key continental and global goals for the purpose of technical reporting
- undertake, apply and disseminate research on policy development support for member states
- coordinate, facilitate and promote cooperation with Africa's strategic partners and stakeholders for effective resource mobilisation
- coordinate and facilitate partnerships with stakeholders and African academia
- foster cooperation in Africa with the private sector
- coordinate between AU specialised agencies, organs and other institutions to create an enabling and supportive environment for the achievement of the goals and priorities of Agenda 2063. [U](#)



**H.E Thabo Mbeki**  
Former President of the Republic of South Africa

### Message on how NEPAD was born:

Following the struggles against colonialism and racist oppression, there was also the struggle against poverty and economic oppression, in order to have total liberation of the Continent - that's how NEPAD was born.



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Inspiring new ways



# As Africa unites to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, we also pin our hopes on the AU Peace Fund to silence the guns

AU member states have set themselves the target to capitalise the Peace Fund up to US\$400 million in 2021. This will be a demonstration of Africa's commitment to ensuring predictable and sustainable financing for peace and security activities.

**By Dr GNM Pandor**  
**Minister of International Relations and Cooperation**

**A**frican countries agree that the most important public health measure to prevent COVID-19 is the roll-out of vaccines. Also key is that they are rolled out in a fair and equitable manner – all countries must get them and get them speedily.

In the past year of South Africa's chairing of the African Union (AU), the continental organisation has been grappling with managing the spread and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic while implementing one of its flagship projects, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement.

The pandemic has had severe effects on AU member countries, but it has also united them in a manner reminiscent of the solidarity that the Organisation of African Unity, the AU's predecessor, led against apartheid South Africa.

African countries agree that the most important public health measure to prevent COVID-19 is the roll-out of vaccines. For the

past year, efforts have been under way to find vaccines that are safe, affordable and effective. Also important is that vaccination be rolled out in a fair and equitable manner.

It is vital to the global containment of COVID-19 that vaccination takes place in all countries and among all populations. We are all aware of the challenges of accessing vaccines for developing countries, particularly in Africa.

South Africa, India and other like-minded countries have called on the World Trade Organisation to temporarily waive specific intellectual property obligations related to the prevention and treatment of COVID-19 for a defined period and within defined parameters.

This will enable countries in Africa and elsewhere to access active pharmaceutical ingredients and benefit from technology transfer, including the know-how to



The implementation phase of the AfCFTA began on 1 January 2021, making history as Africa became the world's largest free trade area. Through the AfCFTA, the continent will eliminate trade barriers, enhance competitiveness and stimulate investment, innovation and economic growth.



strong interdependence and a subordinate role for African countries in decision-making". That is why, in 2016, the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government decided to establish the AU Peace Fund.

The Peace Fund was established under Article 21 of the Protocol establishing the Peace and Security Council of the AU to finance the AU's peace and security operations. The fund covers operational activities: mediation and preventive diplomacy, institutional capacity and peace-support operations.

AU member states have set themselves the target to capitalise the Peace Fund up to US\$400 million in 2021. This will be a demonstration of Africa's commitment to ensuring predictable and sustainable financing for peace and security activities.

As President Cyril Ramaphosa told an AU meeting recently, the continent's failure to implement its own decisions as a result of financial inadequacies "diminish[es] our ability to consolidate peace, prevent the recurrence of violent conflict, build social cohesion, deepen democracy and advance economic development".

manufacture vaccines in Africa at a cheaper cost.

Notwithstanding the pandemic, we also had to ensure the AU continues to execute its agreed reform agenda effectively. The implementation phase of the AfCFTA began on 1 January 2021, making history as Africa became the world's largest free trade area. Through the AfCFTA, the continent

will eliminate trade barriers, enhance competitiveness and stimulate investment, innovation and economic growth.

Also important for our chairing of the AU has been the goal to silence guns on the continent. The financing of peace operations in Africa has been a challenge for years. The civil-society organisation Accord said the AU's reliance on foreign donors created "a very

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# THE GREAT RESET

## Africa has demonstrated its capacity for united action

We draw hope and encouragement from the way that the people of South Africa have come together to confront this disease and by their determination to rebuild our economy and our society.

By President Cyril Ramaphosa

On 26 January 2021, I virtually addressed the World Economic Forum on the state of the world as we confronted the devastation caused by the Coronavirus pandemic.

Today, humanity is facing an unprecedented global health, social and economic crisis.

The pandemic has triggered a global economic downturn of massive proportions, which has not been seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

The World Bank has reported that extreme poverty is expected to rise globally for the first time in over 20 years as the disruption caused by the pandemic exacerbates the effects of conflict, climate change and underdevelopment.

It is clear that the world is at a crossroads. We are facing a common threat and must therefore act together.

While we must unite in defeating this disease, the challenges we must confront were not created by the virus.

They were created by us.

These challenges – from poverty to the destruction of our environment, from conflict to inequality, from illiteracy to famine – are all the result of our actions and, too often, our inaction.

The Coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated these problems, deepened these inequalities and set back our efforts to overcome them.

Our task is therefore not to restore the world to where it was when this pandemic struck, but to forge a new path towards a world that is just, peaceful, cohesive, resilient and sustainable.

It is only through multilateral action that the world can solve its challenges.

It is in our collective interest that the United Nations is strengthened as we work together to advance the global agenda for people, planet and prosperity.

The pandemic has underscored the vital importance of multilateral institutions in facilitating coordination, cooperation and common responses.

Beyond COVID-19, there is perhaps no area of human endeavour that requires common global action more than our response to climate change.

It is essential that we each honour our commitments under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, with a specific focus on means of implementation support and adaptation efforts.

This is a key priority for Africa, as our continent is disproportionately affected by climate change despite releasing the lowest carbon emissions.

Since March 2020, the African continent has demonstrated its capacity for united action.

As the Chair of the African Union (AU), we had to refocus our priorities towards addressing the immediate challenges presented by the pandemic.

The AU moved quickly to develop a continent-wide COVID-19 response plan. This plan included technical assistance to national health systems, setting up regional collaborating hubs and deploying community

healthcare workers to support testing and treatment.

One of the most significant innovations was the establishment of the Africa Medical Supplies Platform, which enables all AU member states to secure vital health supplies at preferential rates.

We also established a COVID-19 African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team to secure and find sources of funding for sufficient vaccines for the countries of the continent.

By January 2021, the task team had secured a provisional 270 million doses for African countries directly through vaccine manufacturers. This was in addition to the 600 million doses expected from the COVAX initiative.

Through its participation in these continental and global initiatives, South Africa continues to promote the need for universal, fair and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines. We are deeply concerned about the problem of “vaccine nationalism”, which, unless addressed, will endanger the recovery of all countries.

Ending the pandemic worldwide will require greater collaboration on the roll-out of vaccines, ensuring that no country is left behind in this effort.

In South Africa, as in most countries, the pandemic has taken a heavy toll. With the greatest burden of disease on the continent, by January 2021, South Africa had recorded around 1.4 million COVID-19 cases and more than 40 000 people had lost their lives.

The current economic downturn follows a decade of weak economic growth, which adds complexity and difficulty to South Africa's economic recovery path.

With the support of our social partners, the South African Government has rolled out a comprehensive set of measures to limit the social and economic impact of the pandemic. We massively expanded social protection on an unprecedented scale, providing a temporary increase in monthly social grants to around 17 million beneficiaries and implementing a monthly Special COVID-19 Grant, which reached six million unemployed people.

Other relief measures included a wage support scheme through the Unemployment Insurance Fund, a loan guarantee scheme administered by South Africa's banks and the deferral of the payment of certain taxes.

While these relief measures have proved vital in keeping many businesses afloat, saving many jobs and keeping millions of South Africans above the poverty line, our attention has now shifted to rebuilding our economy and restoring employment.

Working together with business, labour and civil society, we have developed an Economic Reconstruction and Recovery

Plan. This plan aims to boost confidence, restart the economy and drive urgent reforms to promote faster, more inclusive growth and employment.

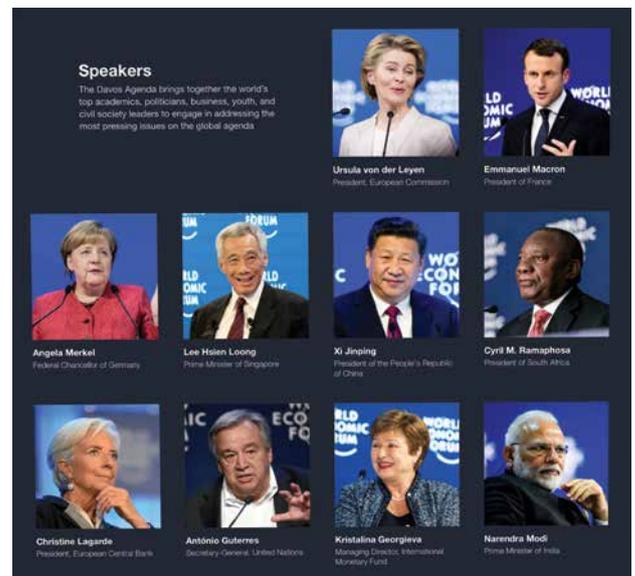
The plan has four immediate priority interventions:

- Firstly, a massive infrastructure-build programme. This will focus on social infrastructure such as schools, water, sanitation and housing, but also on economic infrastructure such as ports, roads, rail and telecommunications.
- Secondly, we are rapidly expanding energy-generation capacity. This will be done with a focus on significantly increasing the contribution of renewable energy, battery storage and gas technologies. These measures aim to bring on an additional 23% of new generation capacity into the system by 2022. In addition, measures are being taken to restructure South Africa's primary electricity supplier, Eskom, into separate entities for generation, transmission and distribution to enable a more competitive, sustainable and efficient energy system.
- Thirdly, we have begun to create additional jobs and support livelihoods through an employment stimulus. This stimulus creates opportunities for unemployed young people as school assistants, in the maintenance and construction of municipal infrastructure and rural roads, as community health workers and nursing assistants and for small-scale farmers, among others.
- Fourthly, we will be intensifying our drive for export-oriented industrial development. We aim to significantly grow local manufacturing and production, and make South African exports much more competitive.

Over the last three years, the South African Government has mobilised R774 billion – which is around US\$51 billion – in new investment commitments.

Around one-fifth of the committed value has already been invested in projects for construction and essential equipment for mining, manufacturing, telecommunications and agriculture.

These interventions will enable South Africa to better realise the potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area, which became operational on 1 January 2021. The free trade area will foster integration, increase trade and accelerate the build-up of productive



capabilities and infrastructure in Africa to meet growing demand.

South Africa will benefit from greater exports to the continent, and domestic sectors such as steel, automotive production, mining and manufactured products are set to benefit, materially boosting economic growth.

We are pursuing each of these interventions with an urgency and resolve that matches the proportions of the challenge. 🌍

If the last year has shown us anything, it is that collaboration, partnership and solidarity are the most effective instruments we have to build a better, fairer and more prosperous world.





# Building global peace, friendship and substantive justice and equality

We have worked along with all nations of the world to address the effects of the pandemic and find solutions to our common challenges, which include conflict, underdevelopment, climate change and humanitarian disasters.

**By Dr GNM Pandor**  
**Minister of International Relations and Cooperation**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a dramatic impact on all of our lives. It has affected the way we live, the way we work and the way we interact with each other. It has made us aware that no person or nation can thrive in isolation.

Despite the separation and interruptions to international contact created by the pandemic, we have been able to continue international work.

This approach of working with others resonates with South Africa's foreign policy, which is driven by a vision to achieve a just and equitable world and an African continent that is peaceful, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and united and prosperous.

As far back as 1955, the Congress of the People adopted the Freedom Charter, envisioning a South Africa free from the oppression of apartheid, wherein all the people

who live and work in it enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Freedom Charter also envisaged a South Africa that works with all nations of the world to build global peace, friendship and substantive justice and equality for all people.

These values and ideals underpin democratic South Africa's foreign policy.

We have worked along with all nations of the world to address the effects of the pandemic and find solutions to our common challenges, which include conflict, underdevelopment, climate change and humanitarian disasters.

We have, therefore, played our role in leadership positions in global and continental governance institutions and strengthened our bilateral relations as we continued to pursue a foreign policy, grounded by the fundamental values in our Constitution, which promote a safe, peaceful, just, fair and prosperous South Africa, region, Africa and world.

## Responding to the impact of COVID-19

In April 2020, the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG), António Guterres, stated that the COVID-19 pandemic would be a humanitarian crisis that would see people "suffering, sick and scared". He called for increased levels of cooperation and solidarity from all nations of the world. At a special session of the UN General Assembly on COVID-19 on 3 December 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa stated that the acts of international solidarity since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic were indeed phenomenal and proved that no country could operate from a position of isolation. President Ramaphosa's statement, eight months after the UNSG made the call for global cooperation to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 indicated that most countries and indeed the institutions of global governance were responsive.

As Chair of the African Union (AU) in 2020, South Africa initiated a coordinated

We also look forward to strengthening bilateral and economic ties with Turkey as we prepare to host the inaugural South Africa-Turkey Bi-National Commission.

Africa response that focussed on addressing the immediate challenges to the public health systems in Africa and measures to mitigate the economic and humanitarian crisis. This included establishing the COVID-19 Response Fund and launching the African Medical Supplies Platform to ensure all countries have access to the necessary equipment and supplies.

The AU has also developed a vaccine strategy for the continent and established the COVID-19 African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team (AVATT), in support of the Africa Vaccine Strategy, tasked to ensure that COVID-19 vaccines are available for Africans. In January 2021, the AVATT confirmed the acquisition of provisional 270 million vaccine doses for African countries, with at least 50 million being available for the crucial period of April to June 2021.

Building on the call made by the UNSG in April 2020, the AU has also called for a comprehensive economic stimulus package for Africa and the suspension of interest payments on Africa's external and public debt.

Despite the progress made in cooperation and with many countries experiencing a second wave of the pandemic, global attention is shifting to access to vaccines and their approval for use. There are fears that the richer countries of the globe may hoard vaccine stocks and use intellectual property rights to block access to vaccines by developing countries. "Vaccine Nationalism" is a very real threat as it will create supply problems to poorer countries, thereby denying their citizens access to life-saving vaccines. The AU Commission and the Centres for Disease Control are giving close attention to this and is seeking ways of ensuring all countries have access.

Defeating this virus still requires countries to collaborate with each other and to work with multilateral institutions to ensure that all people access the required health and medical interventions and that they benefit from economic and social measures required for a sustained response to the pandemic. We also continue Africa's focus on the post-COVID-19 economic recovery.

#### **Our diplomatic footprint in the region and the globe**

South Africa's interests in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the rest of the continent are driven by the values and ideals outlined earlier. We require and want an African continent that is peaceful, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist, united and prosperous.

Much work still needs to be done to achieve this vision. Too many of our people live in situations where there is instability, violence and conflict. This includes the situations in Libya, the Sahel, Cabo Delgado in Mozambique, South Sudan and the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo. We are also concerned about the developments relating to the situation in Western Sahara, as United States' (US) recognition of Morocco goes against international law and the AU's Constitutive Act. These developments may fuel hostilities between Morocco and the Sahrawi. Silencing the guns in these situations requires dealing with the root causes of conflicts, which invariably include governance deficits, human rights abuses and contestation over resources. The AU Summit in December 2020 agreed that the role of foreign interests in the conflicts needed greater attention.

That being said, and despite the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the continent still presents massive economic opportunities for international and South African investors, particularly in the sectors of mining, agriculture and agro-processing, telecommunications, infrastructure, hospitality and tourism. Maximising these opportunities is important as building the regional economy is a key contributor to peace and stability.

The Asia region has managed to limit the economic harm that has affected most other regions as a result of measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and is projected to have the strongest regional rebound projected at 8% growth in 2021 according to the International Monetary Fund. This is good for continuing the robust trade and investment that South Africa enjoys with countries in the region. An indicator of this is that the total two-way trade with Asia and the Middle East (inclusive of Oceania) breached the important milestone of R1 trillion for the first time in 2019 according to the South African Revenue Service.

With South Africa having recently acceded to the Treaty of Amity with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, we anticipate increased opportunities for further collaboration with the key Indo-Pacific regional actors. This provides a strategic platform for enhanced trade and economic initiatives with a wider range of Asian partners.

As is the case with the Western Sahara, there are recent developments that are undermining the internationally agreed parameters to end the occupation of Palestine based on two viable states. This includes the dilution of the Arab Peace Initiative agreed to by the Arab League in 2002 that linked normalisation of relations with Israel with

its withdrawal from the occupied territories. South Africa will continue to foreground the importance of multilateral-led initiatives to end the occupation so that people on both sides of the 1967 green line enjoy freedom, peace, dignity and justice.

South Africa has also continued to enjoy strong and mutually beneficial relations with countries in Europe, South America and North America.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, we have strong cultural, social and economic ties with all countries. We are concerned though that Cuba and Venezuela remain severely affected by unilateral sanctions outside of the legalities provided for sanctions by the UN Charter.

The US also remains a strategic trade and investment partner with partnerships in key areas such as health, education, transport, environment, science and technology and energy. Exports of goods and services and income from US investments in South Africa amounts to US\$412 billion per annum.

South Africa also enjoys cordial relations with Canada. Canada's development assistance is targeted towards South Africa's domestic priorities, such as health, education, governance and capacity-building. South Africa and Canada are both strong supporters of multilateralism and collaborate at the level of the UN and other multilateral fora on issues such as climate change, human rights, shared and inclusive growth, gender empowerment and peace and security.

South Africa enjoys mature and excellent relations with the Nordic countries, which is based on mutual respect, human rights, dialogue, consultation and cooperation, with a strong emphasis on supporting South Africa's drive to greater autonomy. All the Nordic countries are active on the African Agenda and have prioritised African issues in their foreign policy. This includes expanding diplomatic relations, trade and investment, development support, peacemaking and conflict resolution, youth development, the promotion of women, cooperation on climate change issues and the promotion of a more just and equitable international system.

South Africa intends to further exploit opportunities in innovative sectors such as energy, climate change, digitalisation, agriculture, water management and oceans management.

We also look forward to strengthening bilateral and economic ties with Turkey as we prepare to host the inaugural South Africa-Turkey Bi-National Commission. ►►

The world today is changing at a fast rate. Changes affect international relations and how countries relate to each other and position themselves on the global stage. It is an integral part of our work as diplomats to monitor the shifting global dynamics and challenges.

We have very good cooperation with Russia as our strategic partner bilaterally and within formations such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) and the UN, among other multilateral fora. The country is South Africa's fourth-largest trading partner in BRICS.

However, although bilateral trade has increased significantly, from R2.9 billion in 2010 to R13.1 billion in 2019, it remains below

potential and we are working very hard to boost our economic relations to a higher level. We do this through our structured mechanism, i.e. the Intergovernmental Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation, which I co-chair. Other countries in the Central and Eastern Europe region demonstrate great potential for expansion in trade and economic relations with South Africa and we intend to explore these further in 2021.

The countries of Western Europe remain critical for South Africa's economic development. These countries include some of our major foreign investors, largest trading partners and sources of tourism. Some 2 000 European companies represented in South Africa are also a major source of employment and skills development.

Countries in the region have been supportive of South Africa and Africa's efforts to combat COVID-19 and provided test kits and other forms of assistance. We are pleased to have been part of the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID vaccine research programme.

The European Union (EU), is the largest economic bloc in the world, accounting for 25% of global gross domestic product and about 20% of global trade and is South Africa's largest and leading trading partner as a bloc.

Total trade increased from R150 billion in 2000 to R693 billion in 2019. Despite that, there remains a declining trade deficit, and an ongoing negative trade balance, and exports to the EU have increased steadily over the years, growing from R64 billion in 2000 to R319 billion in 2019.

**South Africa's role in institutions of global governance**

The world today is changing at a fast rate. Changes affect international relations and how countries relate to each other and position themselves on the global stage. It is an integral part of our work as diplomats to monitor the shifting global dynamics and challenges.

Aside from the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the rise of trade wars, increasing protectionism, nationalism and populism and an inward-looking focus on countries' domestic priorities have challenged collective efforts for change through multilateral institutions. While this may change with the anticipated re-engagement with the multilateral system by the US in 2021, South Africa will continue to work to strengthen and indeed reform the institutions of global governance.

Our two-year service as a non-elected member of the UN Security Council (SC)



concluded at the end of December, a month in which we chaired the council. Many observers, including member states and think-tanks, have suggested that South Africa's third term was particularly successful. We demonstrated through our votes and engagements with other council members that our stance is independent of global political blocs and that our values and characteristics shaped by our struggle against colonialism and apartheid, which now underpin our constitutional principles, determine how we engage on issues pertaining to peace, security, development and human rights. The fact that we were consistent on matters in the UNSC and across the UN system, strengthened our role as bridge-builder and justified a more permanent role for South Africa and other African countries at the UNSC.

Our term as Chair of the AU coincided with our role at the UNSC. We used this opportunity to champion African issues at the UN and foster closer collaboration on matters relating to peace and security between the UNSC and the AU. South Africa also prioritised the

implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which eliminates trade barriers and is expected to enhance competitiveness and stimulate investment, innovation and economic growth on the continent.

South Africa will continue to utilise its membership of fora such as BRICS; India, Brazil, South Africa; and the Indian Ocean Rim Association to advance reform of the global, political and economic architecture and create deliverables through the emerging role of the New Development Bank, cooperation in health and innovation, trade, tourism and investment, as well as efforts to reform the UNSC.

South Africa needs international support and, in particular, investments and debt relief, to deliver the President's vision of accelerated industrialisation, women's empowerment and youth employment. We must focus 2021 on economic reconstruction and recovery implementation alongside a focus on the pandemic.

One of the challenges the Department of International Relations and Cooperation

(DIRCO) faced in 2020 was the repatriation of our nationals, who found themselves stranded outside of South Africa due to lockdowns that were implemented by many countries, including South Africa, in their attempt to curb the spread of the virus.

From the time President Ramaphosa announced South Africa's Level 5 Lockdown on 15 March 2020 to the time when international travel was again allowed under Level 1, DIRCO, through its Consular Services, repatriated just over 30 000 South Africans who were stranded from all corners of the world, using over 350 flights.

The number excludes tens of thousands who used our land borders.

I once more express my gratitude to all the officials who were involved in this process.

I know many spent sleepless nights, working seven days a week trying to bring our fellow citizens back to their loved ones. 🙏

Our term as Chair of the AU coincided with our role at the UNSC. We used this opportunity to champion African issues at the UN and foster closer collaboration on matters relating to peace and security between the UNSC and the AU.



#### COVID-19 – When travelling abroad:

- Countries in the northern hemisphere are encountering a second or third wave of the pandemic. South Africans should be cautious in travelling to these countries as you might become distressed or even destitute abroad pending the levels of lockdown in the respective countries and with the likelihood of international flights that might be cancelled at short notice.
- Please note that you will be travelling at your own risk to these countries knowing the current circumstances and the uncertainty going forward.
- Please ensure that you are familiar with the immigration and health entry requirements of the country you will visit and South Africa's entry health requirement during the pandemic. If you have any uncertainty regarding the entry health requirements of the country you will be visiting, please contact their Embassy in South Africa for assistance. If you need any clarity regarding the health entry requirements upon your return to South Africa, please consult the website of the Department of Health.
- Please ensure you have adequate travel insurance. Many South Africans had no or inadequate travel insurance during the peak of the pandemic in 2020 to cover extended hotel accommodation, new flight tickets, etc.
- Please register with the South African embassies abroad. The contact particulars of all these embassies are available on the Department of International Relations and Cooperation's website (<http://www.dirco.gov.za/>). South Africans are encouraged to register via the e-mail addresses provided as some of our officials might be working remotely due to local lockdown regulations and will not always be able to take your calls.
- Inform your family or next of kin of your destination and duration of stay.
- Ensure that you meet the immigration requirements of the country you wish to visit as countries have revised their visa regimes during the global pandemic.
- Read thoroughly on the country you intend visiting as the global situation is unstable. If the country you visit is a high risk, consider postponing your visit or proceeding with caution if the travel is unavoidable.
- Know the COVID-19 protocols of the country you intend visiting and should you not comply, you might be refused entry. Many airlines will likely require proof of COVID-19 vaccinations before commencing travel. Currently, a COVID-19 test is compulsory.

# South Africa's foreign policy: Reflections on the United Nations Security Council and the African Union



South Africa intends to continue using its foreign policy work to strengthen AU-UN cooperation and to focus on preventative diplomacy, conflict prevention and conflict resolution on the African continent.

**By Dr GNM Pandor**  
**Minister of International Relations and Cooperation**

In December 2020, South Africa concluded its third term as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and in February 2021, South Africa concluded its tenure as Chair of the African Union (AU). South Africa's foreign policy is derived from our constitutional values of promotion of equality, justice, non-racism, non-sexism and international cooperation.

### The legacy of Nelson Mandela

The South African Government dedicated its term on the UNSC to the legacy of President Nelson Mandela, whose values and commitment to peace were



commemorated in the year 2018, the centenary of his birth. South Africa believes peace is critical to development and progress in Africa. We hoped that our election would support the African objective of silencing the guns in Africa.

This was South Africa's third term as a non-permanent member, and many observers, member states and think-tanks have described it as partly successful and challenging. At the same time, our non-permanent UNSC membership provided us with the opportunity to link our work to the goal of silencing the guns on the African continent in keeping with the theme of our AU Chairship. We also used our term to promote the peaceful settlement of conflicts through preventive diplomacy, inclusive dialogue and post-conflict reconstruction and development.

The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded these challenges and has necessitated us to work together as a collective with all countries across the globe to combat the virus and ensure that we are able to rebuild a safer world where the development needs of all its people are fulfilled.

South Africa advocated for strengthened partnership and closer cooperation between the UNSC and the AU's Peace and Security Council. On 3 December 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa presided over the "Debate on the

The six key priorities for South Africa's Chairship of the AU had to be set aside due to COVID-19. President Ramaphosa led the development of Africa's response to the pandemic and ensured African collaboration in this important battle.

Cooperation between the UN and Regional and Sub-Regional Organisations", which reflected on the efforts of the council to resolve conflicts on the African continent and to further enhance the partnership between the AU and the UN.

One of the key areas that African members of the UNSC have been instrumental in pursuing is enhancing the partnership between the UN and the AU in the prevention and peaceful settlement of disputes. This is in line with Chapter 8 of the UN Charter, which underscores the importance of regional arrangements in contributing to international



President Ramaphosa's focus remains premised on the principle that no country should be left behind.

peace and security. However, a challenge in this relationship has to do with the financing of the AU peacekeeping missions authorised by the Security Council. Reliable and sustainable funding for these AU missions has been a persistent challenge for the AU over the past two decades.

The African members of the UNSC are continuing with efforts to secure commitments for consistent and sustainable financing of these AU missions. We have steadfastly held the view that the use of UN-assessed contributions provides the most reliable avenue of support for UN-mandated AU peace operations. This is an area where we require continued and sustained assistance from other member states and regional bodies.

We underlined the need for the UN and the AU to expedite deliberations to ensure that the AU-led peace-support operations authorised by the Security Council are financed through the UN-assessed contributions. Through our cooperation, we also stressed the need to address the root causes and drivers of conflict in Africa, including focussing on the challenges of development and governance.

On 4 December 2020, I presided over a debate on "Security Council Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace: Security Sector Governance and Reform". The Government of the Republic of South Africa welcomes the unanimous adoption of UNSC Resolution 2553 on Security Sector Reform (SSR). This resolution builds on the solid policy framework laid by Resolution 2151, the first thematic Security Council Resolution on SSR adopted in 2014, piloted by the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The adoption of Resolution 2553 and the focus on SSR processes are a recognition by the Security Council that emphasis must be placed on conflict prevention, peacebuilding and sustaining peace, primarily to avert relapses into conflict. For this to occur, states emerging from conflict must develop their own inclusive context-specific SSR and governance approaches that address the needs of the entire population with the active involvement of women and youth as well as civil-society actors. Bilateral, regional and international partners should partner with states to provide

support that is aligned to their national SSR priorities.

We also continued to consistently express our solidarity with the peoples of Palestine and Western Sahara in their quest to achieve self-determination, fundamental freedom, equality, justice and dignity. We further advanced the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security and the Youth, Peace and Security agendas.

Following the end of our term on the Security Council, South Africa will continue its commitment to multilateralism and work in other multilateral forums, including the UN Peacebuilding Commission and other bodies of the UN to pursue these goals. We remain committed to a rules-based order characterised by inclusion and equity. There is a lot of ground lost in multilateralism in the past four years and we need to rebuild trust and cooperation.

### **Silencing the guns**

South Africa took over the Chairship of the AU under the AU theme for 2020, which was: "Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development". We gave emphasis to an existing AU goal through adoption of this theme, however, all our careful planning was altered by COVID-19.

The AU Summit in December 2020 extended the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa for a further period of 10 years, with periodic reviews every two years. This decision confirmed the complex challenge of peace and security that still needs to be addressed by AU member states.

South Africa has also been seized with the issue of the Trilateral Negotiations on the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). The heads of state and government of the AU Bureau have had meetings to encourage Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan to pursue a peaceful resolution of the GERD matter in an amicable manner and towards a win-win outcome. By January 2021, we had not reached final agreement and more work remains to be done.

On peace and security, too many people on the African continent still face instability, violence and conflict. This includes the situations in Libya, the Sahel, Cabo Delgado in Mozambique, South Sudan and the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo. We are also concerned by the recent developments relating to the situation in Western Sahara. Greater attention to peace in these countries is critical as well as support for solutions from the AU and the UN.

### **COVID-19 has united Africa**

The six key priorities for South Africa's Chairship of the AU had to be set aside due to COVID-19. President Ramaphosa led the development of Africa's response to the

pandemic and ensured African collaboration in this important battle.

In addition to the health-sector responses, the Bureau of the AU Heads of State and Government appointed special envoys to support the continent in the mobilisation of debt-relief measures and securing recovery resources, financial resources, maintaining economic activities and reviving African economies.

The COVID initiatives have led to a unified Africa. One of the outcomes of the meeting was the creation of the COVID-19 African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team, in support of the Africa Vaccine Strategy. This was an effort to be responsive to the suspicion that the call for vaccines to be a global public good would not be respected by the richest countries of the world. President Ramaphosa and the AU are working hard to secure vaccines for Africa.

In his capacity as the AU Chair, on 13 January 2021, President Ramaphosa reported to a special meeting of the AU Bureau of the Assembly that it had secured a provisional 270 million vaccine doses for African countries, with at least 50 million said to be available for the crucial period of April to June 2021.

These efforts complement the COVAX facility, a World Health Organisation and Gavi Vaccine Alliance initiative, to help low- and middle-income countries secure access to vaccines on a fair and equitable basis. President Ramaphosa's focus remains premised on the principle that no country should be left behind.

### **African Continental Free Trade Area**

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is one of the flagship projects of Africa's blueprint for development, Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

With the decision to start trading under the AfCFTA on 1 January 2021, Africa signalled her determination to increase manufacturing and industrial capacity to trade in goods and products, produced in Africa. But much work still needs to be done to achieve this vision.

For South Africa, December 2020 was the convergence of the chairing of the AU, the Presidency of the UNSC and the final month of the AU's ambition to silence the guns on the continent by 2020. South Africa intends to continue using its foreign policy work to strengthen AU-UN cooperation and to focus on preventative diplomacy, conflict prevention and conflict resolution on the African continent. 🌍





# Cuba's medical diplomacy: Human solidarity in the face of COVID-19

Cuba has sent over 3 700 healthcare workers to more than 22 countries around the world to lend a helping hand in their hour of need.

**By Dr GNM Pandor**  
**Minister of International Relations and Cooperation**

The Republic of Cuba has been a vital embodiment of humanism and international solidarity since the triumph of the Cuban revolution in 1963. This Cuban solidarity continues a long

history of strategic relations between our two nations, inspired by a vision of freedom, anti-racism, anti-apartheid and anti-imperialism.

Human solidarity in the face of the COVID-19 threat is absolutely necessary for the Global South, where humanity lacks the

means to withstand the ravages of this virus and remains vulnerable to a host of other debilitating but preventable conditions.

This solidarity amounts to a moral awakening by the Global South's humanity to the current compromised human condition,



which has been shaped by an unfair history of socio-economic and racial exploitation, domination and subordination. Leading by example, Cuba is among the nations of the South fully committed to human solidarity.

Cuba has sent over 3 700 healthcare workers to more than 22 countries around the world to lend a helping hand in their hour of need.

South Africa believes that human solidarity can only find expression within the objectives of building a better Africa and a better world. For us, building a better world entails an ethical and moral struggle to fight and correct global injustice characterised by structural conditions of underdevelopment that confront the people of the South.

Cuba has led the way in this lofty cause, and its impact has been particularly felt in the health sector where Latin American, Asian and African nations continue to reap the benefits of Cuba's medical diplomacy.

Cuba's leading international health diplomacy is a stark reminder of global inequality and the possibility of re-imagining a better world, if the interests of people are put before profits. By default or otherwise, this humanist vision pricks the conscience of the world through putting international reform of the public health sector to the fore as a matter of human rights.

South Africa and the Republic of Cuba are bonded by a noble history of freedom struggle. The current relations between South Africa and Cuba are morally pedigreed as well as embedded within the doctrine of South-South relations.

The late great President Nelson Mandela acknowledged and extolled the Cuban role in advancing the Agenda of the South during a speech at a banquet in honour of President Fidel Castro of Cuba on 4 September 1998. On the issue of Cuba, South Africa relations and international solidarity, Madiba said:

"The defeat of apartheid demonstrated what can be achieved when we join hands with purpose and conviction. South Africa is committed to working with Cuba to help build a better life for millions of people across both our continents and beyond."



As Madiba explained, our country is committed to working with Cuba for the attainment of a better world. The Cuban Medical Brigade, working with such acclaimed commitment and dedication to save lives in the hinterland of our country, does so in pursuit of this exalted vision of building a better human society.

There is no doubt that our strategic relations with Cuba advance the agenda of building a better Africa and a better world and have considerably benefitted our country and our people.

Cuba's health international solidarity is epitomised by the Nelson Mandela/Fidel Castro Medical Collaboration (NMFC) programme.

The NMFC programme was established by presidents Mandela and Castro in 1996 through a bilateral agreement between South Africa and Cuba.

The programme was established to address the over-concentration of health personnel in urban areas and in the exclusionary private sector as well as to increase the number of qualified health professionals.

Since the arrival of the more than 200 Cuban doctors to help us fight this pandemic in April 2020, there have been rather unfortunate insinuations, misinformation and distortions pertaining to the conditions of their presence in our country.

Excelling in primary healthcare and prevention, including preventable diseases, the Cuban healthcare experience has not only buttressed our health system but made a difference to the lives of our people.

Our country has especially benefitted from the Cuban expertise and community orientation, which helped in the area of assessing the underlying factors that lead to diseases in communities.

This has gone a long way towards improving South Africa's primary healthcare, which is one of the challenged facts of our healthcare system.

Under the leadership of President Cyril Ramaphosa, South Africa has nominated the Henry Reeve International Contingent of Doctors Specialised in Disaster Situations and Serious Epidemics, which is also known as the Cuban Medical Brigade – of which there are currently about 3 700 dispatched around the globe in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic – for the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize.

This was a resolution taken by Cabinet, and a move widely supported by an international community that is aware and appreciative of the noble efforts of this group of professionals whose primary aim is to save human life.

This recognition by our government is pursued alongside our immense gratitude to our own healthcare workers.

Our recognition of the Cuban Medical Brigade is part and parcel of international

solidarity and South-South relations of which South Africa is part. We therefore call on all South Africans to support this nomination for the recognition of the humane agenda driven by Cuba.

The African continent itself has been among the greatest beneficiaries of Cuban internationalism, not least in the critical sphere of medical assistance.

Few would forget that members of the Cuban leadership travelled to Algiers to build formal relations with the Algerian National Liberation Front, and the fact that Che Guevara's trip around Africa in 1963 was a significant turning point in strengthening Cuba's relationship with liberation movements around the continent.

Building a better Africa and a better world is an imperative of our time for all those concerned with global inequality and the vulnerable conditions of the developing world to poverty, communicable diseases and pandemics such as COVID-19.

The contribution of Cuba to the Global South and indeed some parts of the Global North in this titanic battle has been nothing short of noble but also a revelation.

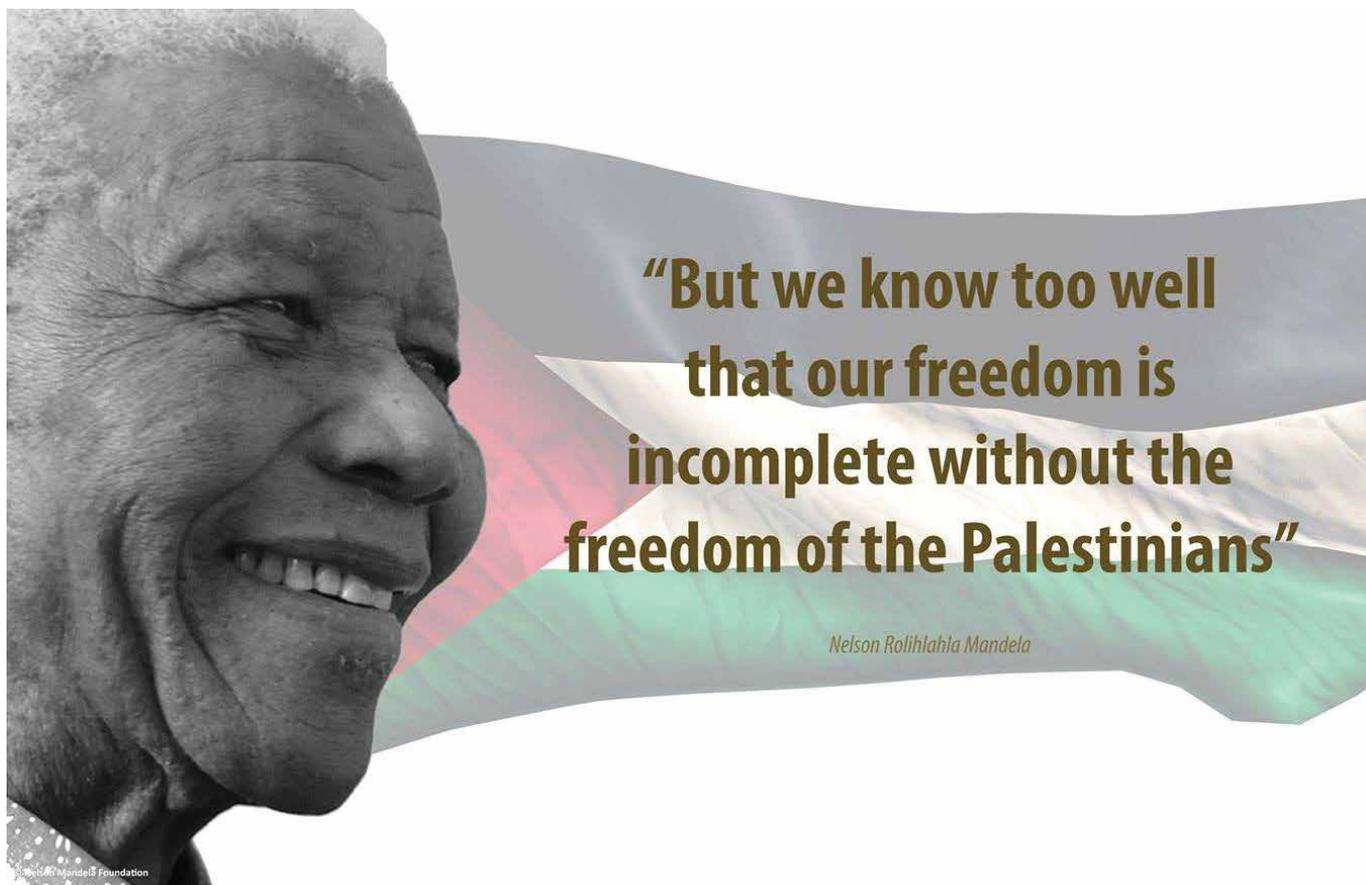
Cuba's selfless pursuit of international solidarity as evidenced by both its support for Africa's liberation struggle and medical assistance to the developing world represents a counter-narrative to the current dominant mode of discourse, which seeks to disguise Western interests as the "norm" for international relations.

For this moral stand, Cuba has endured irrational sanctions and a trade embargo. Its international solidarity has been re-narrativised in negative terms to undermine the humanist impulses that drive its foreign policy orientation.

On moments like this one cannot help recalling the towering words of the late President Mandela on the occasion of his visit to Cuba, which echoed the moral rectitude that he epitomised. Among others, President Mandela said:

"We have come here today, recognising our great debt to the Cuban people. What other country has such a history of selfless behaviour as Cuba has shown for the people of Africa? How many countries benefit from Cuban healthcare professionals and educators? How many of these volunteers are now in Africa? What country has ever needed help from Cuba and has not received it? How many countries threatened by imperialism or fighting for their freedom have been able to count on the support of Cuba?"

We look forward to the continued selfless contribution of the Cuban people to our country. 🇨🇺



# How will South Africa build renewed solidarity on the African continent and support the just cause of Palestine internationally

The devastating impact of the virus has forced us to realise the vital importance of the values of cooperation and collaboration, and the essence of deepening multilateralism and the centrality of the apex institution thereof, the UN and her sister agencies.

**By Alvin Botes**  
**Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation**

The 43rd United Nations (UN) International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was held on 30 November 2020. South Africa’s national interest displays a people-centred, progressive and developmental outlook evidenced in its foreign policy, particularly as this has been expressed in the post-liberation canon of promoting Pan-Africanism, South-

South solidarity, North-South cooperation and multilateral cooperation. We have been universally acclaimed for our role as a country, which errs on the side of the most vulnerable. It therefore holds that we should leapfrog into a prosperous future, informed by a value proposition underpinned by the affirmation of multilateralism and rejection of unilateralism.

We will strengthen our efforts to reposition, reclaim, restore and re-imagine South Africa’s credentials as a universally recognised African state; as a trusted interlocutor and good citizen in the context of a depreciating foreign policy currency.

**COVID-19**

When the world gathered in 2019 to commemorate the International Day of

Solidarity with the Palestinian People, as observed by the UN annually on 29 November, none of us would have imagined that the world would be engulfed by a common enemy – the COVID-19 pandemic.

The outbreak of this pandemic unquestionably presents an era-defining challenge to public health and the global economy. Its political consequences, both short- and long-term, are less well understood. But what we do know, contagious diseases know no borders; it is transnational in nature, straddling nations and states.

The devastating impact of the virus has forced us to realise the vital importance of the values of cooperation and collaboration, and the essence of deepening multilateralism and the centrality of the apex institution thereof, the UN and her sister agencies.

With the international community focussing on mitigating the severe effects and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, Israel is exploiting the situation to escalate its violations in accelerating its settlement colonisation and annexation schemes by continuing to demolish and confiscate Palestinian-owned structures and homes in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and further entrenching its military occupation.

#### **Israel is escalating its violations**

This has once again been observed when the Israeli occupation authorities demolished the Humsa Al-Baqai'a community in Tubas Governorate.

Early in October 2020, Israeli authorities also announced the advancement of over 5 000 new housing units in the occupied West Bank. This marked 2020 as the year for the highest settlement expansion since 2012, with over 12 000 units being advanced.

In July 2020, Israel was on the brink of annexing West Bank territory with support from the Trump administration. In his four years in office, former President Donald Trump

supported Israel to realise an incredible set of diplomatic and strategic gains at virtually no cost in concessions to the Palestinians. On several policy areas, President Trump, the architect of the “Deal of Century”, disposed of policies long-held by bipartisan United States (US) presidential administrations.

In December 2017, he recognised Jerusalem as being the “undivided capital of Israel”, and in May 2018, moved the US Embassy there, annexed the disputed Golan Heights, ramped up illegal settlements, withheld humanitarian aid to the Palestinians, demolished record numbers of West Bank homes, threatened to brand human rights organisations critical of Israel as anti-Semitic and brokered three normalisation deals between Israel and Arab countries.

In a radical shift by Arab nations, three countries, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Sudan, have taken steps in recent months towards normalising relations with the State of Israel.

The prevailing formula as outlined by the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative was that normalisation would only be granted to Israel in return for making meaningful political compromises in relation to the Palestinians.

The conclusion of a multilayered, multiparty package deal has fragmented the Arab Peace Initiative formula, as these accords replace the equation of “peace for land” with the Netanyahu-coined “peace for peace” approach, in which normalisation is given almost unconditionally. Moreover, the accords reframe the role of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within the framework of Arab-Israeli relations. From an international perspective, the potential of the accords to influence the Israeli-Palestinian political stalemate remains a key question. Most remarkable, these diplomatic gifts were lavished on Israel without negotiating anything tangible in return for the Palestinians. They demonstrate that Israel's

As we reiterate our support for a just and negotiated settlement on the Palestinian struggle for self-determination, independence and complete sovereignty in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions and international law, we recall the wise words of the global icon of justice, former President Mandela: “We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians”.

acceptance in the region does not necessitate paying the price of tough compromises on the Palestinian front.

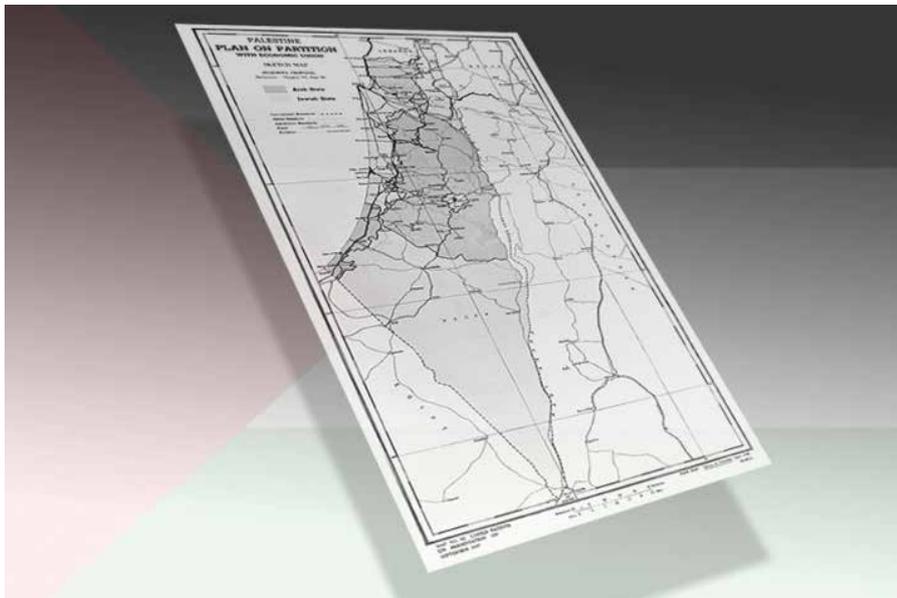
However, in the same vein, the Palestinian Authority on 17 November 2020 announced that it was renewing security and civil ties with Israel, which were severed six months previously amid Israel's plans for unilateral West Bank annexation, a move that has since been suspended. The development came following Joe Biden's victory following the US election.

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People reminded that while UN Resolution 181 paved the way for the declaration of an independent Israel, and its subsequent recognition by the UN and



# INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE





by other states, Israel continues to violate UN Security Council (SC) resolutions and international law, while the Palestinian people continue to endure tragedies and calamities, continue to suffer under occupation and dispossession displacement, live in exile, martyred and imprisoned, while defending their history and homeland and their holy sites. This denial of their most basic of rights should be an affront to the conscience of the world and a spur to action. The nations of the world must truly engage in constructive acts of solidarity. Solidarity must become more than a noun, it is time that it becomes a verb. It is time for concrete measures to be enacted.

The Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) is at a stalemate and though there have been several proposals to reach a peace agreement between Israel and Palestine prior to 2014, the ongoing conflict has defied the international community's peacebuilding efforts. Consultations have been based on clearly established international legal frameworks, which include the UN General Assembly (UNGA), the UNSC resolutions, the Madrid Principles, the Arab Peace Plan, the Geneva Initiative, the Quartet Roadmap and the Paris International Peace Conference, held in January 2017, to mention but a few.

South Africa has premised its involvement in the MEPP on a principled position based on its own struggle against apartheid, and the many similarities with the Palestinian plight. Since the dawn of our country's democracy, and under the stewardship of the first President, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, South Africa's foreign policy and diplomatic positions towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have been remarkably steady. Not only has Pretoria's positions remained consistent, and its actions steadfast under the various changes of South Africa's democratic administrations.

**South Africa's reconciliatory measures**

South Africa has a history of pursuing reconciliatory measures, has initiated and supported draft resolutions in favour of Palestine and has attended many UNSC meetings addressing the Palestinian question. It has held consistent voting behaviour since 1994 and backed the Palestinian UN bid for statehood, and more specifically the 2009 "Palestine 194" diplomatic campaign. South Africa has defended Palestinians in all peace conferences it attended; and used its influence to counter Israeli diplomatic offensives that could prove harmful to Palestinian ties with other African countries.

South Africa has undertaken several initiatives in support of the Palestinian cause:

- In addition to public support for the relevant UNSC resolutions, South Africa has endorsed the US-sponsored Mitchell Report and the Tenet Plan. South Africa welcomed the Saudi-sponsored Arab Peace Initiative of March 2002 as well as the Quartet (US, European Union [EU], Russia and UN) Middle East Road Map of May 2003.
- South Africa has expressed its support for the civil-society initiative that emerged as the Geneva Agreement in 2004, viewing it as complementary to the Road Map. South Africa has declared itself in favour of the deployment of an international monitoring force in the occupied Palestinian territories.
- On 22 August 2012, the South African Cabinet approved Government Notice 379 pertaining to the labelling of products from the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). The Israeli Government was "distressed" by the fact that the entire South African Cabinet had approved the notice, requiring the labelling of products emanating from the OPT.

- In June 2016, former French President, François Hollande, hosted a Middle East Peace Initiative Meeting aimed at rekindling the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. Following this meeting, several other developments ensued: a report from the Middle East Quartet, Russian and Egyptian initiatives, and the adoption of Resolution 2334 on 23 December 2016. In January 2017, France hosted a conference for peace in the Middle East. South Africa reminded the meeting that it had in the past initiated dialogue between different groups of Palestinians and Israelis, during which it shared its experience in negotiations, peacebuilding and constitution-building processes and the transition to democratic transformation.
- South Africa, under former President Jacob Zuma, also appointed Presidential envoys who visited several countries in the region and interacted with leaders and opinion-makers, soliciting views on how to revive and take forward the two-State solution.
- South Africa, through its bond with countries of the Middle East and North Africa region and of the Global South, including the rest of the African continent, has advocated governments to support international peace efforts to resolve this protracted conflict.
- In addition to South Africa's multilateral pledges, at forums such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS); the Non-Aligned Movement; and the G77, South Africa has also pursued several bilateral and trilateral channels of engagement on the MEPP. In 2002, South Africa tried to broker peace talks between Israel and Palestine under the "Spier Presidential Peace Retreat". South Africa hosted two rounds of Spier talks aimed at strengthening the peace camps on both sides and sharing its experience in negotiations, peacemaking and transition to democracy; and to support international peace efforts, in particular through the UN system.

The obvious conclusion from these meetings and interactions is that South Africans are unyielding in their solidarity with Palestine and see themselves as partners in the Palestinian struggle for justice and peace. Furthermore, on 14 May 2018, the Government recalled its former Ambassador to Israel to protest the killing of hundreds of unarmed protesters taking part in the Great March of Return in besieged Gaza. In 2019, South Africa began to actively downgrade its ties with Israel in an unprecedented step, which goes against the current international trend of shielding Israel and protecting it from repercussions for its apartheid policies and its disenfranchisement of millions of Palestinians.

On the global stage, in 2020, South Africa was both an elected member of the UNSC and the Chair of the African Union (AU), which placed upon us a great sense of responsibility to reinforce our solidarity with oppressed people. During our tenure on the UNSC, we did not miss the opportunity to intensify lobbying for the world body, which is weighted against the Palestinians, to strengthen international law, pass critical resolutions and craft new conversations around the Palestinian struggle.

Similarly, our role in the AU is, conceivably, more crucial as Israel is vociferously lobbying various African states to support its bid for observer status at the AU. An emboldened South Africa in the AU is more important than ever, to ensure that Israel does not acquire an observer seat in the AU.

There is a growing and justifiable sense that certain African and Arab nations no longer see the liberation of Palestine as a common objective. Israel, with the support of America, has driven a wedge between these countries, which were united in their unconditional support of the Palestinian struggle against military occupation and apartheid.

If Israel continues to score political victories while facing little resistance, it could also eventually dominate Africa. The absurdity of this matter goes beyond the struggle in Palestine. A continent that was devastated by colonialism, racism and apartheid should not embrace the policies proposed by Israel. This exemplifies the ills that have cost Africa so dearly for hundreds of years. The issue of solidarity with Palestine, and the pressing need to block Israeli scourges in Africa, are intrinsically linked.

As external and internal threats to the historic Palestinian statehood agenda multiply, the need for a political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict becomes more imminent. Within this context, South Africa's struggle against apartheid was based on concerned internal resistance to apartheid and the international isolation of the apartheid state.

To this end, there is a need to encourage and intensify international, national and regional social movements, organisations and coalitions to support the unified call to strengthen the global campaign to pressure Israel to end its occupation and fully comply with international law and all relevant UN resolutions.

While lauding Africa's strong show of support for Palestine, the continent's civil-society network could and should do more, starting with the creation of an Africa-wide solidarity network that could make the activities of national solidarity movements more effective. Given the absence of official ties between Israeli and Palestinian people, the focus should be more directed toward enhancing Track-II diplomacy in ways that may induce both sides to pressure the leadership of Palestine and Israel to revive their official peace talks on more solid grounds. As part of a strategy, the aim would be to create a synergy with relevant NGOs that are bridge-builders, human rights defenders and agents of social protection and economic revitalisation to explore options in moving the MEPP forward.

It is anticipated that President Biden will roll back some of Trump's egregious anti-Palestinian policies. South Africa calls on the newly elected American leadership and the international community to open the door to a different diplomacy approach in resolving the Israeli-Palestine conflict.

Correspondingly, the idea presented by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to hold an international peace conference in 2021 appears to be gaining traction. South Africa fully supports the call for an international conference with the participation of all concerned parties for discussions on a genuine peace process, including the resolution of all final status issues.

Any initiative to end the conflict and to bring an end to Israeli occupation must consider the needs and aspirations of the Palestinian people. No peace plan or initiative can have

any merit or succeed if all parties to the conflict are not included in such talks as equal partners from the very beginning.

As we reiterate our support for a just and negotiated settlement on the Palestinian struggle for self-determination, independence and complete sovereignty in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions and international law, we recall the wise words of the global icon of justice, former President Mandela: "We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians". Indeed, Madiba encapsulates the essence of solidarity itself because solidarity is not just about doing for others; is not about things like humanitarian assistance, displaying empathy, or giving; solidarity is a political act; more than that, it is a political process that creates political relationships.

South Africa's history and support for the Palestinian struggle for freedom are also linked to our historical and shared struggles. South Africa stands ready to continue to further enhance and support the Palestinian cause at multilateral and bilateral levels, alongside the international community, to push forward the peace talks between Palestine and Israel, and will continue to support the efforts for achieving a fair and durable peace in Palestine, based on the two-State solution and in the realisation of the inalienable right to self-determination of the Palestinian people.

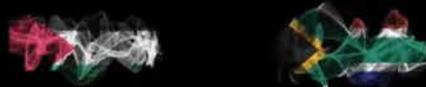
South Africa will continue to work with all like-minded countries to support international efforts aimed at the establishment of a viable Palestinian state, existing side by side in peace with Israel within international recognised borders, based on those existing on 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in line with all relevant UN resolutions, international law and internationally agreed parameters. 🇺🇦



*From Jerusalem To South Africa With Love*

*This dance by the youth of Jerusalem is dedicated to our friends in South Africa.  
As our leaders before us, let us unite with renewed energy towards collective liberation.  
From Palestine to South Africa, Amandla Awethu, the future is ours*

هذه الرقصة التي يقوم بها شباب القدس مهداه لأصدقائنا في جنوب أفريقيا  
كالقادة من قبلنا ، لنتحدهم مع الطاقة المتجددة نحو التحرر الجماعي .  
من فلسطين إلى جنوب أفريقيا ، أماندلا أويثو القوة لنا ، المستقبل هو مستقبلنا





BRUNEI



THAILAND



MYANMAR



LAOS



INDONESIA



MALAYSIA



PHILIPPINES



CAMBODIA



SINGAPORE



VIETNAM

# SA agreement with Southeast Asian bloc opens up a host of opportunities

Few regions in the world offer such promise and potential for the future of South Africa's international relations as the region comprising the members of ASEAN.

By Dr Hilton Fisher

South Africa's Ambassador to Indonesia, Timor-Leste and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

**O**n 10 November 2020, South Africa acceded to the Treaty of Amity (TAC) of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the fifth-largest economy in the world. The potential for future trade, investment and a host of other cooperation agreements is exciting.

Few regions in the world offer such promise and potential for the future of South Africa's international relations as the region comprising the members of ASEAN. From large consumer markets, dynamic trade and investment opportunities to a successful model of regional integration that has contributed meaningfully to growth and development – the potential for cooperation is vast.

As part of efforts to deepen South Africa's engagement and cooperation with this region, our country acceded to the ASEAN TAC. The TAC was signed at the first ASEAN Summit Meeting in Bali, Indonesia, in February 1976.

ASEAN is a regional organisation aimed at promoting economic growth and regional stability among its member states. Comprising 10 member states (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam), the organisation's headquarters are in Jakarta, Indonesia.

ASEAN actively encourages non-ASEAN states outside Southeast Asia to enhance cooperative relationships through accession to the TAC. Recognising the pivotal importance of ASEAN, key regional players such as China, Japan and South Korea are regular participants at ASEAN summits and meetings while prominent dialogue partners include the European Union (EU), India, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America (USA).

With a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of US\$2.8 trillion and a population of 650 million, in comparison to the US\$2.6-trillion GDP and 1.3 billion people of Africa, ASEAN is the fifth-largest economy in the world. A burgeoning middle class with a huge consumption potential and discretionary funds make ASEAN a pivotal consumer market of the future and an attractive region to Africa.

While the preamble of the TAC makes references to principles adopted during the 1955 Bandung Asian-African Conference, these have not yet translated into significant business opportunities for African countries. There are approximately 300 companies from ASEAN, mainly in the areas of agri-business, manufacturing, oil and infrastructure, active in Africa and are mostly concentrated in South Africa, Nigeria and Egypt. Africa has become a destination for investment from ASEAN.

The major ASEAN investors in Africa are Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, while the ASEAN countries with the highest trade with Africa are Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore, with South Africa, Nigeria and Egypt being the largest African import markets for ASEAN goods.

One way for Africa-ASEAN reciprocal trade and investment to flourish is to forge agreements with regional blocs, more specifically through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement. There have to date been no trade agreements between ASEAN and African regional economic communities. In 2008, seven ASEAN nations with diplomatic representation in South Africa forged the ASEAN-Pretoria Committee in an effort to boost trade and investment with South Africa. These are concerted efforts by ASEAN to boost trade and investment with Africa in general and South Africa specifically. It is imperative that South Africa develops a clear strategy to optimally benefit from accession to the TAC by means of increased cooperation, trade, investment and tourism.

While South Africa has diplomatic and economic relations with individual ASEAN members, accession to the TAC formalises its relations with ASEAN as a bloc. South Africa-ASEAN relations offer many opportunities. Accession to the treaty will ultimately

With a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of US\$2.8 trillion and a population of 650 million, in comparison to the US\$2.6-trillion GDP and 1.3 billion people of Africa, ASEAN is the fifth-largest economy in the world.

contribute to facilitating closer trade relations and more investment opportunities. South Africa, however, needs to find a way to take advantage of a Free Trade Agreement, within the current legal framework, in the Southern African Customs Union, the Southern African Development Community and ultimately within the AfCFTA.

ASEAN presents an opportunity for South Africa to explore broader economic opportunities outside the traditional markets of the USA, the EU and China. Tensions in the global trade arena, constrained markets and the post-COVID-19 world portend a shift in geopolitical economic relations. ASEAN offers an opportunity to fill the void and pursue new opportunities. Since ASEAN has free trade among its members as well as six other countries, it is prudent for South Africa to develop a strategic approach towards its interaction with ASEAN.

South Africa's foreign policy objectives of economic diplomacy aimed at enhancing job creation, education and training as well as health cooperation will be well served through accession to the TAC. The timing of this accession offers a significant opportunity for South Africa post-COVID-19 economic recovery efforts.

There is scope for greater collaboration with ASEAN member countries across the various multilateral and regional bodies. Four ASEAN countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand) are, together with South Africa, members of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), whose objective is to promote sustained growth and balanced development through regional cooperation. South Africa's membership of IORA and the closer relations with ASEAN that will be brought about by accession to the TAC need to be harnessed in pursuit of its national interests.

Accession to the TAC offers South Africa the further opportunity to pursue its multilateral agenda related to, among others, combatting human trafficking, terrorism, illegal fishing, illegal logging, organised crime, reducing the proliferation of drugs, the effects of climate change and improving food security. The promotion of tourism and reciprocal visa regimes will be accelerated through accession to the TAC. Add to these collaboration around research and development, exchanges between academia, collaboration between policymakers and professionals, cultural exchanges, religious exchanges, language and gastronomy.

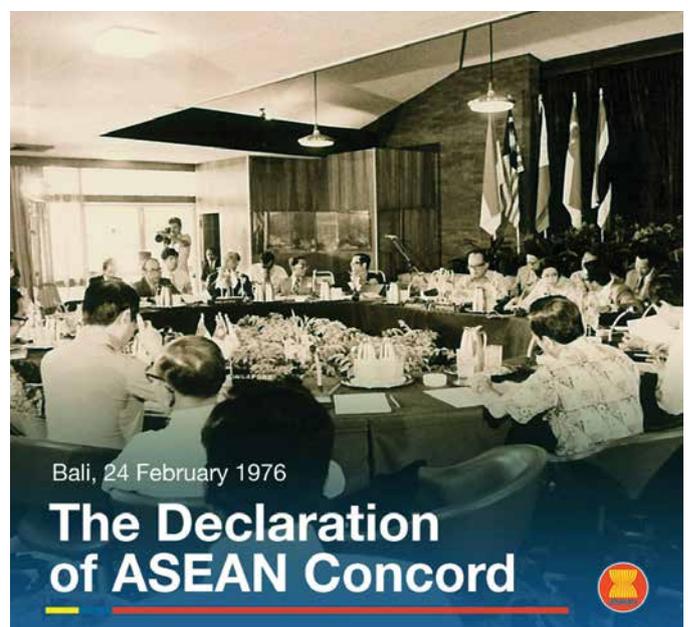
ASEAN's success lies in its agility and receptiveness to change and demand. One such transformative change is the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). While the precepts of the 4IR have been part of the economic integration agenda of ASEAN, the implementation in the post-COVID-19 economic reconstruction is likely to be accelerated. ASEAN leaders have stressed that gaps in digital infrastructure and connectivity, skills and knowledge development and the formulation of digital policies will play out at the regional level and must be prioritised as the greatest impact of the 4IR.

The implementation of 4IR in ASEAN post the COVID-19 pandemic will accelerate economic integration by enhancing economic cooperation and supply chain connectivity.

As South Africa prepares for a technological leap into the digital future, ASEAN provides an excellent example of how to both harness and navigate the opportunities and challenges this digital transformation offers to developing countries. ASEAN has been successful in propelling the Southeast Asian region into prosperity while maintaining durable stability amidst diverging political systems and ethnic and linguistic diversity.

Looking ahead, it is anticipated that Southeast Asia will become even more strategic and the region more populous. Situated in the heart of the Asia-Pacific region, ASEAN occupies a strategic military location and lies at the crossroads of global trade. South Africa's accession to the TAC provides the opportunity to strengthen ties with a regional partner and advance its foreign policy objectives. 🇺🇦

ASEAN presents an opportunity for South Africa to explore broader economic opportunities outside the traditional markets of the United States of America, the European Union and China.





# Women's economic justice critical in realising AU Agenda 2063

The AfCFTA will create opportunities that will benefit many women in particular across the continent as the export of goods and services is boosted. Fostering greater trade between African nations will help deepen economic integration in line with the AU's Agenda 2063.

**By Phumla Williams**  
**Director-General of the Government Communication and Information System and Cabinet Spokesperson**

When South Africa assumed the Chair of the African Union (AU) in 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa made an undertaking that the continent's women's financial and economic inclusion would be high on the agenda.

South Africa's Chairship of the AU also coincided with a number of important

milestones on the continent and globally. Among these milestones, was the end of the 2010 to 2020 Decade of African Women, which focussed on gender equality and women empowerment. It was also the final year of the commitment made in the African Agenda 2063 of ensuring 50% women representation in decision-making by 2020.

The launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) comes at an opportune

time to help accelerate women's growth and development. It establishes a single African market that enhances inclusive economic development and trade across our continent. A key thrust of South Africa's tenure as Chair was to implement the AfCFTA to strengthen regional trade and industrialisation.

The AfCFTA will create opportunities that will benefit many women in particular across the continent as the export of goods and

Evidence has shown in both developed and developing economies that when more women join the labour force, and in particular become entrepreneurs, there is a rise in gross domestic product. This empowerment also spreads to families and communities with improved levels of education, increased levels of health, reduction in poverty and starvation, and stronger communities.

services is boosted. Fostering greater trade between African nations will help deepen economic integration in line with the AU's Agenda 2063.

The year 2020 was earmarked as a pivotal one for women empowerment on the continent, and although the COVID-19 pandemic has caused massive disruption, there has been notable progress. South Africa has made gender equality and women's empowerment central to the transformation agenda and it is also at the heart of efforts to ensure sustainable development.

By establishing the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, South Africa has created institutional capacity dedicated to development and prosperity. The Gender Equality Bill was introduced to accelerate the empowerment of women and attain 50/50 gender parity for the country. The Commission on Gender Equality is mandated to monitor, evaluate and research women's rights and gender equality in the country.

As a continent, we have found that investing in women is one of the most effective development tools to uplift society.

Evidence has shown in both developed and developing economies that when more women join the labour force, and in particular become entrepreneurs, there is a rise in gross domestic product. This empowerment also spreads to families and communities with improved levels of education, increased levels

of health, reduction in poverty and starvation, and stronger communities.

By devoting an entire decade to women, African leaders have demonstrated their political will and commitment to promoting gender equality, women's empowerment and women's rights. Throughout the decade, considerable progress was made in translating commitment into measurable action as most African countries took giant steps to elevate the status of women through legal and constitutional means, institutional gender mechanisms, as well as creating conducive environments for women to realise their potential.

Other notable achievements are that African states have improved women's access to education, modern technologies, infrastructure and services.

The same can be said for more representation of women in sectors traditionally dominated by men, such as mining, finance, commercial agriculture and commercial fishing, among others.

Although these are all welcome developments, the continent still has a long way to go in breaking down barriers and the proverbial glass ceiling.

The continent must address issues of socio-economic and cultural constraints, along with harmful cultural practices. African states must address gender-based violence, and ensure a level playing field with regard to property ownership, land and inheritance.

The new African Women's Decade on Financial and Economic Inclusion of African Women 2020 – 2030 is an opportunity for AU member states to take appropriate action to fully implement commitments to advance the welfare of women on the continent.

South Africa is currently releasing over 700 000 hectares of state-owned land and has committed to ensure that 50% of this land goes to women.

The new decade will also see efforts to ensure greater availability of financial resources and equality of opportunities to access financial services.

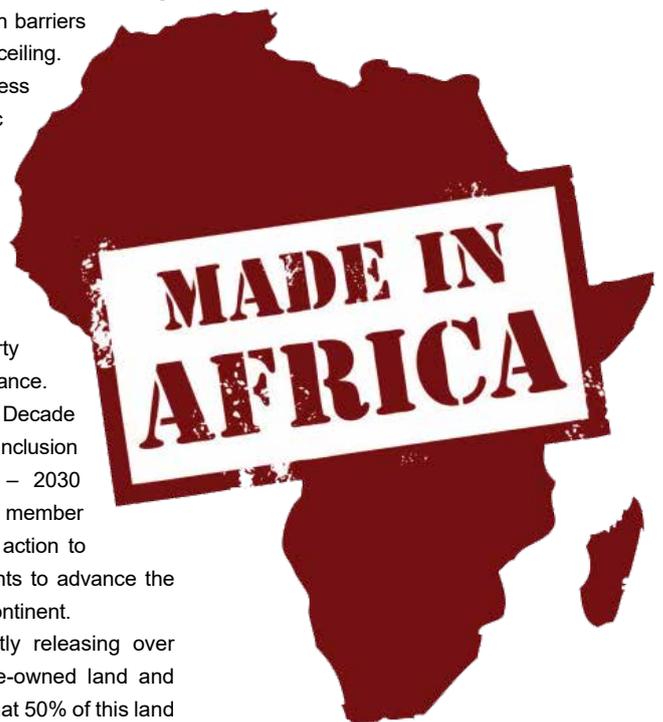
Financial inclusion is critical to the empowerment of women and the improvement of their quality of life, particularly if coupled with financial literacy.

Africa must explore the idea of gendered financing tools to target, in particular, young women entrepreneurs who wish to start businesses. The continent must incubate and provide access to markets to allow these entrepreneurs to get off the ground.

The past decade has shown that much can be achieved with dedication and focus. Let us ensure that we blaze a new trail over the coming months and years by unlocking the unlimited potential of women on our continent.

Addressing attitudes towards women, will ensure that our attitude towards growth and prosperity is realised. 

"The new African Women's Decade on Financial and Economic Inclusion of African Women 2020 – 2030 is an opportunity for AU member states to take appropriate action to fully implement commitments to advance the welfare of women on the continent."





Tucked away in the Groot Drakenstein mountains, the Franschhoek Wine Route is considered South Africa's "gourmet capital". There are more than 40 active wineries along the route, ranging from popular brands such as Boschendal and L'Ormarins to very small, artisan producers like My Wyn and Black Elephant Vintners. Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot, Chardonnay and Semillon farmers make up the bulk of the vineyard plantings in Franschhoek, making it a "must do" for every wine lover.





# LIBERATION HERITAGE AMBASSADOR PRISCILLA JANA: A HUMAN RIGHTS ICON

Ambassador Jana was an outstanding and fearless human rights lawyer who devoted her practice to fighting the apartheid regime, defending a broad range of struggle leaders and asserting the rights of marginalised South Africans.

**A**mbassador Devikarani Priscilla Sewpal Jana passed away on Saturday, 10 October 2020, at the age of 76.

In paying tribute, President Cyril Ramaphosa said South Africa lost a human rights icon and a formidable legal intellect with the passing of South African Human Rights Commission Deputy Chairperson Priscilla Jana.

Ambassador Jana was an outstanding and fearless human rights lawyer who devoted her practice to fighting the apartheid regime, defending a broad range of struggle leaders and asserting the rights of marginalised South Africans.

The President said: "Our nation and our legal fraternity have lost a champion of the struggle we waged for justice, freedom and democracy.

"Priscilla Jana was at the side of Solomon Mahlangu, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and many other leaders as they waged their fight for freedom on our streets and in the courts of the unjust apartheid legal system.

"She helped to focus global attention on apartheid South Africa and went on to fly the flag of a free and democratic South Africa by

representing our country in the Netherlands and Ireland.

"We will always be indebted to Priscilla Jana for her contribution to our freedom and for her championing of equality and of the causes of vulnerable South Africans in our democratic dispensation.

"May her soul rest in peace at the end of the extraordinary life she has led in service to our nation."

President Ramaphosa declared her funeral as a Special Provincial Official, Category Two.

Devikarani Priscilla Jana was born on 5 December 1943, in Westville, Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal), to a middle-class Indian family. From an early age, Jana developed an awareness of the unequal society she was born into, stating in her book *Fighting for Mandela*, "everyone who wasn't white was suffering". This conscientisation was nurtured early in her life by her father, a school teacher, who challenged social injustices, whether these related to apartheid or to the Indian caste system. The family was constantly uprooted because of her father's political activity.

From 1960, she attended Durban High School and in September 1963, she commenced tertiary education at the Sophia College for Women in Breach Candy, Bombay

India. Although she had initially planned to study Medicine at the Sophia College, following her marriage to her first husband, Reg, Priscilla decided that Law was what she really wanted to do. She initially commenced her Law degree through the University of South Africa, but went on to become a full-time Law student at the University College for Indians on Salisbury Island, off the Durban coast, where she was the only female in her class.





Jana went on to become the personal attorney of Nelson Mandela and, as such, was one of very few South Africans to have had unique access to Mandela during his incarceration on Robben Island. It has been said of Jana that "at one stage, she represented every single political prisoner on Robben Island".

carry coded messages from senior political leaders on the island to then ANC President Oliver Tambo.

Jana was also a member of the South African Law Commission and served as a member of the Advisory Committee to the President. She served as South African Ambassador in the Netherlands from 2001 to 2005 and Ambassador in Ireland from 2006 to 2011. Jana was a Member of Parliament from 1994 to 1999. She joined the South African Human Rights Commission in January 2017 as Commissioner and Deputy Chairperson, taking responsibility for the commission's equality focus area. 🇷🇺

[www.sahistory.org](http://www.sahistory.org)

In 1974, she graduated with a degree and completed her articles at the law firm of Ismail Ayob in Johannesburg. As a human rights attorney, her clients ranged from society's most economically downtrodden to many noted political figures. In addition to her own life experiences, through her activities as a human rights lawyer, she saw the brutality of apartheid first hand and became determined to fight this hated system by joining an underground African National Congress (ANC) cell.

Jana went on to become the personal attorney of Nelson Mandela and, as such, was one of very few South Africans to have had unique access to Mandela during his incarceration on Robben Island. It has been said of Jana that "at one stage, she represented every single political prisoner on Robben Island".

She recorded details of her extraordinary life and her courageous role in fighting the hated system of apartheid in *Fighting for Mandela*. In this book, she poignantly writes: "My entire adult life has been dedicated to dismantling the apartheid system and attempting to replace it with something wholesome and good for all South Africans. I cannot regret one minute of it".

In 1980, Jana was banned under the Suppression of Communism Act, 1950 for five years.

She joined an underground cell of the ANC reporting to former President Thabo Mbeki that included former Police Commissioner Jackie Selebi and religious leaders Rev. Beyers Naudé and Rev. Cedric Mayson. Her access to Mandela when he was imprisoned on Robben Island enabled her to





# How values, interests and power must shape South Africa's foreign policy

Middle-sized powers like South Africa need a reformed multilateral system. It should, therefore, continue to be engaged in the debates on reforming it.

By Danny Bradlow

South African Research Chairs Initiative Professor of International Development Law and African Economic Relations, University of Pretoria

The COVID-19 crisis is one of many indicators that we live in dangerous and uncertain times. Others include the international community's struggle to respond to technological and climate change, demographic shifts, growing poverty and inequality as well as increased global insecurity.

The global governance arrangements for managing these changes are no longer fit for purpose. Take the decision-making procedures in the United Nations (UN) Security Council and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). They don't account for the growing

importance of developing countries. Nor do they meaningfully accommodate non-state actors such as transnational corporations and civil-society groups.

These changes are pushing countries to reassess how they use foreign policy to serve their national interests. A recently published book, *Values, Interest and Power: South African Foreign Policy in Uncertain Times*, contributes to such a reassessment in South Africa. The book was co-edited by foreign-relations expert, Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, and myself.

In the book, a group of senior and junior South African authors offer suggestions on

how the country can formulate and implement a foreign policy that responds to a changing global world.

We maintain that foreign policymaking should be guided by the national interest. The South African Constitution provides important guidance on this. This is because it's a product of the country's history, politics and culture. It expresses its values and aspirations.

On foreign policy, it allocates responsibilities and authority among the different branches of government. It also instructs relevant government authorities to base their foreign policy on the values expressed in the Bill of Rights.

Subject to these constraints, policymakers are free to determine foreign-policy priorities according to their view of the country's economic, geo-strategic, political, cultural, environmental and security interests.

### Recommendation

The book concludes with some recommendations for South Africa's foreign policymakers.

First, foreign policy should:

- Contribute to implementing the domestic economic and social transformation agenda.
- Be consistent with the values and governance arrangements set out in the Constitution.
- Position South Africa to be a norm entrepreneur in global affairs. This means pursuing creative and principled solutions to global issues.
- Advocate reforms to global governance arrangements so that they become more responsive to the concerns of the global South. And become more accountable.

Secondly, we recommend changing the way which foreign policy is designed. The Presidency should establish an inter-agency coordinating council that can formulate a coherent and effective foreign policy. The Department of International Relations and Cooperation should then lead implementation.

Our third recommendation is that Parliament and the Chapter 9 institutions should play a role in foreign-policy-making. These institutions support the country's constitutional democracy. For example, the Human Rights Commission could issue an annual report assessing how effectively the Government has used international relations to advance human rights at home.

In addition, there should be an annual meeting with these bodies to discuss the Government's foreign policy objectives for the year ahead. This could be run by the executive through The Presidency or the foreign relations department.

Fourthly, we recommend that a concerted effort be made to ensure that foreign service staff have the technical and language skills to deal with the expanding range of issues facing the country in the global arena. Equally important, they should also understand the links between domestic social and economic transformation and foreign policy.

### Top-of-mind topics

We also make recommendations on specific topics.

**Economic development and cooperation:** South Africa needs to pay attention to its trade and economic relations, particularly in Africa. For example, the new African Continental Free Trade Area should open important trading and job-creating opportunities. It will also help develop regional value chains.

We recommend that the Government, business, labour and other stakeholders develop an integrated strategy to take advantage of these opportunities.

**Climate change:** The country has played an important leadership role in the global UN Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiations.

To continue playing this role credibly, it should reduce the inconsistencies between its domestic and global climate change-related policies. In particular, it needs to stress in both arenas the important relationship between climate change and social justice.

**Peace and security:** South Africa should draw lessons from its experiences in African peacemaking about how it can help African regional bodies end conflicts.

We also recommend that the country develops a maritime strategy. This is important for two reasons. First, South Africa is bounded by two major oceans. Its exclusive economic zone is bigger than its land mass. Second, external actors are becoming increasingly interested in the Indian Ocean. They see it as part of a bigger maritime space stretching from the Pacific to the east coast of Africa. Without such a strategy, it will be difficult for the country to protect its interests.

We maintain that foreign policymaking should be guided by the national interest. The South African Constitution provides important guidance on this. This is because it's a product of the country's history, politics and culture. It expresses its values and aspirations.

**The multilateral system:** Middle-sized powers like South Africa need a reformed multilateral system. It should, therefore, continue to be engaged in the debates on reforming it.

Given resource constraints, it needs to focus on institutions where reform is feasible. These include the World Trade Organisation, the IMF and the World Bank. Reforms should focus on creating a greater voice for underrepresented countries, and more public accountability and transparency.

South Africa should also use its platform in global forums like the G20 and Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) to promote issues of concern to Africa, and to foster greater inter-regional cooperation.

### Need for coherence

A foreign policy that looks incoherent – or is merely reactive – can have both reputational and material costs. We hope this book contributes to improving the gains the country can make from its international relations. 🇷🇺

Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, CEO, South African Institute of International Affairs, contributed to this article. This article was first published on *The Conversation*.

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# Six reasons why Africa's new free trade area is a global game changer

The African Continental Free Trade Area, the largest global free trade area by countries participating, could transform the continent's economic prospects.

**By Caroline Kende-Robb**  
Senior Fellow, African Centre for Economic Transformation

The arrival of COVID-19 in 2020 has rapidly reshaped countries, societies and communities. Our response to the pandemic has changed political and social systems and created new social norms. Now, the world continues to face a plethora of challenges – including climate change, inequality, technological change, migration and displacement – that are both complex and evolving, and which demand collective action. Most pressingly, the full economic impact of the pandemic is still not fully understood: the International Monetary

Fund projected a historic global gross domestic product (GDP) contraction of 4.4% in 2020 and a partial and uneven recovery in 2021, with growth at 5.2%.

And yet, despite these challenges, global leadership and cooperation have been woefully flacking since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis. During this time, our rules-based international order became more fragile and even “disordered”. We saw a rise of populism, protectionism and nationalism, exacerbated by COVID-19. Citizens’ trust in governments across the world has been eroded, creating fragility in once-stable democracies. Events

in the United States Capitol, in January 2021, simply highlighted the fragility of the previously thought-to-be-most-stable of democracies.

Enter the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Launched on 1 January 2021, the AfCFTA is an exciting game changer. Currently, Africa accounts for just 2% of global trade. And only 17% of African exports are intra-continental, compared with 59% for Asia and 68% for Europe. The potential for transformation across Africa is therefore significant. The pact will create the largest free trade area in the world measured by the number of countries



participating. Connecting 1.3 billion people across 55 countries with a combined GDP valued at US\$3.4 trillion, the pact comes at a time when much of the world is turning away from cooperation and free trade.

The agreement aims to reduce all trade costs and enable Africa to integrate further into global supply chains – it will eliminate 90% of tariffs, focus on outstanding non-tariff barriers and create a single market with free movement of goods and services. Cutting red tape and simplifying customs procedures will bring significant income gains. Beyond trade, the pact also addresses the movement of persons and labour, competition, investment and intellectual property.

To overcome many current challenges, and to build back better in the wake of COVID-19, now is the time for more trade and greater cooperation. If fully implemented, what would this exciting new agreement bring to Africa and to the world?

### **1. The AfCFTA will significantly reduce poverty**

According to a recent report by the World Bank, the pact will boost regional income by 7% or US\$450 billion, speed up wage growth for women, and lift 30 million people out of extreme poverty by 2035. Wages for both skilled and unskilled workers will also be boosted by 10.3% for unskilled workers, and 9.8% for skilled workers.

The AfCFTA highlights the significant and increasing commitment of the African Union (AU) to reducing poverty through trade – a link that is increasingly recognised. As Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General of the World Trade Organisation, recently stated: “Trade is a force for good, and properly harnessed can help lift millions out of poverty and bring shared prosperity”.

### **2. Positive economic outcomes will be many and varied**

Diversifying exports, accelerating growth, competitively integrating into the global economy, increasing foreign direct investment, increasing employment opportunities and incomes, and broadening economic inclusion are just a few of the positive economic outcomes the AfCFTA can bring.

It is estimated that the agreement will increase Africa's exports by US\$560 billion, mostly in manufacturing. Intra-continental exports would also increase by 81%, while the increase to non-African countries would be 19%. According to the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, if successfully implemented, the AfCFTA could generate a combined consumer and business spending of US\$6.7 trillion by 2030. Furthermore, markets and economies across the region will be reshaped, leading to the creation of new industries and the expansion of key sectors. Significantly, it would make African countries more competitive globally.

### **3. Women stand to gain**

The AfCFTA clearly focusses on improving the lives of women. There is a risk that some of the economic gains made by women through trade could be reversed by the COVID-19 crisis. According to the Economic Commission for Africa, women account for around 70% of informal cross-border traders in Africa. Through such work, women can be vulnerable to harassment, violence, confiscation of goods and even imprisonment. Tariff reductions under

Diversifying exports, accelerating growth, competitively integrating into the global economy, increasing foreign direct investment, increasing employment opportunities and incomes, and broadening economic inclusion are just a few of the positive economic outcomes the AfCFTA can bring.

the AfCFTA will enable informal women traders to operate through formal channels, bringing better protection. Furthermore, a growing manufacturing sector would provide new job opportunities, especially for women.

As AfCFTA Secretary-General, Wamkele Mene, stated, “It [the AfCFTA] will be the opportunity to close the gender income gap, and the opportunity for SMEs to access new markets”. This is significant, since small and medium-sized enterprises account for 90% of jobs in Africa.

### **4. Trade integrity will be centre-stage**

The AfCFTA offers an opportunity to promote good governance both globally and across Africa, through the concept of “Trade Integrity” – defined as international trade transactions that are legitimate, transparent and properly priced – as a way to ensure the legitimacy of the global trading system. The prevalence of illegally-procured or produced goods (for example, illegal mining or fishing, or goods resulting from child or forced labour), mis-invoiced trade transactions (i.e. trade fraud) and opacity in most free trade zones strips governments of revenues – needed now more than ever before to assist with the pandemic response – undermines fair labour standards and human rights, and obfuscates who is involved in trade transactions and what goods are being traded, which can facilitate transnational crime. ►►

The AfCFTA offers an opportunity to promote good governance both globally and across Africa, through the concept of “Trade Integrity” – defined as international trade transactions that are legitimate, transparent and properly priced – as a way to ensure the legitimacy of the global trading system.

Tariff reductions under the AfCFTA will enable informal women traders to operate through formal channels, bringing better protection. Furthermore, a growing manufacturing sector would provide new job opportunities, especially for women.

**5. The negative impacts of COVID-19 will be cushioned**

The pandemic is expected to cause up to US\$79 billion in output losses in Africa in 2020. The African Development Bank Group's African Economic Outlook (AEO) 2020 Supplement estimates that Africa could suffer GDP losses in 2020 between US\$145.5 billion (baseline) and US\$189.7 billion (worst case), from the pre-COVID-19 GDP estimates. Further, trade in medical supplies and food has been disrupted. It is being fully recognised across the continent that the AfCFTA presents a short-term opportunity for countries to "build back better" and cushion the effects of the pandemic. In the longer term, the pact will increase the continent's resilience to future shocks.

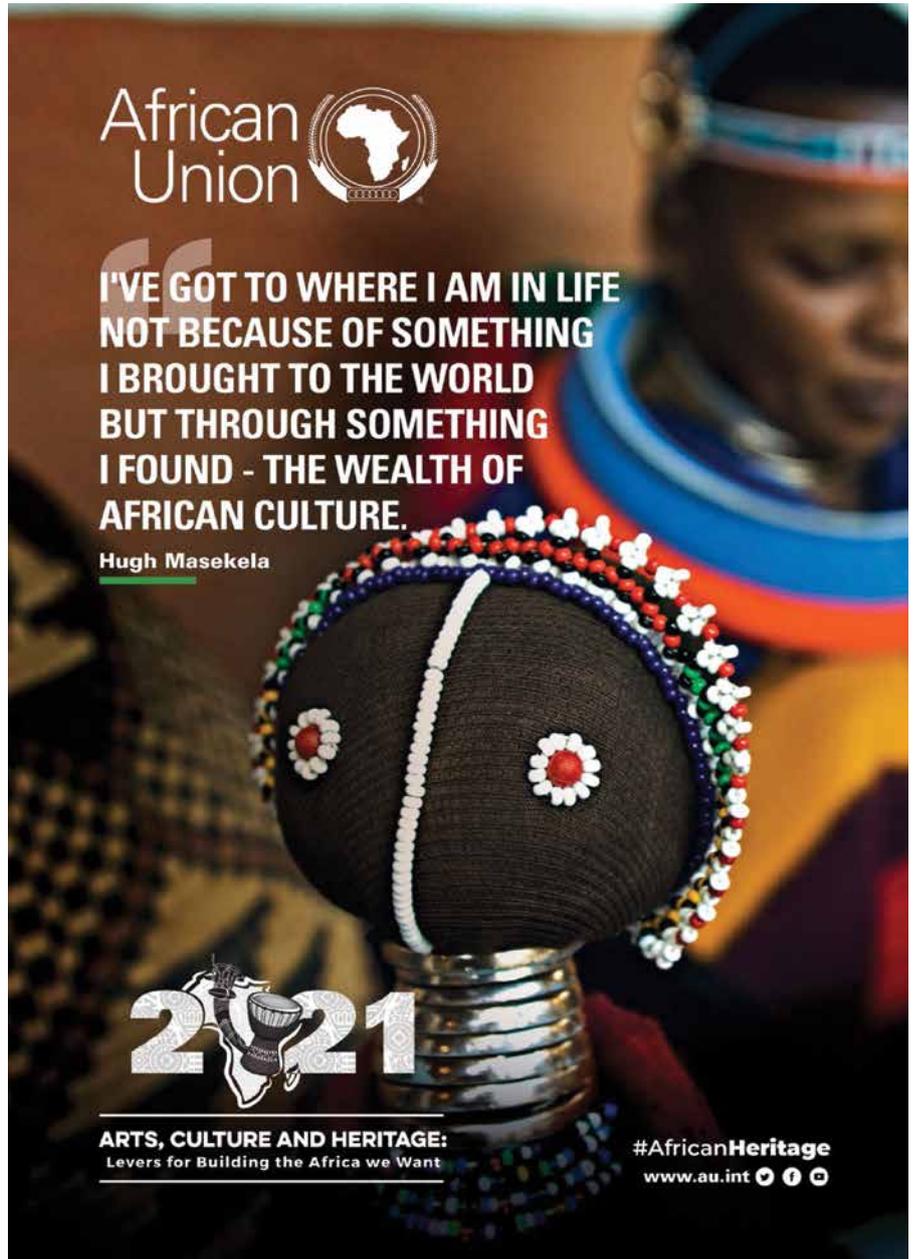
**6. The benefits of cooperation will set an example for the world**

Across the world, countries are questioning trade agreements and economic integration, alongside turning away from global cooperation, leadership and collective action. Political dynamics are driving short termism, polarisation and isolationism. Yet, our multiple threats demand long-term thinking and greater cooperation – and this is precisely what the AfCFTA represents. While the world turns in one direction, the AU is moving in the other by deepening ties across the continent.

At the same time, we cannot lose sight of significant challenges that still exist. Three stand out. First is implementation.

A recent article by the African Centre for Economic Transformation highlights how the agreement will accelerate economic transformation and help Africa "escape the colonial legacy". They stress, however, that "the devil is in the implementation" and recommend a bottom-up approach, which focusses on national problems that require cross-border solutions such as shared water resources, regional energy markets and highways.

The second is equity. It will be crucial to understand who gains and who loses from the pact. For example, smallholder farmers may lose if there is a focus on large-scale cash-crop farming, which could lead to greater food insecurity and poor nutrition. The poverty and social impacts therefore need to



be tracked across sectors and those who are negatively affected protected until extractive patterns of trade are replaced by robust value chains, value addition, increased interregional integration, greater investment, creating more jobs and increased income.

And third is infrastructure. According to the African Development Bank, Africa's infrastructure needs are substantial at US\$130 to US\$170 billion a year, with a financing gap between US\$68 to US\$108 billion, driving most countries' trade outward rather than inward.

The Ghanaian President, Nana Akufo-Addo, recently stated that the COVID-19 pandemic had heightened the importance of the success of the AfCFTA – a success that is now within reach, despite the current challenges.

The President added, "The destruction of global supply chains has reinforced the necessity for closer integration among us so that we can boost our mutual self-sufficiency, strengthen our economies and reduce our dependence on external sources." 🇳🇮



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# Strengthening regional tourism integration and cooperation

The workshop should be viewed as South Africa's initiative towards implementing the signed bilateral agreements, building tourism capacity within the African continent and strengthening regional integration.

**By Victor Tharage**  
**Director-General of the Department of Tourism**

While 2020 can best be described as a year of unprecedented adversity, it also highlighted the interconnectedness of our world and how nations are able to rally together for a common purpose as we battle a common adversary. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to batter our economy, only ebbing and flowing in intensity. The pandemic has caused us to pause, pivot and pursue a new way forward. Now more than ever, do we need our collective efforts and meaningful contributions for the road to recovery.

The Department of Tourism hosted its Eighth Sharing Best Practice Workshop in virtual format in March 2021 and shared this platform with countries with which it has bilateral partnerships. The objectives of the workshop, among others, included: sharing information and best practices, identifying strategies to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector and strengthening regional integration and cooperation.

This initiative is in line with the provisions of South Africa's foreign policy, which supports the development of the region and the continent. The workshop should be viewed as South Africa's initiative towards implementing the signed bilateral agreements, building tourism capacity within the African continent and strengthening regional integration.

Against the backdrop of the continuing pandemic and in our adaptation of the new normal, the theme for the virtual Best Practices Workshop 2021 was aptly: "Tourism Recovery Post-COVID-19 – A Country Perspective". The impact of the pandemic on the tourism sector as well as recovery strategies to deal with it, were therefore relevant and fitting as the theme.

Tourism is a significant economic pillar and lever for job creation and income generation in South Africa. It directly accounts for 2.9% of South Africa's gross domestic product and 8.6% indirectly and this industry supports about one-and-a-half million direct and indirect jobs. It supports a vibrant and complex value chain and it generates foreign direct investment

and significant export earnings. Tourism also stimulates and supports the development of small businesses.

In South Africa, the industry has responded to COVID-19 with a robust Tourism Recovery Plan, which entails three strategic themes. Firstly, re-igniting demand, secondly, rejuvenating supply and thirdly, strengthening enabling capability. The tourism sector is resilient and can rebound from periods of crisis. Overall, the tourism sector is among those with the greatest potential for long-term sustainable economic growth. South Africa's recovery plan is imbedded in the country's Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP).

For the past seven years, the department has been conducting the best practices workshops, attended by delegates from invited countries in Africa and the rest of the world, in particular those with whom South Africa has signed memoranda of understanding (MoUs) or bilateral agreements.

The continued interest in the workshop has shown the value of this mechanism to our

counterparts from the African continent and other parts of the world, to be trained in various areas in the field of tourism. The workshop is conducted and used as part of implementing the signed bilateral agreements or MoUs and contributes to regional integration. The workshop further seeks to align tourism's contribution to Agenda 2063 through improving the standards, systems and policies in regulating the tourism industry while creating jobs and alleviating poverty.

Countries present on this platform were Angola, Benin, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Mexico, Singapore, Vietnam and Venezuela. This diverse group of countries created a knowledge base of valuable inputs in charting the way forward for sector recovery.

Representing the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), Elcia Grandcourt, who is the Regional Director: Department for Africa, said: "To ensure a swift recovery response to the pandemic, the main areas to be aligned are:

- fostering reliance
- advancing Brand Africa
- unlocking growth through investment promotion and public-private partnerships
- promoting travel facilitation like connectivity and visas."

The UNWTO forecasts international tourist arrivals to be down by 20% to 30% in 2020 when compared with 2019 figures, equivalent to a loss of US\$300 billion to US\$450 billion in international tourism receipts (exports),

which is almost one third of the US\$1.5 trillion generated globally. Some countries were predicted to face more substantial blows than others due to their high reliance on the tourism sector.

The potential of economic growth and development related to the tourism sector is fully recognised at both continental and international levels. In the African context, the tourism sector is confronted with a number of issues, not only in its long-term development and prosperity, but also in the strategic orientation, including dealing with issues such as safety and security as well as health challenges, e.g. the current pandemic.

The Deputy Minister of Tourism, Fish Mahlalela, who represented South Africa at this forum, reiterated that the South African



SOURCE: WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION (UNWTO), DECEMBER 2020

The pandemic has caused us to pause, pivot and pursue a new way forward. Now more than ever, and in the time ahead, tourism academics need to step up and contribute research-based, data-driven ideas and solutions to support what will be left of the tourism industry.

Government placed tourism high on its agenda for sustainable growth and job creation, which is one of the eight interventions in the ERRP. The Deputy Minister said: “Our President, in his 2019 State of Nations Address, set a target of 21 million tourist arrivals by 2030 for the tourism sector. It is through initiatives and platforms such as the Best Practices Workshop that we will make meaningful contributions in achieving such targets.”

Vietnam has implemented comprehensive urgent measures to support tourism businesses and labourers, focussing on three supporting packages: The first is the monetary package, including loans and credits for businesses; the second is the fiscal package, including tax reduction and extension of tax payment; and the third is the social security support package, including financial support for employees who have lost their jobs or were suspended due to COVID-19. Other policies, including payment postponement of some social insurance funds and the adjustment of the regulations on unemployment insurance benefits, are also included. Together with the Government's support, Vietnam's Administration of Tourism is proactive in cooperating with tourism businesses and local authorities to implement recovery campaigns

The arts and crafts industry in Uganda heavily depends on tourists who tend to purchase Ugandan-made handicrafts as souvenirs. Therefore, the disruption in travel for both domestic and international visitors has led to a decline in sales of the art and craft pieces, thus affecting employment. According to study results, at least seven out of 10 artisan jobs have been lost due to the pandemic. In January 2021, Uganda received the Safe Tourism Seal (STS) from the World Travel and Tourism Council. The STS builds on established certifications through evaluations and endorsements. The seal provides additional assurances when travelling during these uncertain times.

In supporting the industry, the Government of Malawi waived remittance of the 1% tourism levy by operators; suspension of payment for tourism operating licences and general suspension of loan repayments by arrangement. Some operators in the sector introduced half pay to employees to sustain jobs and collaborated with several development partners to support tourism stakeholders such as tour guides in strategic areas through income-creation measures such as clearing nature trails, collecting garbage and erecting tourism infrastructure.



The Government of Malawi further provided financial and technical support to industry players to build resilience by increasing the fund (grants) under the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) capacity-building programme and through the UN Development Programme, from which 30 SMEs benefitted from US\$30 000 support.

To strengthen tourism resilience, Mexico believes in working on new strategies to build a sustainable and resilient tourism sector. This includes loan programmes to industry, training programmes, digitalisation of the product offerings and new models of sustainable tourism development.

The pandemic has caused us to pause, pivot and pursue a new way forward. Now more than ever, and in the time ahead, tourism academics need to step up and contribute research-based, data-driven ideas and solutions to support what will be left of the tourism industry. Data will have to be collected and tracked to help stakeholders make informed decisions. Academics will need to support new creativity and new opportunities that will be created in the recovery stages. Tourism education will have to be changed entirely to reflect new realities.

Having noted that a few African countries have now started administering the vaccination, it gives us hope as the tourism and hospitality

sector and the value chain, that we are on the road to recovery, and therefore our policies and regulations should be shaped to suit the new norms and standards in addressing the traveller's health and safety measures.

Tourism is a people-centred industry. It's about the visitor experience. With new insight and collective knowledge, we look forward to surmounting this obstacle that is COVID-19 and welcoming visitors to our shores again. Indeed, we will travel again tomorrow. 🇿🇦

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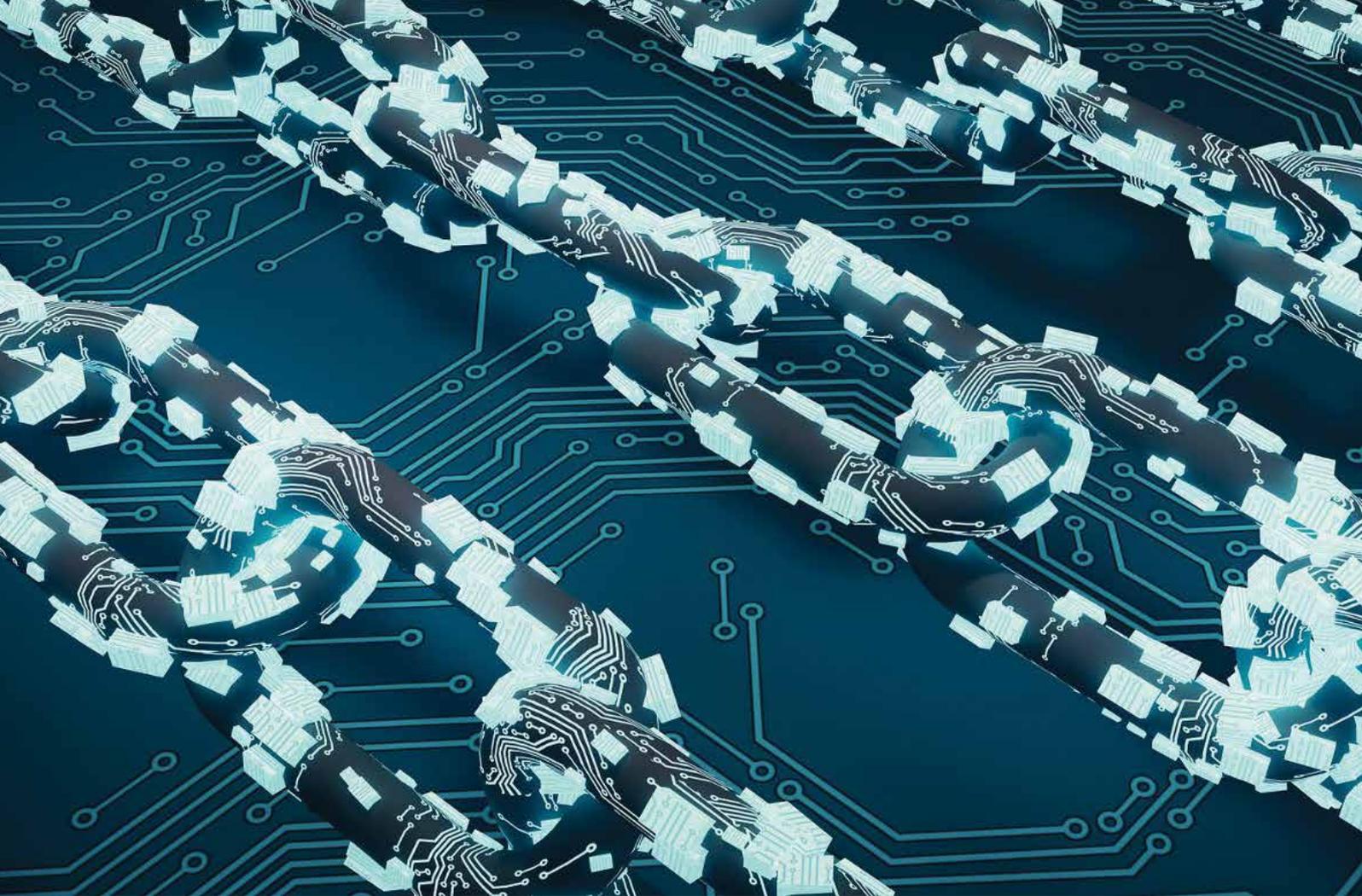
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# Blockchain and South Africa's foreign policy

Blockchain technology – perhaps known best in its cryptocurrency incarnation – is a system of recording information that allows for its storage and unchangeability.

**By Bhaso Ndzendze, Research Director, Centre for Africa-China Studies and Lecturer on Tech Dynamics in International Relations at the University of Johannesburg (UJ); and Professor Tshilidzi Marwala, UJ Vice-Chancellor and Principal and Deputy Chairperson of the South African Commission on the Fourth Industrial Revolution**

Transformations in production and connectivity are defining the ongoing Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). But it is also defined by emerging trends in the decentralisation of financial transactions. The former are products of advances in artificial intelligence and machine learning, 3D printing (additive manufacturing), 5G networks and the Internet of Things. The latter is due to blockchain technology, which has come into mainstream attention in the past decade. Blockchain technology – perhaps known best in its cryptocurrency incarnation – is a system of recording information that allows for its storage and unchangeability. This

system, also known as the decentralised ledger, is therefore useful in peer-to-peer payment, hence its application in cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, Ethereum and hundreds of others that have come into the fore in the past several years. It has also gained traction as a method of ensuring the integrity of ballots in elections.

Four features define blockchain. First, it has a distributed database. In other words, the data is not controlled by a single individual due to the immense computational power required, as well as the increasing complexity, which takes place the more centralised the process seems to become.

Second, it has peer-to-peer transmission through which every party may verify the

transactions taking place without the need of an intermediary or “middle man”, which are usually in the form of banks.

Third, the system is defined by transparency and pseudo-anonymity, which means that every node or user in the blockchain has a unique alphanumeric address, which is at least 30 characters.

Finally, the records are irreversible, which is what ensures that there can be no double-spending. This is crucial because any individual or group who would seek to corrupt the blockchain system would have to change every block in the chain.

This impossibility to corrupt is continually being further complicated by the growing



Given the level of interdependency between South Africa and a number of these economies, the regulatory gap may cause legal ambiguity in the future.

may be yet to be discovered far beyond the management of payments.

This is why the technique is known as a general-purpose technology (GPT). As a GPT, blockchain has the potential to provide a foundation for new future technologies and other applications when combined with the other 4IR technologies.

Given its numerous applications, blockchain has ample implications for the global economy. This is a consideration for the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in particular. In the 2018 report, *Can Blockchain Revolutionize International Trade?*, authored by Emmanuelle Ganne, the Economic Research and Statistics Division of the WTO studied “the potential of blockchain for reducing trade costs and enhancing supply-chain transparency, as well as the opportunities it provides for small-scale producers and companies”. The WTO publication observes that global supply chains are engaged in evaluations of how to best leverage blockchain systems in order to enhance their efficiency and profitability due to the direct payments. At the same time, however, blockchain has been used to facilitate transnational money laundering. This poses a serious threat to national economic sustainability as it leads to shrinking revenues.

South Africa and the African Union as a whole, therefore, have a substantial stake in ensuring that blockchain is optimally regulated. For South African and African policymakers, we suggest that there are at least five ways blockchain impacts national and continental priorities as set out in Agenda 2063. These include the flow of remittances within the continent and from other regions among the unbanked, the enabling of innovation and money laundering, improper election funding, terrorism-sponsoring and other illicit financial flows. Internationally, three broad camps have emerged: some advance the elimination of blockchain, some advocate maintaining it but

with greater scope for regulation, while others are more or less in favour of the status quo.

According to a comprehensive study by the Law Library of Congress in the United States, as of 2019, there were 25 states with implicit and explicit bans on cryptocurrency, including China, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. On the continent, these are Algeria, Egypt, Lesotho and Morocco. The North African countries have absolute bans, while the Kingdom of Lesotho has an implicit ban. The South African Reserve Bank (SARB), according to its 2014 position paper on virtual currencies, expressed warning against individuals from trading or holding virtual currencies. The same white paper, however, noted no “systematic threat” being posed by cryptocurrencies for the time being and the SARB reserved “the right to change its position should the landscape warrant regulatory intervention”.

Given the level of interdependency between South Africa and a number of these economies, the regulatory gap may cause legal ambiguity in the future. This policy considers blockchain only in terms of its cryptocurrency version, while it leaves many of its other applications open.

Moreover, there are potential uses to which blockchain can be implemented for the benefit of government and citizens. Among others, these benefits include combatting corruption, electoral fraud and bureaucratic inefficiency in record-keeping. This raises the urgency of advancing a uniform global policy on blockchain.

Such a policy will require cognisance of the national and transnational benefits as well as a mitigation of the downsides, while leaving room for agility as new factors emerge.

This is a balancing act, and a set of strong voices for the Global South’s interests is a necessary ingredient in the formulation of such a regulatory framework. ☰

number of blocks in the chain due to the sheer number of transactions, which are recorded with an unchangeable signature called a hash. The ledger is greatly secured as a result.

In its 2016 report on determining when a society can be said to be in the 4IR, the World Economic Forum set the threshold of 10% of revenue being in cryptocurrency. In other words, a country may be said to be in the 4IR at the point when the equivalent of 10% of its gross domestic product is in cryptocurrency. So far, no country has met this threshold.

Such a lack of evidence may be due to the difficulty policymakers have had in regulating cryptocurrency, mainly because they are not certain about classifying it since it exhibits characteristics of being both an asset and a currency (medium of exchange). Such ambiguity has allowed day traders to make use of virtual currencies as vehicles for speculation, in the hopes of buying a cryptocurrency and selling it at a higher price at a future date. This has been a significant setback for regulators.

The method has many applications, some of which are already known but many of which

There are potential uses to which blockchain can be implemented for the benefit of government and citizens. Among others, these benefits include combatting corruption, electoral fraud and bureaucratic inefficiency in record-keeping. This raises the urgency of advancing a uniform global policy on blockchain.



# What African countries can expect from Biden: And what they should ask for

Biden comes to office with more foreign affairs experience – including US-Africa policy – than any of his predecessors.

**By John J Stremlau**  
Honorary Professor of International Relations, University of the Witwatersrand

President Joe Biden delivered his first public statement on United States (US) foreign policy early in February 2021. Africa was not mentioned. Does this suggest the continent will be absent from the new administration's considerations?

I think not.

Firstly, the day after his speech, the new President addressed the 34th Summit of the African Union (AU), which was meeting virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He reiterated his commitments to active diplomacy and multilateralism in concert with the AU.

All US efforts would be consistent with America's core democratic values, which are also enshrined in the AU's Constitutive Act and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. They have recently been assaulted in Uganda and Ethiopia. But at least a broad US-Africa consensus to cooperate in

preventing and resolving problems may be emerging.

And within days of becoming President, Biden issued an executive order voiding Trump's 2017 policy banning all recipients of US government assistance from mentioning abortion, much less counselling women on it. Lifting the gag rule has been applauded by women's rights groups throughout Africa for its practical importance and as another signal of his support for their goal of securing gender equality.

Secondly, the themes and priorities President Biden set out in his foreign policy speech point to vital pathways for productive Africa-US cooperation.

## **Biden's international priorities**

Biden comes to office with more foreign affairs experience – including US-Africa policy – than any of his predecessors.

At the top of his foreign policy agenda are COVID-19 and climate change. On his first

day in office, he issued orders for America to rejoin the World Health Organisation and Paris Agreement on climate change. He also pledged to make diplomacy and multilateralism the primary means of US foreign policy.

These significant policy priorities will benefit African countries. It is now up to them to press the US to urgently increase funding on two fronts. Firstly, to ensure African access to affordable, adequate COVID-19 vaccines. Secondly, to boost the Green Climate Fund to help Africa mitigate and adapt to global warming.

Several other highlights of Biden's international priorities should please Africans:

- Refugee issues. President Biden announced his approval of an executive order to restore admissions levels, raising last year's level fivefold to 125 000. He also said that, in partnership with other nations, the administration would back efforts to redress the deprivations that drove people to flee their homes. Finally, he made a commit-

ment to ensuring more humane sanctuaries for those who must flee.

- Racism and white supremacy. In another reminder that good foreign policy derives from domestic decency, he asserted in his 4 February foreign policy address:

“We’ve taken steps to acknowledge and address systemic racism and the scourge of white supremacy in our own country. Racial equity will not just be for one department in our administration, it has to be the business of the whole of government in all our federal policies and institutions.”

- Equal rights. Elaborating on his determination to ensure greater respect for diversity and inclusion, domestically and internationally, President Biden declared: “When we defend equal rights of people the world over – of women and girls, LGBTQ individuals, indigenous communities and people with disabilities, the people of every ethnic background and religion – we also ensure those rights are protected for our own children here in America”. He also emphasised the importance of his decision to overturn the ban on Muslims entering the US, from Africa and other regions. He also criticised China for its suppression of its Muslim minority, among other contentious issues that he pledged not to ignore in Sino-American relations.
- China. President Biden offered to work with China, “when it’s in America’s interest to do so”. Africans should seize this as an opening for diplomatic agency to press China and the US to compete in ways beneficial to Africa. An example would be to advance the African Continental Free Trade Area, which the US and China support.

#### What comes next

President Biden will not ignore immediate crises. His address focussed on just two – Yemen and Myanmar (Burma). In both, he advocated using diplomacy and multilateralism. African governments are not directly involved in either. But, they can expect the Biden administration to deal similarly with African crises and, when asked, to assist the AU’s efforts at peacekeeping, conflict prevention and regional security.

As African governments consider how best to engage the US, they should look beyond the Executive Branch to Congress, where African programmes have traditionally enjoyed the bi-partisan support that Biden vows to encourage. Recent changes in key leadership positions also augur well for US-Africa relations.

The first public statement from the new Chair of the powerful House Foreign Affairs Committee, Gregory Meeks, was to call for a new Africa policy, which he said would be his top priority. Meeks and his Africa

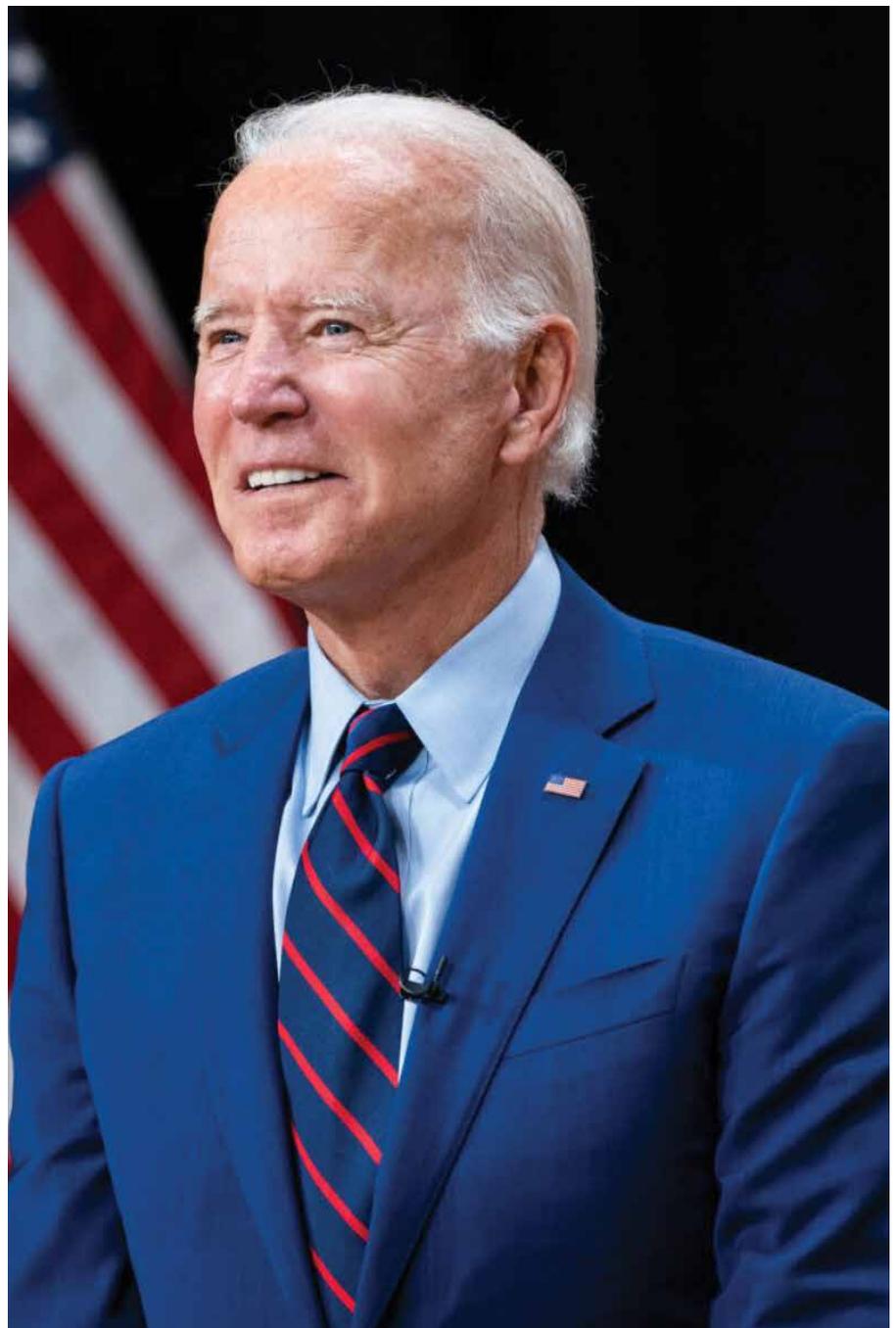
As African governments consider how best to engage the US, they should look beyond the Executive Branch to Congress, where African programmes have traditionally enjoyed the bi-partisan support that Biden vows to encourage. Recent changes in key leadership positions also augur well for US-Africa relations.

subcommittee chair, Karen Bass, are from the Africa Diaspora, a constituency Biden credits for ensuring his nomination and election.

President Biden also has close personal ties to the pro-Africa members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which he once chaired.

This too should be to Africa’s advantage together with the principles and processes prominent in Biden’s maiden foreign policy address. 

This article was first published on *The Conversation*.





## Why it pays to link products to places – and how African countries can do it

African countries could position Geographical Indications to help global intellectual property rights enforcement for developing economies. Registration and export of GI products will improve the economy of rural African communities.

By Samuel Samiai Andrews

Professor of Intellectual Property Law, University of Gondar

Around the world, people commonly associate certain foods and products with particular geographical areas. These products are known for characteristics like aroma, flavour and the traditional knowledge systems used to make them. Legal and agricultural scholars speak of these characteristics as *terroir*.

For example, coffee from Ethiopia's Yirgacheffe, Sidamo and Harrar regions is famous for its quality. The Ijebu people of western Nigeria call their processed cassava Ijebu garri. Roquefort cheese and Darjeeling tea are also products associated with certain places.

These kinds of products, which have characteristics unique to their source, can be

identified and protected by a type of intellectual property (IP) right called Geographical Indications (GI). This right gives economic and financial advantages to the place of origin. The products can be registered with a global treaty registry like the World Intellectual Property Organisation. This helps to counter fake products in the international market.

Developed economies, especially in Europe, have benefitted from GI protection and promotion since 1994, when they adopted the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. And as early as 1883, the geographical origin of products was recognised as one aspect of IP in the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property. It accords them protection due to their value in national economic growth.

According to a 2020 European Commission study, Europe's economy gained about

75 billion euros in the 2017 sales value of GI products. This means GI products accounted for 7% of the total sales value of Europe's food and drink sector. The study also shows that the sales value of GI products doubled on average, when compared with similar products without GI certification. People attach value to buying authentic products from their sources.

As a predominantly agrarian region, Africa could adopt this strategy to boost the economies of rural communities. The second phase of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) focusses on IP rights and trade. It's an opportunity to take steps towards recognising the economic value of GI.

### Treaties

There are two main treaties currently regulating GI. They include the Lisbon Agreement for the Protection of Appellations of Origin and Their

As a predominantly agrarian region, Africa could adopt this strategy to boost the economies of rural communities. The second phase of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement focusses on IP rights and trade. It's an opportunity to take steps towards recognising the economic value of GI.

International Registration (Lisbon Agreement) and the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement on Appellations of Origin and Geographical Indications (the Geneva Act). Together, they are called The Lisbon System.

Most African countries have not signed these GI treaties. Accession to these treaties carries political and economic benefits. Not even Ethiopia and Nigeria – countries with great agricultural potential – have done so. GI status attracts higher revenue streams because of the customary assumption of quality that accrues to these products.

Joining the Lisbon Agreement and the Geneva Act would aid African countries in extending their products beyond their shores. Member countries have treaty obligations to protect GI products from misappropriation and abuse.

For example, Oku white honey from Cameroon, South African Rooibos tea and South African lamb are certified GI products. They enjoy protection outside the continent, leading to enormous financial benefits to their places of origin.

The local producers of GI products and services have inadequate knowledge of IP and economics. Identifying GI products and including them in a formal database require learning and experience. Therefore, private and public institutions should intervene in guiding producers and farmers. They can do this through the formation of cooperatives and educating members about GI. Producers and farmers should form GI management organisations to help members manoeuvre through the legal landscape. These include registration of products and collection of royalties and licensing revenues.

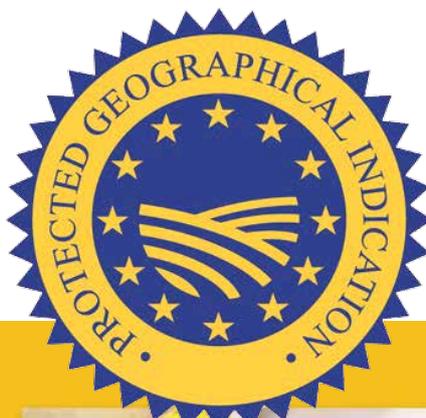
African nations should also streamline their regional IP bodies. Two major African IP regional bodies – the African Intellectual Property Organisation and the African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation – could be merged into a single organisation for efficiency. The Anglophone and Francophone dichotomy in African IP rights management shouldn't exist. With the AfCFTA encouraging a single trade market, a divided IP regional management structure may not be effective.

Nigeria and Ethiopia, like most African countries, do not have a single governmental institution that deals with GI. Although Nigeria's trademark laws regulate registration, they do not cover GI registry. Ethiopia does not have any law for GIs nor a registry.

A specialised governmental office should regulate GI in each African country. For example, Zimbabwe has its GI Act. South Africa has its GI Regulations of 2019. It sets up its GI registry and guidelines to protect GI agricultural products.

African countries could position GI to help global IP rights enforcement for developing economies. Registration and export of GI products will improve the economy of rural African communities. 🇸🇦

This article was first published on *The Conversation*.





## “Atoms for Development” in Africa

Many African countries already possess natural resources required for nuclear energy, and according to Article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, have the right to the peaceful use of nuclear technology. However, with rights come responsibilities.

**By Yarik Turianskyi and Jo-Ansie van Wyk**  
**South African Institute of International Affairs**

Sixty years after the first nuclear weapons tests were conducted in Africa, many countries on the continent are exploring how nuclear energy could be used for socio-economic development.

Seventeen African states have already expressed interest: some have active nuclear research and development programmes, while others are investigating the possibility of a

nuclear build. For the time being, South Africa has the continent’s only operational nuclear power plant, but this will change in the near future.

To promote knowledge and awareness around the peaceful use of nuclear energy in Africa, there is a need to strengthen relevant bodies responsible for nuclear governance on the continent and improve national-level legislation on nuclear safety and security.

Many African countries already possess natural resources required for nuclear energy, and according to Article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, have the right to the peaceful use of nuclear technology. This could specifically be used to achieve developmental objectives in the African Union’s long-term vision Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals endorsed by the United Nations. However, with rights come responsibilities.

To promote knowledge and awareness around the peaceful use of nuclear energy in Africa, there is a need to strengthen relevant bodies responsible for nuclear governance on the continent and improve national-level legislation on nuclear safety and security.

Countries interested in nuclear energy firstly need to ensure the safe and secure handling of nuclear materials, plants, reactors and waste disposal. Messaoud Baaliouamer, the Executive Secretary of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE), emphasises the need to cultivate a safety culture in countries interested in the pursuit of nuclear energy at all levels: directing the responsibilities of the national regulatory authority and the general population.

It is also important not to see nuclear technology as the only solution to development and to consider the costs involved. Knox Msebenzi, the Managing Director of the Nuclear Industry Association of South Africa, advocates for adding nuclear energy to a country's energy mix. He adds that African states embarking on nuclear builds need to ensure that they pay competitive interest rates to make these projects cost-efficient. While it may take 20 to 25 years to pay off loans to build nuclear power plants, the plants have a lifespan of 50 to 60 years.

Indeed, many countries on the continent are already achieving progress in adding nuclear to their energy portfolio. Egypt plans to become the second country on the continent with a nuclear power plant; and construction of four nuclear reactors is under way.

According to Noel Stott, Senior Researcher at the Verification Research, Training and Information Centre, Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria are a tier below: still developing nuclear infrastructure, creating necessary laws and regulations, training personnel and establishing a regulator. All these hurdles must be overcome prior to getting a licence and starting construction of nuclear plants and reactors.

There is a clear need for practical policy recommendations for African governments already using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and those planning to do so in the future. Given that this is a new area for most of them, it would also be worthwhile for these governments to share lessons learned and best practices with each other.

This would include closely cooperating with established nuclear actors in the North and South, as well as continental and regional organisations, such as AFCONE and the International Atomic Energy Agency. Such cooperation would assist aspiring nuclear powers in establishing credible, robust nuclear non-proliferation regimes, which are essential for the safe and peaceful use of nuclear energy. 🇺🇸



In October 2019, the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) announced the commencement of a three-year project on the peaceful use of nuclear technology in advancing development in Africa, called "Atoms for Development".

The first-ever project of its kind in Africa is funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and focusses on the nexus between nuclear security in securing global peace and nuclear technology in catalysing development towards Africa's achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Agenda.

A credible, robust nuclear non-proliferation regime is essential to facilitate the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Without safe and secure handling of nuclear material, plants, reactors and waste disposal, Africa's ability to utilise nuclear technology for its developmental objectives in Agenda 2063 and the United Nations' SDGs is compromised.

Africa is one of only two regions in the world that has adopted a continent-wide nuclear-free zone captured in the Pelindaba Treaty. This treaty includes the establishment of oversight mechanisms to closely monitor countries' adherence to it and established the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE). AFCONE plays an important role in advancing the peaceful application of nuclear science and technology in Africa and in providing support to state parties to benefit fully from nuclear science technology applications in the areas of health, agriculture and energy. It is also actively engaged in global and regional efforts towards disarmament and non-proliferation.

African nuclear countries regularly post updates of nuclear developments in their respective domains to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). SAIIA is working closely with both AFCONE and the IAEA to strengthen African engagement with the Pelindaba Treaty and to strengthen nuclear governance and compliance in the region.

Specifically, the project aims to enhance states' ability to benefit from the peaceful use of nuclear technology by focussing on two pillars. The first is on building capacity and greater awareness in Africa to enhance compliance with various non-proliferation obligations and on safeguarding the security of nuclear material and facilities in Africa against accidents, theft and negligence. The second focusses on providing a strong evidence-base to inform African countries' strategies on nuclear technology for development. [www.saii.org.za](http://www.saii.org.za)



# South African astronomy has a long, rich history of discovery – and a promising future

South African astronomy remains at the forefront of many initiatives and discoveries. It has become a leader in the field of radio astronomy with the MeerKAT telescope near Carnarvon and will within a decade be the host of an international project, the Square Kilometre Array.

**By Ian Glass**

**Associate Research Astronomer, South African Astronomical Observatory**

The South African Astronomical Observatory (SAAO) in Cape Town is the oldest permanent observatory in the southern hemisphere: it turned 200 in 2020.

This observatory is a fundamental part of South Africa's long history of astronomical research, which began when French academic Nicolas-Louis de La Caille visited Cape Town from 1751 to 1753. He undertook a careful examination of every square degree

of the southern sky. This resulted in the first comprehensive sky survey ever made, in either hemisphere.

The Royal Observatory, Cape Town of Good Hope (today the SAAO), was established in 1820. It became – and remained



for 150 years – the most important source of star positions in the southern hemisphere sky. This was in terms of both accuracy and the number of measurements made. In the years that followed its foundation, the observatory's laborious work led to important scientific discoveries.

Cape astronomers were responsible for, among other things, the first measurement of the distance to a star; the first photographic sky survey; and the accurate measurement of the distance to the sun. They were at the forefront of developments in stellar spectroscopy. This is the detailed analysis of a star's light to find out its composition and movement towards or away from the sun. They also determined the shape of the Earth in the southern hemisphere and conducted the first accurate countrywide survey measurements of southern Africa.

In 1543, the mathematician and astronomer, Nicolaus Copernicus, asserted that the Earth orbited the sun. This meant that people should be able to observe the apparent shift in the position of the nearest stars from

different points in the Earth's orbit. But that had not been observed in the centuries that followed. The reason was, of course, that even the nearest stars are incredibly far away and the effect being looked for is very small.

When the Royal Observatory was founded in 1820, it was equipped with the most accurate star-position measuring devices available. Eleven years later, Thomas Henderson used those devices to make the first believable measurements of this effect, known as "parallax". By observing the angular "movement" of Alpha Centauri – still the second-closest star known to us – and knowing also the size of the Earth's orbit, this gave the distance to the star by simple trigonometry.

A different technology, photography, would lead to more important astronomical discoveries at the Cape. All observatories in the 19th century made precise observations of star positions one by one and published catalogues of these. In 1882, the head of the Royal Observatory, David Gill, was surprised to receive a letter from a Mr Simpson, an amateur photographer in Aberdeen, a town elsewhere in the Cape.

Simpson had managed to photograph a bright comet that had just appeared. His photographic plates were sensitive enough to register stars in the background. This led to a "lightbulb" moment for Gill: he realised that the positions of stars could now be recorded in quantity on a permanent medium, more reliably than any visual observer could ever hope to do.

So, he set up a special photographic telescope using the largest lens that he could find and set about making the first photographic star catalogue. This was called the *Cape Photographic Durchmusterung* after its much more laboriously compiled northern hemisphere equivalent, put together in Bonn, Germany.

But it wasn't just Cape Town that hosted an important astronomical site.

In 1903, the Johannesburg Observatory was established. It achieved its greatest success in 1915 when its director, Robert Innes, discovered a very faint star near Alpha Centauri.

On various grounds, he claimed it to be the nearest star to Earth; it took many years of investigation before this could be verified. The new discovery was named "Proxima Centauri", meaning the nearest in the constellation Centaurus. Not only was it the nearest star but at that time of discovery, it was the least luminous star ever discovered. Other dimmer stars have been found since, but Proxima still retains its nearest star status and its distance has been thoroughly verified from space satellites.

### Doubling the size of the universe

In 1948, the private Radcliffe Foundation in the United Kingdom set up in Pretoria what was for a time the largest telescope in the southern hemisphere and joint fourth-largest in the world. This is a title currently held by the Southern African Large Telescope.

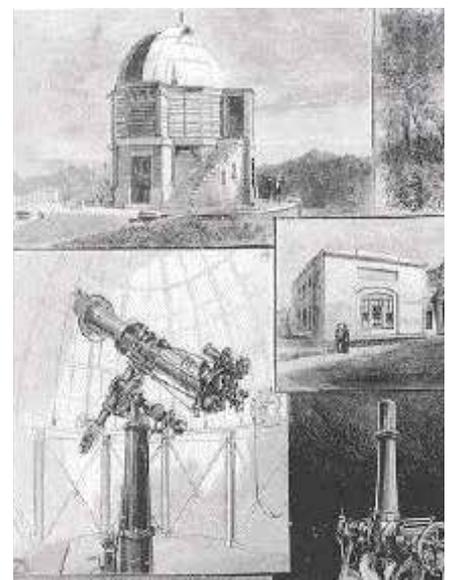
Early on in the Radcliffe's existence, the then director, David Thackeray, and his colleague, Adriaan Wesselink, discovered in our neighbouring galaxy, the Large Magellanic Cloud, a number of RR Lyrae variable stars that astronomers using smaller telescopes could not detect. These are stars that change their brightness in a well-defined manner over a cycle of a few days and whose average "wattage" is completely predictable.

By measuring the Magellanic Cloud stars' average apparent brightnesses and comparing them to other RR Lyrae stars at known distances, they determined that the cosmic distance scale originally published two decades before by Edwin Hubble and others was underestimated by about a factor of two. In effect, they doubled the size of the universe. This result was announced to great acclaim at the triennial meeting of the International Astronomical Union in 1952.

### More to come

Today, South African astronomy remains at the forefront of many initiatives and discoveries. It has become a leader in the field of radio astronomy with the MeerKAT telescope near Carnarvon and will within a decade be the host of an international project, the Square Kilometre Array. 🇺🇦

This article is adapted from a piece that initially appeared in the South African National Research Foundation's *Science Matters* Magazine. It was first published on *The Conversation*.





# SKAO is born: Launch of international observatory signals new era for radio astronomy

Through the development of innovative technologies and its contribution to addressing global societal challenges, SKAO will play its part to address the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and deliver significant non-science impact across its membership and beyond.

The Square Kilometre Array (SKA) Observatory, a new intergovernmental organisation dedicated to radio astronomy, was launched on 4 February 2021, following the first meeting of the Observatory's Council.

The new observatory, known as SKAO, is the world's second intergovernmental organisation to be dedicated to astronomy. Headquartered in the United Kingdom (UK)

on the grounds of the Jodrell Bank United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation World Heritage Site with sites in Australia and South Africa, SKAO is tasked with building and operating the two largest and most complex radio telescope networks ever conceived to address fundamental questions about our universe.

"This is a historic moment for radio astronomy," said Dr Catherine Cesarsky, appointed first Chair of the SKAO Council.

"Behind today's milestone, there are countries that had the vision to get deeply involved because they saw the wider benefits their participation in SKAO could bring to build an ecosystem of science and technology involving fundamental research, computing, engineering and skills for the next generation, which are essential in a 21st century digital economy."

SKAO's telescope in South Africa will be composed of 197 15 metre-diameter dishes located in the Karoo region, 64 of which already

"We are excited by the fact that the SKA Observatory will be the first, and only, science intergovernmental organisation where Africa will play a strategic leading role."

exist and are operated by the South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (SARAO), while the telescope in Australia will be composed of 131 072 two-metre-tall antennas located on the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation's (CSIRO) Murchison Radio-astronomy Observatory.

The creation of SKAO follows a decade of detailed engineering design work, scientific prioritisation and policy development under the supervision of its predecessor, the SKA Organisation, supported by more than 500 engineers, over 1 000 scientists and dozens of policymakers in more than 20 countries; and is the result of 30 years of thinking, research and development since discussions first took place about developing a next-generation radio telescope.

"Today marks the birth of a new observatory," said Prof. Philip Diamond, appointed first Director-General of SKAO. "And not just any observatory – this is one of the mega-science facilities of the 21st century. It is the culmination of many years of work and I wish to congratulate everyone in the SKA community and in our partner governments and institutions who have worked so hard to make this happen. For our community, this is about participating in one of the great scientific adventures of the coming decades. It is about skills, technology, innovation, industrial return and spin-offs, but fundamentally it is about a wonderful scientific journey that we are now embarking on."

The first SKAO Council meeting followed the signature of the SKA Treaty, formally known as the Convention establishing the SKA Observatory, on 12 March 2019 in Rome, and its subsequent ratification by Australia, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, South Africa and the UK and entry into force on 15 January 2021, marking the official birth date of the observatory.



The council consists of representatives from the observatory's member states, as well as observer countries aspiring to join SKAO. Among these, are countries that took part in the design phase of the SKA such as Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, and whose future accession to SKAO is expected in the coming weeks and months, once their national processes have been completed. Representatives of national bodies in Japan and South Korea complement the select list of observers in the SKAO Council.

At its first meeting, the SKAO Council approved policies and procedures that have been prepared in recent months, covering governance, funding, programmatic and human resource matters, among others. These approvals are required to transfer staff and assets from the SKA Organisation to the observatory and allow the latter to become a functioning entity.

"The coming months will keep us very busy, with hopefully new countries formalising

their accession to SKAO and the expected key decision of the SKAO Council giving us the green light to start the construction of the telescopes," added Prof. Diamond.

SKAO will begin recruitment in Australia and South Africa in the next few months, working alongside local partners CSIRO and SARAO to supervise construction, which is expected to last eight years, with early science opportunities starting in the mid-2020s.

Dr Blade Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, said: "The establishment of the SKA Observatory enables the SKA project to enter an exciting phase – implementation of cutting-edge scientific and technical designs that have been conceptualised by multinational teams, including many South African scientists and engineers, over the past few years. We are excited by the fact that the SKA Observatory will be the first, and only, science intergovernmental organisation where Africa will play a strategic leading role. The SKA project will act as a catalyst for science, technology and engineering innovation,



**SKA**  
SQUARE KILOMETRE ARRAY

**SQUARE KILOMETRE ARRAY**

**SKA Global Headquarters – A nexus for radio-astronomy**

The SKA Global Headquarters will be reflective of one of the most innovative science research organisations in the world. An inspirational building that reflects the science and vision behind the SKA project and that fosters a culture of collaboration and communication.

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Planned resilient connection to the national research network

**Passive design** that prioritises **natural daylighting and ventilation**

**Electric vehicle** recharging facilities

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Discover more, visit [www.skatelescope.org](http://www.skatelescope.org)

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"The creation of SKAO follows a decade of detailed engineering design work, scientific prioritisation and policy development under the supervision of its predecessor the SKA Organisation, supported by more than 500 engineers, over 1 000 scientists and dozens of policymakers in more than 20 countries."

providing commercial opportunities to local high-tech industry, and creating the potential to put Africa on the map as a global science and innovation partner."

Amanda Solloway, UK Science Minister, added: "The SKA Observatory is one of the most ambitious scientific international collaborations of our time, which could open up unrivalled opportunities for the world's leading astronomers. Today's first meeting of the Observatory's Council, headquartered at the UK's own Jodrell Bank, is yet another pivotal milestone to provide our scientists with access to some of the world's most sophisticated telescopes, furthering our knowledge of the universe."

SKAO, formally known as the SKA Observatory, is a global collaboration of member states to build and operate cutting-edge radio telescopes to answer fundamental questions about our universe. Headquartered in the UK, its first two telescopes, the two largest and most complex radio telescope networks ever built, will be constructed in Australia and South Africa. A later expansion is envisioned in both countries and other African partner countries. SKAO's telescopes will conduct transformational science and, together with other state-of-the-art research facilities, address gaps in our understanding of the universe, including the formation and evolution of galaxies, fundamental physics in extreme environments and the origins of life. Through the development of innovative technologies and its contribution to addressing global societal challenges, SKAO will play its part to address the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and deliver significant non-science impact across its membership and beyond.



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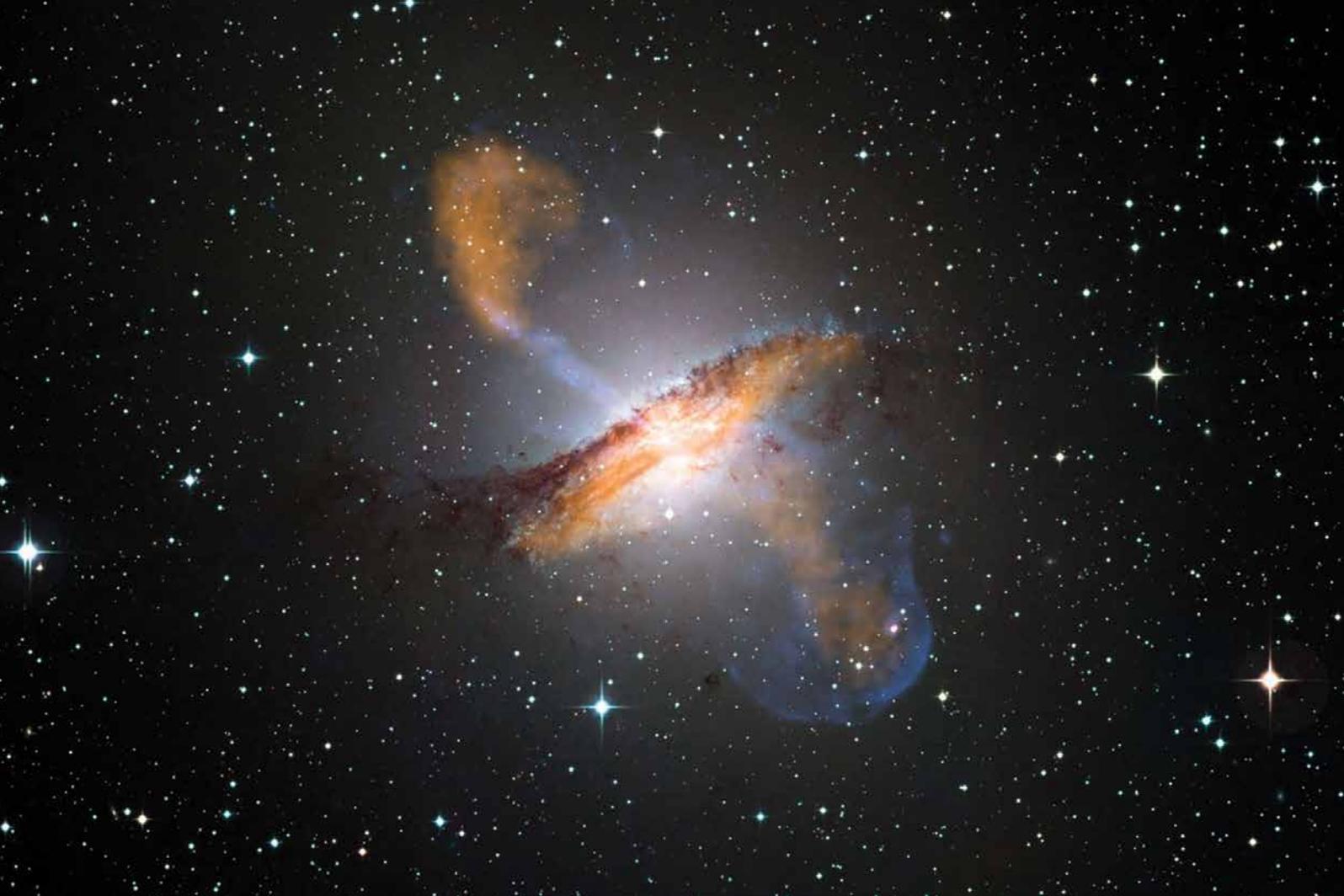
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# Gigantic galaxies discovered with the MeerKAT telescope

The fact that MeerKAT detected two of these monsters in a relatively small patch of sky suggests that giant radio galaxies may actually be much more common than previously thought. This gives astronomers further vital clues about how galaxies have changed and evolved throughout cosmic history.

**By the South African Radio Astronomical Observatory**

Two giant radio galaxies have been discovered with South Africa's powerful MeerKAT telescope. These galaxies are among the largest single objects in the universe and are thought to be quite rare.

The MeerKAT telescope is located in the Karoo region of South Africa and comprises 64 radio dishes. It was inaugurated in July 2018. MeerKAT is managed by the South African Radio Astronomy Observatory, which is a facility of the National Research Foundation.

The fact that MeerKAT detected two of these monsters in a relatively small patch of sky suggests that giant radio galaxies may actually

be much more common than previously thought. This gives astronomers further vital clues about how galaxies have changed and evolved throughout cosmic history.

The discovery was published on Monday, 18 January 2021, in the *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*.

Many galaxies have supermassive black holes residing in their midst. When large amounts of interstellar gas start to orbit and fall in towards the black hole, the black hole becomes "active" and huge amounts of energy are released from this region of the galaxy.

In some active galaxies, charged particles interact with the strong magnetic fields near the black hole and release huge beams, or "jets",

of radio light. The radio jets of these so-called "radio galaxies" can be many times larger than the galaxy itself and can extend vast distances into intergalactic space.

Dr Jacinta Delhaize, a Research Fellow at the University of Cape Town and lead author of the work, said: "Many hundreds of thousands of radio galaxies have already been discovered. However, only around 800 of these have radio jets exceeding 700 kilo-parsecs in size, or around 22 times the size of the Milky Way. These truly enormous systems are called 'giant radio galaxies'."

Despite the scarcity of giant radio galaxies, the authors found two of these cosmic beasts in a remarkably small patch of sky.

Dr Delhaize said: "We found these giant radio galaxies in a region of sky, which is only about four times the area of the full moon, though the galaxies are much further away and much larger than the moon. Based on our current knowledge of the density of giant radio galaxies in the sky, the probability of finding two of them in this region is extremely small."

"This means that giant radio galaxies are probably far more common than we thought!"

Dr Matthew Prescott, a Research Fellow at the University of the Western Cape and co-author of the work, said: "These two galaxies are special because they are much bigger than most other radio galaxies. They are more than two mega-parsecs across, which is around 6.5 million light years or about 62 times the size of the Milky Way. Yet, they are fainter than others of the same size."

"We suspect that many more galaxies like these should exist, because of the way we think galaxies should grow and change over their lifetimes."

The giant radio galaxies were spotted in new radio maps of the sky created by the MeerKAT International Gigahertz Tiered Extragalactic Exploration (MIGHTEE) survey. It is one of the large survey projects underway with South Africa's impressive MeerKAT radio telescope and involves a team of astronomers from around the world.

The two giant radio galaxies have never been identified before, despite the sky region having already been observed by other radio telescopes such as the Karl G Jansky Very Large Array in the United States of America and the Giant Metre-Wave Radio Telescope in India.

Dr Ian Heywood, a co-author at the University of Oxford, said: "The MeerKAT telescope is the best of its kind in the world. We have managed to identify these giant

radio galaxies for the first time because of MeerKAT's unprecedented sensitivity to faint and diffuse radio light.

"This made it possible to detect features that haven't been seen before. We found large-scale radio jets coming from the central galaxies, as well as fuzzy cloud-like lobes at the ends of the jets."

"We know that these galaxies are several billion light years away, and so it was the discovery of these enormous jets and lobes in the MIGHTEE map that allowed us to confidently identify the objects as giant radio galaxies."

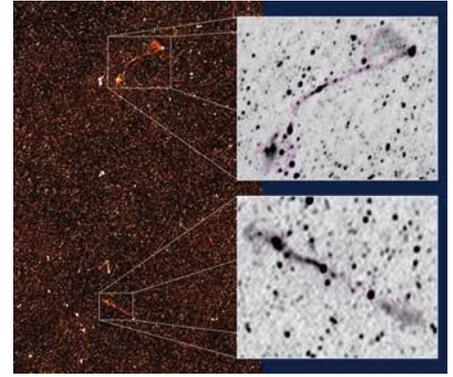
Why only very few radio galaxies have such gigantic sizes has been somewhat of a mystery. It is thought that the giants are the oldest radio galaxies, which have existed for long enough (several hundred million years) for their radio jets to grow outwards to these enormous sizes. If this is true, then many more giant radio galaxies should exist than are currently known.

With the discovery of objects like these giant radio galaxies, a clearer understanding of the evolutionary pathways of galaxies is beginning to emerge.

"The existence of the two MIGHTEE giant radio galaxies provides tantalising evidence that a large population of faint, very extended giant radio galaxies may exist," said Dr Delhaize.

"In the past, this population of galaxies has been hidden from our 'sight' by the technical limitations of radio telescopes. However, it is now being revealed thanks to the impressive capabilities of the new generation of telescopes.

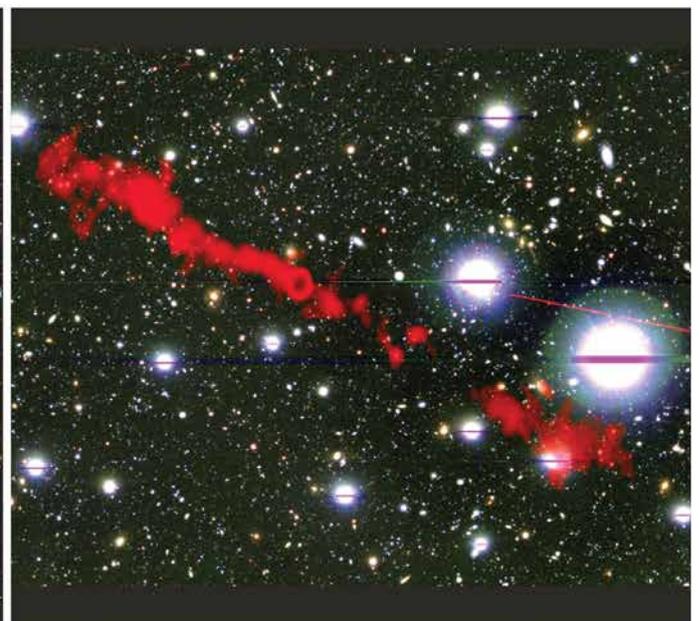
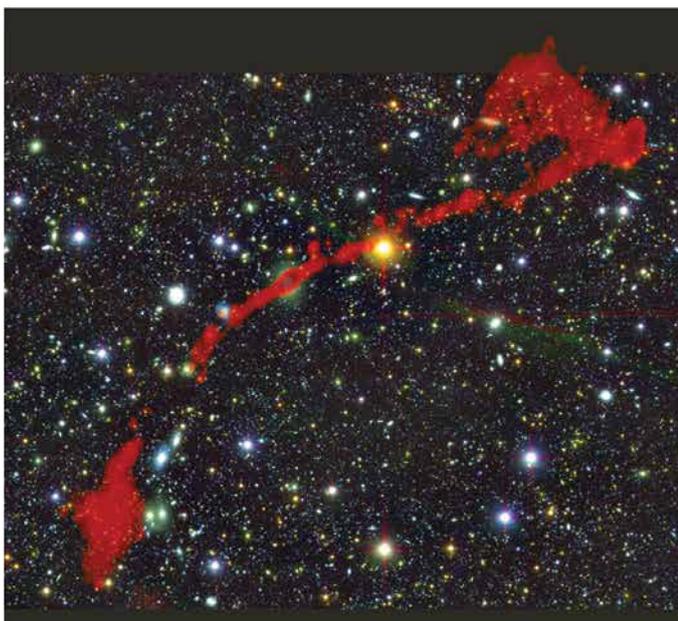
"We hope to uncover more of these giant galaxies in the MIGHTEE survey as it progresses. We also expect to find many more with the future Square Kilometre Array



(SKA) telescope. The SKA will reveal larger populations of radio galaxies than ever before and revolutionise our understanding of galaxy evolution."

Construction of the highly anticipated trans-continental SKA telescope is due to commence in South Africa and Australia in 2021 and continue until 2027. Science commissioning observations could begin as early as 2023. 🇺🇦

The two giant radio galaxies have never been identified before, despite the sky region having already been observed by other radio telescopes such as the Karl G Jansky Very Large Array in the United States of America and the Giant Metre-Wave Radio Telescope in India.



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- A gallery dedicated to the legends of humanity . . .
- A symbolic resting place for our fallen countrymen and women . . .
- the story of Southern Africa's 3.6 billion years of history
- this is Freedom Park, hailed the fulcrum of our vision to heal and reconcile our nation ...

The message that Freedom Park sends to every South African is this: look at where we come from, look what we have lived through – if we can do that and survive then our future must hold infinite possibilities. Let Freedom Park open your mind to these possibilities.

Everything at Freedom Park is representative of our history, heritage, culture, spirituality and indigenous knowledge. Even the 360° view of the capital city from Salvokop Hill symbolises a link between the past, present and future. From here you can see the Voortrekker Monument – a reflection of the past; the Union Buildings – our current governance; and UNISA's Centre of Knowledge – engendering a sense of knowledge and development for the future.

Freedom Park is a one-stop heritage destination because we narrate the history, heritage, culture, spirituality and indigenous knowledge systems of our nation.

Freedom Park honours those who took a stand and sacrificed for a better South Africa. We want our youth to know that there is a place that recognises such heroes and heroines. Our youth's contributions mattered so much in the history of our nation. It is, however, time for today's youth to take their lead from those who have gone before and take a stand to build this nation even further."

### **EDUCATING OUR NATION'S YOUTH**

We have a fully-equipped education unit that arranges activities that bring together youth from diverse backgrounds to talk about culture and heritage. We also have specific programmes for basic and tertiary education and a special Youth out of School programme that teaches young people about where they come from and assists them to develop a sense of pride in their own identity. We teach young people about tolerance and acceptance, and to understand and respect each other. We believe that racism and intolerance often result from ignorance and misconceptions about who you are.'

Freedom Park also focuses on school tours but is aware that accessibility becomes an acute challenge; hence the outreach programmes that aim to take Freedom Park to the people.

**Our visiting hours are 08:00 – 16:30, Monday through to Sunday. We offer scheduled guided tours 09:00, 12:00 and 15:00.**

**For a tour please contact us on 012 336 4020. Our prices: Adults R60, children R40 and international tourists R150.**

### **AWARD-WINNING LOCATION**

Besides visiting Freedom Park for a tour, or to spend time learning, reflecting and praying, it is also the perfect location for corporate functions and retreats, picnics, and even concerts. This beautiful and inspiring venue offers state-of-the-art technology and facilities, as well as a peaceful space for walking, hiking and bird watching. 'When you're at Freedom Park you'll forget that you're in the city centre. Last year, Freedom Park was voted among the top 10 architecturally outstanding museums in the world and Pretoria's best heritage destination. We believe these are testaments to the beauty and uniqueness of Freedom Park.

This December sees us celebrating the Day of Reconciliation with an Interfaith and Dialogue (16 December) Mandela Peace Walk (5 December), A three day festival celebrating the Pan African Cultural Experience (11-13 December).

**Please visit us on [www.freedompark.co.za](http://www.freedompark.co.za)**



# Step up climate-change adaptation or face serious human and economic damage – UN report

The UNEP *Adaptation Gap Report 2020* finds that while nations have advanced in planning, huge gaps remain in finance for developing countries and bringing adaptation projects to the stage where they bring real protection against climate impacts such as droughts, floods and sea-level rise.

By the United Nations Environment Programme

**A**s temperatures rise and climate change impacts intensify, nations must urgently step up action to adapt to the new climate reality or face serious costs, damages and losses, a new United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) report finds.

Adaptation – reducing countries’ and communities’ vulnerability to climate change by increasing their ability to absorb impacts – is a key pillar of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The agreement requires its signatories to implement adaptation measures through national plans, climate-information systems, early warning, protective measures and investments in a green future.

The UNEP *Adaptation Gap Report 2020* finds that while nations have advanced in planning, huge gaps remain in finance for developing countries and bringing adaptation projects to the stage where they bring real protection against climate impacts such as droughts, floods and sea-level rise.

Public and private finance for adaptation must be stepped up urgently, along with faster implementation. Nature-based solutions – locally appropriate actions that address societal challenges, such as climate change, and provide human well-being and biodiversity benefits by protecting, sustainably managing and restoring natural or modified ecosystems – must also become a priority.

“The hard truth is that climate change is upon us,” said Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UNEP. “Its impacts will intensify and hit vulnerable countries and communities the hardest – even if we meet the Paris Agreement goals of holding global warming this century to well below 2°C and pursuing 1.5°C.”

“As the UN Secretary-General has said, we need a global commitment to put half of all global climate finance towards adaptation in the next year,” she added. “This will allow a huge step up in adaptation – in everything from early warning systems to resilient water resources to nature-based solutions.”

**Adaptation planning is growing, but funding and follow-up lagging**

The most encouraging finding of the report is that 72% of countries have adopted at least one national-level adaptation planning instrument. Most developing countries are preparing national adaptation plans. However, the finance needed to implement these plans is not growing fast enough.

The pace of adaptation financing is indeed rising, but it continues to be outpaced by rapidly increasing adaptation costs. Annual adaptation costs in developing countries are estimated at US\$70 billion. This figure is expected to reach US\$140-300 billion in 2030 and US\$280-500 billion in 2050.

There are some encouraging developments. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) has allocated 40% of its total portfolio to adaptation and is increasingly crowding-in private-sector investment. Another important development is increasing momentum to ensure a sustainable financial system. However, increased public



and private adaptation finance is needed. New tools such as sustainability investment criteria, climate-related disclosure principles and mainstreaming of climate risks into investment decisions can stimulate investments in climate resilience.

Implementation of adaptation actions is also growing. Since 2006, close to 400 adaptation projects financed by multilateral funds serving the Paris Agreement have taken place in developing countries. While earlier projects rarely exceeded US\$10 million, 21 new projects since 2017 reached a value of over US\$25 million. However, of over 1 700 adaptation initiatives surveyed, only 3% had already reported real reductions to climate risks posed to the communities where the projects were being implemented.

**Nature-based solutions for adaptation can make a huge contribution**

The report places a special focus on nature-based solutions as low-cost options that reduce climate risks, restore and protect biodiversity and bring benefits for communities and economies.

An analysis of four major climate and development funds – the Global Environment Facility, the GCF, the Adaptation Fund and the International Climate Initiative – suggested that support for green initiatives with some element of nature-based solutions had risen over the last two decades. Cumulative investment for climate-change mitigation and adaptation projects under the four funds stood at US\$94 billion. However, only US\$12 billion was spent on nature-based solutions – a tiny fraction of total adaptation and conservation finance.

**Stepping up action**

According to the report, cutting greenhouse gas emissions will reduce the impacts and costs

associated with climate change. Achieving the 2°C target of the Paris Agreement could limit losses in annual growth to up to 1.6%, compared to 2.2% for the 3°C trajectory.

All nations must pursue the efforts outlined in UNEP's *Emissions Gap Report 2020*, which calls for a green pandemic recovery and updated nationally determined contributions that include new net-zero commitments. However, the world must also plan for finance and implement climate-change adaptation to support those nations least responsible for climate change but most at risk.

While the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to hit the ability of countries to adapt to climate change, investing in adaptation is a sound economic decision.

UNEP is the leading global voice on the environment. It provides leadership and encourages partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. 🌱

**What can be done to close the adaptation gap?**

**Increase adaptation finance**

**Strengthen support of nature-based solutions**

**Pursue a green pandemic recovery and prepare to adapt**

**#AdaptationGap**

**UN**  
environment programme



Addo Elephant National Park, in the Eastern Cape, offers visitors the chance to observe elephants in their natural environment. This population once consisted of only 16 elephants – today, more than 600 elephants roam free here. Addo is the third-largest national park in South Africa, stretching from the Zuurberg mountains to the coast, and includes two offshore island groups. The park is also home to land-based animals such as buffaloes, lions, leopards and rhinos, as well as sea-dwelling animals like Great White sharks and Southern Right whales. This means that Addo is one of the few reserves in the world that boasts the Big Seven.



# Flying the **FLAG**

## SAIA Chief Executive to serve on High-Level UN Advisory Board



The South African Institute of International Affairs recently announced that its Chief Executive, Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, has been appointed to serve a two-year term on the United Nations (UN) High-level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs (HLAB-II).

In a world grappling with the devastating fall-out from COVID-19, the board aims to provide focussed guidance and recommendations to respond to current and future challenges in overcoming the pandemic in an inclusive manner. Its priorities include addressing inequalities, improving digital cooperation, ensuring sustainable financing and boosting partnerships.

The board's expertise "will play a crucial role in supporting these efforts by providing effective guidance to the Secretary-General and spearheading the research and policy analysis work of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs," according to the department's Under-Secretary-General, Liu Zhenmin.

Sidiropoulos said that it was a great honour to be serving on the HLAB-II at this crucial time for sustainable development across the world: "The COVID-19 pandemic has set back many developing countries in their path to attain the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. It has exacerbated inequalities and illustrated the negative developmental impact of 'digital exclusion'. This has made it even more urgent that the world works together to achieve Agenda 2030. Political commitment, innovation and cooperation will be key".

## SA's citrus industry commended for record-breaking export



Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development Minister, Thoko Didiza, has commended the citrus industry on the record exports they made.

"The industry has expanded notably over the past decade, and we thank the farmers for showing confidence and increasing the investments. The industry's investment is starting to pay off, as the Citrus Growers Association reported that South Africa exported a record 146 million cartons of citrus in 2020; which means we are still the world's second-largest exporter of fresh citrus after Spain," Minister Didiza said.

Minister Didiza added that the challenge going forward was ensuring that, "as a government, we open more export markets for the industry, as the estimates suggest, there will be roughly 300 000 tons added into the current volumes in the next three years that require an export market".

"As a government, we commit to working with the industry and other stakeholders to expand the market access to destinations

such as the United States, China and India, the European Union and other countries that already enjoy South African citrus. In the process, we will work with relevant stakeholders in improving logistics for export activity.

"Agriculture is part of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan that President Cyril Ramaphosa announced late last year; to this end, we will continue working with all stakeholders to ensure that we provide a policy environment conducive for all subsectors to prosper. Part of the growth-enhancing interventions is detailed in the Sector Master Plan, which will be announced within the first quarter of the year," the Minister said.

The growth projections for soft citrus, lemons and Valencia oranges alone indicate an expected additional R6.8 billion in foreign exchange earnings and the creation of 22 250 sustainable jobs over the next three years.

[SAnews.gov.za](http://SAnews.gov.za)

South Africa has become the second-largest exporter of fresh citrus in the world, after record-breaking exports that delivered 146 million cartons of citrus in 2020.

Citrus is one of South Africa's most important subsectors in the agricultural sector that provides a significant contribution to job creation and economic activity in South Africa's rural communities.

## Thuli Madonsela receives French Knighthood from President Macron



Prof. Thuli Madonsela, Chair in Social Justice at Stellenbosch University's Faculty of Law, has been appointed as Knight of the Legion of Honour by French President Emmanuel Macron.

Madonsela is being honoured in recognition of her remarkable achievements in defence of the rule of law and the fight against corruption in South Africa.

*The Ordre national de la Légion d'honneur* (French Legion of Honour) celebrates the accomplishments of distinguished individuals, irrespective of sex, social background and nationality. Viewed as the highest decoration in France, it was established by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802.

The categories of the order include the degrees *Chevalier* (Knight), *Officier* (Officer), *Commandeur* (Commander), *Grand Officier* (Grand Officer) and *Grand-Croix* (Grand Cross).

Previous South African recipients of the degree *Chevalier* include Nadine Gordimer, Ahmed Kathrada, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Mampela Ramphela, Miriam Makeba, André P Brink and Zanele Muholi.

One of the knighthood's famous recipients is soccer legend Zinedine Zidane, who led the French to World Cup glory in 1998.

Stellenbosch University said in a statement that the official ceremony to bestow the insignia on Madonsela would take place as soon as

the COVID-19 situation eases significantly, on a date to be mutually agreed between the French Ambassador to South Africa, Aurélien Lechevallier, and Madonsela.

Madonsela said: "I do my work to add value to humanity out of love and gratitude for the privileges life and humanity have given me and in pursuit of my duties. However, a recognition of this magnitude does inspire immense gratitude while spotlighting my work on social justice, the rule of law and ethical governance.

"I believe it comes from a place of appreciating our interconnectedness as humanity though separated by oceans and borders."

Madonsela added that she accepted the honour on behalf of the public protector team that worked with her in the pursuit of ethical and accountable government for seven years.

"I also accept the award on behalf of my colleagues at Stellenbosch University, with whom we are pioneering research, policy reform and civic mobilisation on social justice, with the hope of catalysing progress towards ending poverty and reducing structural inequality by 2030 in line with the global Sustainable Development Goals.

"I also accept it on behalf of my Thuma Foundation colleagues, who are mostly volunteers dedicating their time and resources towards making democracy work for all through democracy leadership and literacy."

TimesLIVE

## Pretoria vets do groundbreaking heart surgery on two dogs



dogs. The surgeries paved the way for the establishment of a hospital centre of excellence in minimally invasive surgery and cardiology.

Specialist surgeons, Dr Keatshoff and Dr Elliott, saved the lives of seven-month-old French Bulldog, Daisy, and six-month-old Cocker Spaniel, Talen, at Onderstepoort Veterinary Academic Hospital, the university said.

"This procedure is limited to hospitals abroad with surgeons or therapists who are particularly interested in cardiology. Only hospitals that have the equipment can perform surgery."

For the two canines, the groundbreaking process involved using a balloon to widen the heart valve orifice.

"Using fluorography (real-time X-rays), the balloon was passed through two chambers of the heart and through a small hole in the valve. After inflating the balloon, the hole was stretched (balloon valvuloplasty)," they said.

### Possibility of "centre of excellence"

The university said successful surgeries had allowed hospitals to help pets in such delicate situations.

"This means we can offer a service not previously offered by Onderstepoort Veterinary Hospital. It also gives us the opportunity to extend the life of special pets like these.

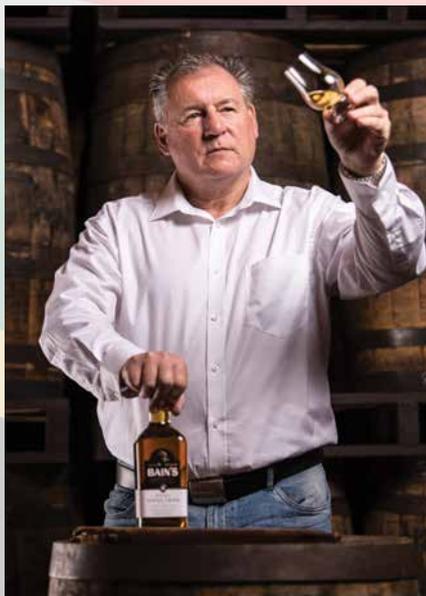
"This groundbreaking surgery also creates the opportunity to create a hospital centre of excellence in minimally invasive surgery and cardiology, and offers more advanced surgeries such as valve replacement and heart transplantation."

varietyinfo.com

University of Pretoria veterinarians, Dr Adrian Keatshoff and Dr Ross Elliott, saved the lives of two dogs using groundbreaking technology.

Veterinarians at Onderstepoort Veterinary Academic Hospital have performed groundbreaking surgery on the hearts of two

## SA master distiller inducted into Global Whisky Hall of Fame



Whisky Magazine announced on 4 February 2021 that Andy Watts, Distell master distiller of a range of proudly South African whiskies, Bain's Cape Mountain Whisky and Three Ships Whisky, will be bestowed the great honour of being inducted into *Whisky Magazine's* Whisky Hall of Fame.

The induction was expected to take place on 25 March during an online ceremony when the global winners of the Icons of Whisky Awards, together with the World Whiskies Awards winners, were announced.

The honour of Whisky Hall of Fame has been bestowed on just a handful of iconic people since its inception in 2004, as a permanent tribute to their lasting contribution to the whisky industry.

Watts received this prestigious accolade in recognition of his life-long commitment to the South African whisky industry and subsequently, the World Whisky Category (whiskies produced outside of Scotland, the United States and United Kingdom).

Watts' career didn't start-off in the world of whisky. He grew up in Penistone in Yorkshire, England, and arrived in South Africa in 1982 as a professional cricketer with Derbyshire CCC, planning to spend six months a year coaching at schools throughout the Boland.

Within three years, he landed a position at the then Stellenbosch Farmers Winery (SFW) where he became involved in blending spirits. He was invited to Scotland by Morrison Bowmore Distillers to work hands-on at its three distilleries – Auchentoshan in the

Lowlands, Glen Garioch in the Highlands and the legendary Bowmore Distillery on the Isle of Islay.

He returned to South Africa determined to prove that the country can produce internationally award-winning whiskies. Back at SFW, he was tasked, along with the company's Technical Services Department, to transfer its fledgling whisky operations from the R&B Distillery in Stellenbosch to The James Sedgwick Distillery in Wellington, taking up his position as distillery manager in August 1991.

In addition to a host of global awards achieved for the whiskies and the distillery, Watts was awarded in 2016 and 2018 the title as "Rest of the World Master Distiller / Master Blender" in *Whisky Magazine's* Icons of Whisky Awards and in the 2018 awards went on to be named as the "Global Icons of Whisky Master Distiller / Master Blender". More recently, he received the "2020 Global Icon World Whisky Ambassador Award" for his passion in not only creating whisky but in sharing knowledge of South African whiskies around the globe.

[www.sapeople.com](http://www.sapeople.com)

## Two South African lodges named among planet's best

South Africa is home to some of the most beautiful landscapes in the world and, according to *Condé Nast Traveller's* annual ranking of the best resorts on the planet, two of the most luxurious lodges are found here too.

The list was collated from surveys done by travellers via the publication's annual Readers' Choice Awards. Even though non-essential travel has been on hold since early 2020, the list highlights places that resonated with readers "in a year when travel may have been out of reach".

The resorts that made the coveted "Best Lodges in the World" list include out-of-this-world retreats in the Maldives, Fiji and the Caribbean, with several of the top spots taken by safari lodges in Africa.

South Africa proudly has two places on the list, Singita Sabi Sands Boulder Lodge in Mpumalanga and Morukuru Beach Lodge in the De Hoop Nature Reserve near Cape Agulhas.

Singita Sabi Sands Boulders Lodge is set in the exclusive Sabi Sands Private Game Reserve on the banks of the Sand River. Together with its neighbour, the famous Kruger National Park, Sabi Sabi offers 2.7 million hectares of unfenced, protected wilderness.

Game roam freely between the two reserves, forming one of Africa's

most biodiverse wildlife populations. Sabi Sands is particularly famous for its leopards and boasts an unrivalled record for the regularity and quality of sightings.

The lodge has 12 spacious suites with glass-fronted bathrooms and ball-and-claw tubs overlooking the open bush. When you aren't on guided safari walks or drives with professional rangers and skilled Shangaan trackers, you can relax by a private plunge pool, enjoy pampering massages and body treatments in the spa or work out in the gym.

The five-bedroom Morukuru Beach Lodge in De Hoop Nature Reserve is an off-grid idyll nestled on one of the most beautiful coastlines in South Africa. The luxurious boutique beach lodge has five gorgeous suites with panoramic ocean views where



you can lie and watch migrating whales, and is just steps from the beach and ocean.

You can cool off in the swimming pool, soak in the hot tub and enjoy sundowners on the rooftop terrace, which boasts 360-degree panoramic views of the surrounding reserve and ocean. It's nothing less than spectacular.

Other luxury resorts on the list include Singita's Pamushana Lodge in Zimbabwe's Malilangwe Reserve, Likuliku Lagoon Resort in Fiji, Naladhu Private Island in the Maldives, the Mulia & Mulia Villas in Bali, Oliver's Camp in Tanzania's Tarangire National Park and Wilderness Safari's Bisate Lodge in Rwanda.

[www.thesouthafrican.com](http://www.thesouthafrican.com)



## Sharks enter into global partnership with Roc Nation



"With their expertise and relationships in the international market, our vision of taking the Sharks brand to the world is very much on track. Working together with our team at the Sharks, Roc Nation will assist in growing our fan base in new territories and will ensure that our approach will always be of an international standard. We look forward to the sharing of minds, a bold approach and the creativity that this partnership will produce, that will position our brand as the leading brand in world rugby."

Commenting on the exciting alliance between the two business entities, Yormark said: "Roc Nation is thrilled to embark on this unique partnership with the Sharks, supporting Ed and his first-class management team to position the club as the premium rugby club in South Africa and around the world. Leveraging our subject-matter experts across our international offices, we are confident that the Sharks will be the envy of the rugby world, attracting top players from around the world."

"Success in this partnership is not just accomplishment on-field, but how we build upon the business structure to guarantee long-term sustainable success."

[www.bignewsnetwork.com](http://www.bignewsnetwork.com)

In January 2021, the Sharks announced a new global partnership with the internationally acclaimed agency Roc Nation.

The Durban rugby franchise announced on its official website that Roc Nation was one of the world's leading entertainment companies, forming a unique and tangible partnership with the Sharks, driven by innovation, community and integrity.

A statement from the Sharks read: "This announcement follows the news earlier in

the month that American company MVM Holdings had acquired a 51% controlling share in the Sharks, with co-CEO of Roc Nation Unified, Michael Yormark, forming part of the consortium.

Roc Nation also has Springboks Siya Kolisi and Cheslin Kolbe as its clients.

Sharks CEO, Eduard Coetzee, commented: "Roc Nation is an internationally renowned brand and we are delighted to welcome them to the Sharks family."

## Cape Town lands Top 50 "Most Instagrammable Cities" list for third consecutive year



ocean views. What more could you ask for? Cape Town is an Instagrammer's dream location to visit: endless natural beauty and cliff-top views, pastel pink neighbourhoods and turquoise waters."

Cape Town gets loads of love from the world because of its international status but it isn't the only good thing in South Africa. South Africa is also home to the Big 5, the Panorama Route and the Big Hole. While the website only featured images of Cape Town, South Africa has so much beauty to offer.

Big 7 Travel has a "Best of" list for everything and South Africa often features in the top 50 of these lists. From the sexiest accent in the world to the most festive cities across the globe. Cape Town was even voted onto one of the best destinations of the decade!

Some 1.5 million people from 60 countries take surveys and vote for the best travel accolades around the world.

[www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

Cape Town has done it again. The Mother City has earned yet another Top 50 title – only this time it is for being a photogenic city.

Cape Town is the most popular destination in South Africa and is often listed on the top travel lists in the world. Recently, Big 7 Travel released their list for the most Instagrammable cities in the world and Cape Town landed on the list for the third time in a row.

Instagram is a platform that people love to use to share snippets of their lives. South Africa is one of the top travel destinations in the world. Merge the two together and you get a match made in heaven.

In 2019, Cape Town landed fifth on the list, 2020 earned a 15th place and 2021 Cape Town got 45th place.

"Dramatic scenery, fantastic hiking trails and deserted beaches that boast spectacular

## South African solo rower Grant Blakeway completes World's Toughest Row



**M**elkert and a long-awaited reunion at the finish line saw eco-warrior – Grant Blakeway – triumphed against the odds to conquer the World's Toughest Row.

Blakeway could hardly stand when he stepped ashore in Nelson's Dockyard, English Harbour, on Saturday, 6 February 2021. He had just finished the World's Toughest Row in a time of 56 days, 3 hours, and 29 minutes – and he was utterly exhausted.

The 59-year-old Durban businessman set off from San Sebastian de La Gomera

on 12 December last year to row across the Atlantic Ocean in the 2020 Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge, alongside 20 other teams from around the world. He was the only South African among them, and one of eight solo competitors in the 2020 fleet.

The premier event on the global ocean-rowing calendar is sponsored by Talisker Single Malt Whisky and organised by Atlantic Campaigns. The race involves a 3 000-mile (approximately 4 800km) unassisted row from the Canary Islands to Antigua and Barbuda. Race teams compete solo or in groups of up to

five people, and carry everything they need on their boats.

The journey from San Sebastian de La Gomera to the English Harbour was physically and mentally challenging from the get-go, confesses Blakeway.

"This race is difficult enough when you're in a group, but when you're a solo rower, everything becomes harder. You're the human engine, the navigator, the radio operator, the repairman, the medic and the cook," he says.

"When something breaks, you have to fix it. When something goes wrong, you have to make a new plan. One way or another, you find out what you're made of during this race. The mighty Atlantic Ocean gives so much, and takes so much, too.

"The Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge has been a life-changing event," concludes Blakeway.

"I'm so grateful to my family, my friends, my supporters and to everybody who cheered me on from their corner of the world. When you receive messages from people you've never met, it's incredibly humbling. All I can say is 'thank you'. From the bottom of my heart. Thank you. You carried me through."

[www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

## Stellenbosch University wine researcher receives French Knighthood in Agriculture



**T**he French Government has bestowed a ceremonial knighthood on an associate professor from Stellenbosch University.

Professor Benoit Divol is a part of the Department of Viticulture and Oenology and the South African Grape and Wine Research Institute at Stellenbosch University.

He received the *Chevalier dans l'Ordre du Mérite Agricole* (Knight in the Order of Agricultural Merit) for his scientific contributions as well as his endeavours to enhance research cooperation between France and South Africa, particularly in the fields of viticulture and oenology. "Even though the knighthood is only ceremonial by nature, I

feel honoured by this token of appreciation of my work, especially because it acknowledges my endeavours to form academic links between France and South Africa.

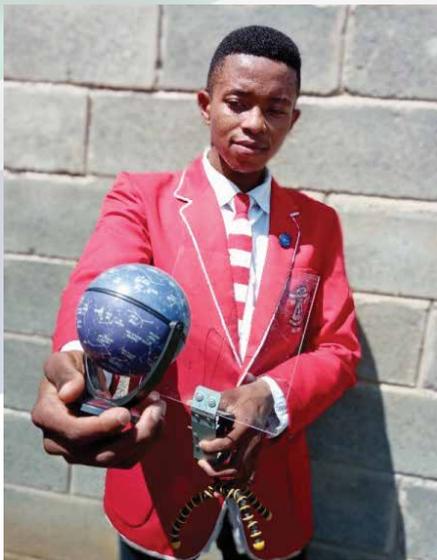
"On a personal level, it obviously makes me happy to create bridges between France and South Africa. I also sincerely believe that it provides great professional and personal opportunities for my students and that it contributes positively to the international standing of the Department of Viticulture and Oenology and the South African Grape and Wine Research Institute," he said.

Divol, a Parisian by birth, has been working at Stellenbosch University since 2005, where he joined the then Institute for Wine Biotechnology as a postdoctoral researcher.

Since then, he has, among others, led the Department of Viticulture and Oenology as Chair and was promoted to Associate Professor in 2017.

<https://thewc.co.za>

## South African young scientist scoops award at Taiwan Science Fair



Seventeen-year-old Thabo Maliea captivated judges with his ingenuity, depth of knowledge and mastery of inquiry methodology displayed in his scientific research project, "Sunprints in the Sky".

A teenage scientist from Botshabelo in the Free State, with dreams of being an astrophysicist, has made South Africa proud by winning one of the prestigious awards at the 2021 Taiwan International Science Fair (TISF).

Thabo Maliea, who competed virtually in the fair via Eskom Expo, captivated judges with his ingenuity, depth of knowledge and mastery of inquiry methodology displayed in his scientific research project, "Sunprints in the Sky". The project investigates the track that the sun makes in comparison with three specific stars over a period of five months, using a homemade observational apparatus instead of expensive equipment.

Maliea, who was accepted to study Astrophysics at Wits University and is on the University of Cape Town's waiting list, was awarded the third award in the Astrophysics Category, winning a prize of R1055,35 cash, a medal and a certificate.

"I have mixed emotions about winning an award, to be honest. I actually didn't expect to win a prize at the TISF because of how tough

it is to compete in and the high international standards. Overall, I'm very happy and excited," said Maliea.

"I have always wanted to do an astronomy project and participate with it in the Eskom Expo for Young Scientists, but I had only one setback: I couldn't afford to buy myself a useful observational apparatus. So, then I decided to use a homemade one, because it is more affordable, and it was my best alternative," added Maliea.

Eskom General Manager of Risk and Sustainability, Andrew Etzinger, said: "Eskom is extremely proud of our learners for their fantastic achievements, especially Thabo, whose fascination with the sun has gained him global recognition. Eskom's investment in this national initiative, Expo for Young Scientists, is part of our broader strategy of skills development for the country. It is logical to invest in STEM at school-level, in order to support the learners at a key inflection point".

[www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

## Three SA hotels make Global Top 50 "Most Romantic" List



Three stunning South African hotels have been featured on the Top 50 list of "Most Romantic Hotels" as voted for by an audience of 1.6 million international travellers.

Some 1.5 million people from 60 countries take surveys and vote for the best travel accolades around the world. Big 7 Media shares several lists, which promote global travel.

Big 7 Travel asked their followers to vote for the 50 most romantic hotels globally, and South African destinations featured three times on the list:

### Lion Sands Ivory Lodge – Mpumalanga

"Ivory Lodge thinks of everything – from your champagne of choice in the maxibar to unique

dining under the stars. Guests staying at Ivory Lodge can also spend a night or two in a luxury treehouse.

"The Kingston Treehouse is built on boulders, across a small drawbridge, with lanterns to light the way."

### La Residence – Franschhoek, Western Cape

"Located in the beautiful Franschhoek Valley on a private 30-acre estate, La Residence is surrounded by Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz vineyards, olive groves and plum orchards.

"A romantic and indulgent paradise that's filled with rich fabrics, wonderful artwork and antique furniture.

"Guests dine either in their suite or the central Terrace Room, beside a fire or the stunning double rim-flow pool."

### Londolozzi – Kruger National Park

"Londolozzi is right on the Sand River, in the heart of the Sabi Sand Game Reserve within the famous Greater Kruger National Park.

"Each of the five camps has a uniquely different vibe, yet all are beautiful. Londolozzi's Private Granite Suites feature outdoor bathtubs where you can watch elephants play in the river."

[www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

## Condé Nast names South Africa on 2021 Best Holiday Destination List



Condé Nast Traveller released the Best Holiday Destinations of 2021 and South Africa earned a spot on the coveted list.

The popular list was put together a little differently this year.

With the world mostly being stuck at home for the last year, the list contains more destinations that celebrate the outdoors, life-changing experiences and places that use the funds from your trip to better the lives of others.

South Africa was featured alongside some incredible destinations, including the Caribbean, Portugal, the United Arab Emirates, the Canary Islands and the Amazon, to name a few.

This is what the publication had to say about why they selected South Africa for this year's list:

"Like many countries, South Africa's tourism industry has been through the wringer of late. But while the world has taken a forced break,

a new generation of genre-busting creatives have been busy shining a light on the most diverse cultural community on the African continent. Biennales, fairs and new artist-run spaces are at the helm of the country's enlivened art scene, with exciting local artists – including twin sisters Noncedo and Nonzuzo Gxekwa – getting prime wall space at galleries such as the Maitland Institute and The Centre for the Less Good Idea.

"All-women music festivals, Soweto township theatre groups and a burgeoning container coffee-shop scene in Maboneng draw the focus firmly onto Johannesburg.

"In Jozi, Pan-African dinner clubs such as Yeoville, run by chef Sanza Sandile, rub up alongside lively rooftop bars and secret hole-in-the-wall spots in the bohemian suburb of Melville.

"That's not to mention the parade of fresh hotels and lodges waiting to welcome international guests in 2021, which includes Kruger Shalati – a stupendously smart cabin hotel stationed on a historical railway line – as well as AndBeyond's new supremely good-looking solar-powered Ngala Treehouse, rising above the predator-filled bush on the edges of Kruger National Park."

[www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

## Mohale Mashigo teams up with Marvel for Black History Month Comic



Award-winning South African author, Mohale Mashigo, has collaborated with Marvel on a new comic, *Marvel Voices: Legacy #1*.

Kgomotso Carol Mashigo, also known as Mohale Mashigo, has teamed up with Marvel to launch *Marvel Voices: Legacy #1*. This cartoon is a celebration of the black heroes of



the *Marvel Universe*. The well-known South African storyteller made the announcement in a tweet on 24 February 2021.

February was Black History Month. In celebration of this, award-winning author, singer-songwriter and former radio presenter, Mashigo, along with seven other creators, wrote *Marvel Voices: Legacy #1*. Mashigo

penned down promising young heroes Ironheart, Ms Marvel and Shuri.

The seven creators include Academy Award-winning screenwriter John Ridley, who looks at the impact of Miles Morales.

"I'm deeply appreciative of having had the opportunity to contribute to this amazing collection of narratives," Ridley told Marvel.

The screen credits for *Marvel Voices: Legacy #1* in the art department include comic legend Olivier Coipel, Valentine De Landro, Chriscross, Chris Allen and more. The cover was created by Taurin Clarke. The comic became available from 24 February 2021.

Mohale Mashigo is the author of *The Yearning*, a 2016 fictional book set in Cape Town following the life of a young woman named Marubi, who has a dark past. *The Yearning* won a prize at the University of Johannesburg for debut fiction.

In 2018, Mashigo published two novels: *Intruders: Short Stories* and *Where is Lulu?*

[www.thesouthafrican.com](http://www.thesouthafrican.com)

## Wayde van Niekerk SA's newest Laureus Sport for Good Ambassador



South African sprint sensation and current 400m World and Olympic record holder, Wayde van Niekerk, has been announced as the latest Laureus Ambassador.

Van Niekerk joins an illustrious group of esteemed South African sporting icons in the Laureus Family, including Banyana Banyana coach Desiree Ellis and player Amanda Dlamini, Bafana Bafana legend Lucas Radebe and Springbok legends Jean de Villiers, Corne Krige and Bryan Habana.

Born in Kraaifontein in Cape Town, Van Niekerk got his first taste of sport playing rugby with his cousin Cheslin Kolbe.

After deciding his future lay in athletics, Van Niekerk took up sprinting in 2009, at the age of 17.

He qualified for the World Juniors in the 200m and started concentrating on the 200m and 400m.

He made his first international appearance at the 2010 IAAF World U20 Championships in Moncton and continued his spectacular progress at the 2015 IAAF World Championships in Beijing, setting a new African record of 43.48 to win the 400m title.

In 2016, he became the 107th athlete to break the 10-second barrier in the 100m.

That made him the first individual to break 10 seconds for 100m, 20 seconds for 200m, and 44 seconds for 400m.

On a magical evening of track and field in Rio in 2016, a night that had an entire nation beaming with pride, Van Niekerk produced a breath-taking run, running "blind" in lane eight to beat Michael Johnson's longstanding world record set in 1999.

In August 2017, Van Niekerk successfully defended his 400m world title at the 2017 World Championships in Athletics in London and continues to be one of South Africa's most decorated and celebrated sportspeople.

Wayde van Niekerk said: "I'm honoured to be a part of the Laureus family, joining an esteemed group of sports men and women who are members and ambassadors of this great global organisation."

"Laureus does amazing work in uplifting society by celebrating sport and transforming lives across South Africa and around the world, so I'm excited to get started and make an impact with my involvement in the Sport for Good Foundation, especially working on the Laureus projects, which I am so passionate about, including mental health projects and nutritional education within local communities."

Laureus Ambassadors are a select group of both current and retired sportsmen and women who have achieved sporting greatness or made significant contributions to the sporting community during their careers. They are recognised as role models and icons of success and volunteer their services to support the work of Laureus Sport for Good.

Laureus Sport for Good is a global charity that uses the power of sport to help young people overcome violence, discrimination and disadvantage. Currently, supporting more than 200 programmes in over 40 countries, Laureus has raised more than €150 million for the Sport for Development sector and changed the lives of more than six million children and young people since 2000.

Laureus South Africa Chairperson, Morné du Plessis, added: "We are thrilled to officially welcome Wayde to the Laureus family. It has been remarkable to witness his rise in world sport, and the impact that he has had in inspiring South Africans both young and old."

[www.thesouthafrican.com](http://www.thesouthafrican.com)

## Loyiso Gola's *Unlearning* is Netflix's first African stand-up comedy

The world needs a laugh right now, and Netflix has selected South Africa's Loyiso Gola to deliver just that. The sharp-witted comedian is back with his sharp wit and critically acclaimed comedy hour, *Unlearning*, which debuted globally on 23 March 2021.



Gola is the first African to have a solo full hour of stand-up comedy on Netflix and that's not all – this is the first African original for 2021.

The special first debuted at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2017 and ran at the MICEF, London's Soho Theatre, Makhanda (formerly

Grahamstown), and Soho Playhouse in New York. Following the crazy year that was 2020, Gola brought his special to his hometown, Cape Town. Africa's latest Netflix Original was filmed in front of a live audience at the

famed Zeits Mocca, following strict COVID-19 protocols.

Gola is one of Africa's most loved and popular stand-up comedians. Gola is a two-time Emmy-nominated anchor for his satirical news television series, *Late Nite News with Loyiso Gola*, which launched in 2010 and saw 12 seasons.

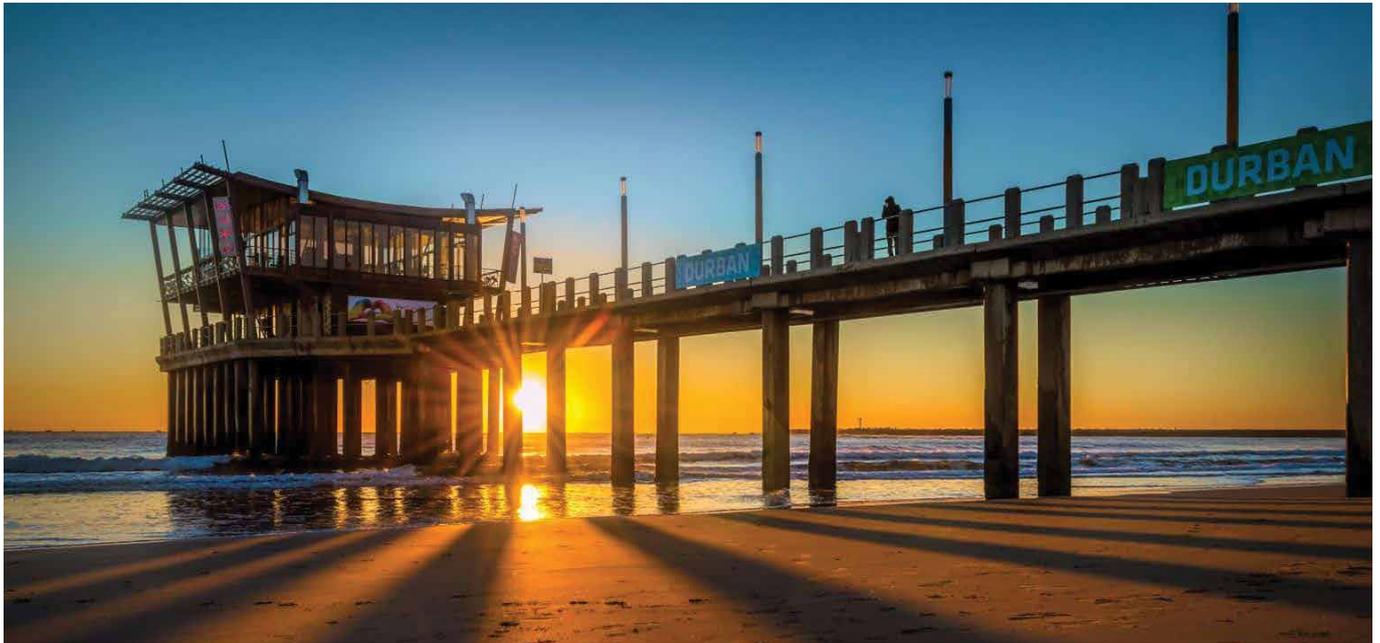
Gola is also the African correspondent for Charlie Pickering's *The Weekly* on ABC in Australia. Some of Gola's noteworthy performances include his show, *Tall Tales*, which ran at the Soho Theatre in 2015; *Dude, Where's My Lion?*, which ran in Edinburgh; *Loyiso Gola Live in New York*, which was his debut United States stand-up special, recorded in Brooklyn in 2016; and the Netflix special, *Comedians of the World*, which was released in 2019.

[www.sapeople.com](http://www.sapeople.com)



Tsitsikamma National Park is an area of the Garden Route National Park, on South Africa's southern coast. It encompasses a marine reserve, deep gorges and local vegetation like the Big Tree, a towering yellowwood. The Mouth Trail crosses a suspension bridge over Storms River. The well-known Otter Trail starts at the Storm River mouth.





**The KZN South Coast has the highest number of Blue Flag beaches in KZN**

Within KZN, there are 10 Blue Flag beaches – an internationally recognised demarcation of quality – and six of these are located on the KZN South Coast. With golden sands and the warm Indian Ocean, visitors can enjoy bathing, surfing, snorkelling and diving along this beautiful coast.

# 10 Amazing facts

## about the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast

With so many unique, family-friendly holiday activities, and a variety of accommodation options, the KZN South Coast is also an incredibly affordable domestic destination for the entire family.

By Tyler Leigh Vivier  
[www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

The KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) South Coast, a renowned domestic holiday destination, is home to some of the country's most interesting and diverse sites and activities. Ugu South Coast Tourism (USCT) recently shared the top 10 amazing facts about the region.



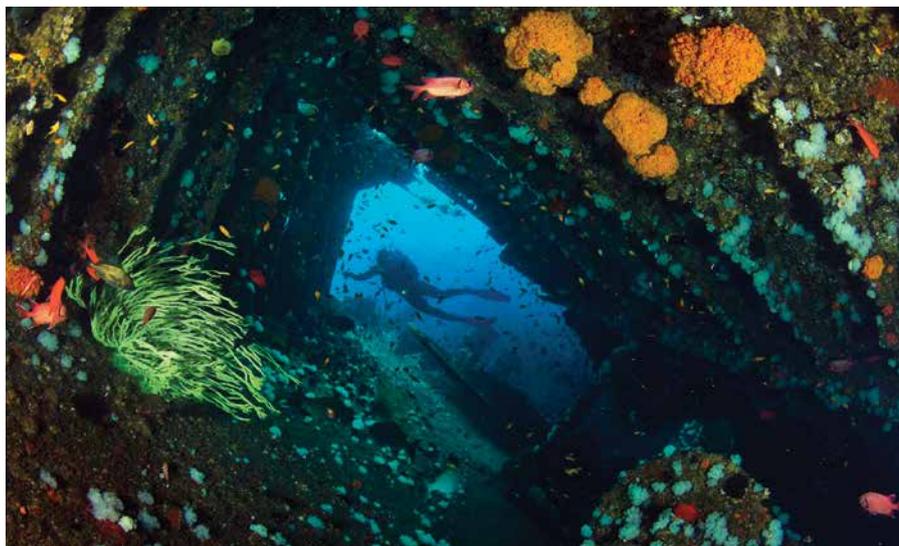
**The KZN South Coast is home to the smallest desert in the world**

Situated just 10 kilometres (km) from Port Edward is the Red Desert. Stretching 200 metres in diameter, this recently-proclaimed nature reserve is also the world's smallest desert and the site of many archaeological discoveries.



**The KZN South Coast is also known as "The Golf Coast"**

With 11 golf courses alongside oceans and coastal forests, there is a green for every golfer. The diverse courses can be found at Umkomaas, Scottburgh, Selborne Park, Umdoni, Port Shepstone, Harding, Margate, Southbroom, San Lameer, Port Edward and the Wild Coast Sun.



**The KZN South Coast has two of the world's top dive sites and marine protected areas (MPAs)**

Aliwal Shoal, just 5km offshore of the Umkomaas River; and Protea Banks, 8km off Shelly Beach, are both world-revered dive sites and home to a number of ocean creatures. These wondrous ocean sites are both MPAs and have prompted numerous international documentaries and attracted an influx of global tourists.



**The KZN South Coast has the only MSA-approved racing track in KZN**

Dezzi Raceway in Port Shepstone is the only Motorsport South Africa (MSA)-approved racing track in the province and the host of numerous prestigious motorsport events. The track includes two purpose-built drift circuits for high-octane entertainment. ▶▶



**The KZN South Coasts enjoys the annual Sardine Run**

Winter brings the planet's biggest biomass migration close inshore of the region, giving visitors front-row seats to the ocean-based feeding frenzy. This is a must-see annual spectacle, as shoals of silver fish are followed by bigger fish, sharks, dolphins, whales and sea birds.



**The KZN South Coast has the highest gorge swing in the world**

The Wild Gorge Swing in Oribi Gorge is the highest swing of its kind in the world. Located at the top of Lehr's Waterfall, the swing is the equivalent of launching off a 55-storey building (165 metres). This is a definite bucket list addition for any thrill-seeker.



**The KZN South Coast witnesses annual humpback whale migration**

Between June and December, more than 30 000 humpback whales participate in the annual migration, which can be viewed from any of the 58 KZN South Coast beaches and the many oceanside restaurants and cafés.



#### The South Coast has the most tidal pools in KZN

This family-friendly swimming destination has several tidal pools, which provide sheltered beach swimming regardless of the surf conditions.



#### The KZN South Coast is an affordable holiday destination

With so many unique, family-friendly holiday activities, and a variety of accommodation options, the KZN South Coast is also an incredibly affordable domestic destination for the entire family.

“These are just a selection of the many unique and enriching sites and activities that can be found on the KZN South Coast,” explained CEO of USCT, Phelisa Mangcu. “As an affordable destination offering all manner of nature-based, outdoor activities, the region is the perfect location for those wanting to unwind and reconnect with family after a challenging year. This truly is #ParadiseForEveryone.” 🇷🇺



# CAPE TOWN WELCOMES YOU



CITY OF CAPE TOWN  
ISIXEKO SASEKAPA  
STAD KAAPSTAD

## VISIT, LIVE, WORK, PLAY & INVEST IN ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CITIES ON EARTH

Cape Town has been voted the world's Best City by readers of the UK's Telegraph for five consecutive years, and there's good reason why. We rank among the world's top destinations to visit and have all the attributes that appeal to people looking for a great city in which to live, work, play and invest.

Cape Town is a proudly inclusive city, welcoming all who can join us in our vision to create a safe, sustainable, vibrant urban environment for generations to come.

We are national leaders in business and have a thriving knowledge economy; our skills market is growing and the city offers numerous opportunities for work and investment.

Cape Town is also a proud recipient of a number of international awards and accolades. In 2018, the city was named one of the Top 10 Surf Cities in the world by Surfer Magazine and crowned the number one city in Africa for business tourism events by the International Congress and Convention Association. Cape Town has also been voted one of the Top 10 Cities in the World for Travellers by Lonely Planet in 2017, Skytrax voted our airport the Best in Africa and international real estate company Savills ranked the Cape Town amongst the world's Top Tech Cities in a 2017 report.

### VISIT

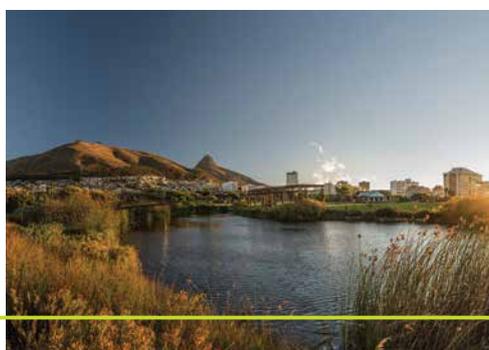
Cape Town is a must-visit destination. Cape Point, Groot Constantia, Kirstenbosch, Robben Island, the Table Mountain Cableway and the V&A Waterfront are the iconic destinations that form the core of the true Cape Town experience, and a trip to the city will not be complete without a visit to each Big 6 attractions. Cape Town also has the highest number of Blue Flag beaches in South Africa. Seven of the city's most popular beaches and three Cape Town marinas have been recognised for meeting the globally-acclaimed Blue Flag standards.

Beaches awarded the prestigious status include: Bikini Beach, Mnandi, Strandfontein, Llandudno, Camps Bay, Clifton 4th and Silwerstroom.

Cape Town has a number of world class museums that offer up a treasure trove to the past. A number of these museums are located in the city centre - all within walking distance of each other - and together offer a view as diverse and entertaining as the city itself.

The state-of-the-art Zeitz MOCAA - recently voted the world's top cultural destination - is the latest addition to the Cape Town landscape and the first major museum in Africa dedicated to contemporary art. The museum, housed in the historic Grain Silo at the V&A Waterfront, comprises over 9,500 square meters (102,000 square feet) placing it among leading contemporary art museums worldwide.

Zeitz MOCAA is spread over nine floors, of which 6,000 square meters (65,000 square feet) is dedicated to exhibition space. Through an entire floor dedicated to education, the museum aims to develop a new art-loving, museum-going audience.





## LIVE

Cape Town has a terrific mixture of areas to live, from vibrant city-living to quiet, leafy residential suburbs. The city is known for its successful property market. In recent years Cape Town's property values and sales transactions have exceeded Johannesburg's and continue to attract international property investors. The city and surrounds is also home to four public universities, two globally recognised business schools and a number of trustworthy private and public institutions. Educational institutions situated in the city include the University of Cape Town, University of the Western Cape and the Cape Town University of Technology. Cape Town is also fast becoming the most digitally connected city in Africa. The City's public Wi-Fi service and other digital inclusion projects are part of a broader Digital City Strategy, which aims to make Cape Town the most digitally connected city in Africa. Other elements of the strategy include investment in digital infrastructure, digital business initiatives, and a focus on digital government.

## WORK

Cape Town's favourable lifestyle is one of the major reasons why many of the top wealth and asset management firms choose to base themselves here. The city is home to an impressive group of wealth managers, including the likes of Allan Gray, Old Mutual, Foord, Coronation, Sanlam, Prescient and Sygnia. Most of these companies' staff and top executives live in the city. Top employment sectors in Cape Town include community and social services, the financial and trade sectors. The financial services sector employed the largest number of skilled individuals in 2015 (274 087) and the manufacturing sector employed the largest number of semi-skilled and unskilled individuals (111 213).

Cape Town is also home to over 200 companies in the Information Technology (IT) and software industry employing 7 500 people. Our large retailers have extensive distribution channels into Africa opening up the possibility of collaboration in moving products within the continent. Cape Town also has a booming film and media industry. It's a sector that has created more than 35 000 jobs, contributing about US\$ 92 million to the economy in the last 3 years.

Cape Town is home to the only Hollywood style film studio complex in Africa. Coupled with exceptionally skilled film crew and post-production services, our facilities are winning awards and attracting a growing number of productions and stars to our shores. We also act as a gateway to Africa with several companies running their African operations from our city. The City of Cape Town is making sure that our infrastructure investments support key sectors, like the tech industry. An extensive open source fibre optic network has been installed with plans to extend the footprint over the forthcoming years.

## PLAY

Cape Town hosts a wide range of local and international events – from concerts and community-based events to business conferences and international sports tournaments. The city is a creative hub with arts, heritage and cultural sites, activities and opportunities for all. We have a lively arts and culture scene where creativity and heritage are explored through theatre, live music, dance, visual arts and more. Both day and night in Cape Town offer you exciting cultural spaces to visit and events to be a part of. Explore galleries and museums, cultural precincts, attend signature events and explore our top cultural venues.

## INVEST

Cape Town is South Africa's oldest city, its second-most populous and an important contributor to national employment. It is the legislative capital of South Africa, the administrative and economic centre of the Western Cape, and Africa's third biggest economic hub. The Mother City produces 9.8% of South Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) and accounts for more than 71% of the Western Cape's economic activity (Global Insight, 2016). The City has a diversified economy, and the three biggest sectors are: finance, insurance, property and business services. Cape Town is attracting thinkers, innovators and design led entrepreneurs who are helping to build an ecosystem that is strong in many aspects of the knowledge economy. The city is the leader on the African continent in the information technology sector, with more tech start-ups than anywhere else on the continent.

Cape Town has been chosen as the African headquarters of innovation by companies such as Barclay Rise and Thomson Reuters. The city is also the home to many of South Africa and Africa's financial institutions and, coupled with the national headquarters of many legal and consultancy firms, offer all the services needed to underpin a global drive into Africa.

One of the fastest growing sectors in Cape Town's economy is the business process outsourcing (BPO) sector, with many global call centres and online retailers like Amazon choosing to conduct their operations from our shores.

[www.capetown.gov.za/visit](http://www.capetown.gov.za/visit)  
[www.investcapetown.com](http://www.investcapetown.com)  
[www.capetown.travel](http://www.capetown.travel)





The Whalebone Pier, or the uMhlanga Pier, was declared by CNN as the “Best in the World” and “world’s most beautiful pier” in 2014. It is situated at Umhlanga Rocks, on the north coast of KwaZulu-Natal. Its distinctive appearance is what makes the uMhlanga whalebone pier one of the most iconic landmarks in South Africa and indeed the world. A firm favourite with photographers, the 80-metre walkway was built in 2007 and represents a whale’s skeleton. It is an extension of an underground culvert that helps disperse excess storm water from the land into the ocean.





## Fifth IPAF: A visual wonderland

Placed in public sites, this art is there for everyone, a form of collective community expression.

The fifth edition of the International Public Art Festival (IPAF) transformed Cape Town's Salt River into a visual wonderland from 10 to 14 February 2021. Organised by Baz Art, 20 local

and international artists created large-scale public artworks across the streets of Salt River.

The fifth edition brought the number of murals in Salt River to well above 100.

The festival is a showcase of how public art can express community values, enhance our environment, transform a landscape, heighten our awareness, or question our assumptions. Placed in public sites, this art is there for everyone, a form of collective community expression.

This year, IPAF focussed on three points: creativity, sustainability, and safety. Through the theme, *100% Sustainable*, IPAF 2021

examined how we can answer the needs of today without compromising the world our future generations will inherit. The amazing and interactive street art experiences focussed on the principles of Economic, Social and Environmental Sustainability.

Family-friendly walking, cycling and running tours were on offer. Tours varied in length and included new and existing murals that paint a fascinating picture of Cape Town and Africa at large.

Local and international artists from around the globe included: Anser NineOne, South Africa; Bazil Baxter, South Africa; Braveart, South Africa; Bushy Wopp, South Africa; Dbongz, South Africa; Dirty Native, South Africa; Dolf, South Africa; Elizabeth Kruger, South Africa; Gareth FunkSavage, South Africa; Haanie Bee, South Africa; Ilukuluku Collective X Morag Myerscough (United Kingdom), South

Africa; J3rny, Brazil; Lucamaleonte, Italy; Petru Naomi Lotter, South Africa; Sane, South Africa; Saype, France; Shinji Akhirah, South Africa; Silas, South Africa; Sonny, South Africa; Thato SBK, South Africa; VivaSage, South Africa; and Zizo Bongekile Manona, South Africa.

IPAF Festival SA says: "In collaboration with our sponsors, we worked extremely hard this year to create work opportunities for local tour guides, who have been hit hard by the ongoing pandemic. From an economic perspective, we all need to rethink tourism and supporting LOCAL tourism can be one way to approach the challenge our tourism industry faces right now. It's been great to see THAT IT'S POSSIBLE if we team up and work together!!"

Sponsors include the City of Cape Town, Embassy of Switzerland, the Presidential Stimulus Programme, Loopcolors, Sterling

Baz Art is a non-profit organisation that is dedicated to harnessing the power of art for the benefit of the public, as has been done in cities and towns across the globe – to resounding success.

Access, Viva Con Agua South Africa, *Instituto Italiano Di Cultura* and Eazi Access

Baz Art is a non-profit organisation that is dedicated to harnessing the power of art for the benefit of the public, as has been done in cities and towns across the globe – to resounding success.

Baz Art channels its energies and achieves its objectives through art creation, education, incorporation and development. The Baz Art business model encourages novel partnerships between artists and residents, as well as neighbourhoods, businesses and organisations in the community. Baz Art strives for inclusivity, involvement and community respect.

The inaugural IPAF took place in and around Salt River, Cape Town, in 2017. The festival's aim was to beautify the district, showcase local and international talent and take art out of the usual galleries: right to the streets of Cape Town. [U](https://ipafest.co.za/)

<https://ipafest.co.za/>





## Daniel Popper: Larger than Life

The artist is no newcomer when it comes to creating impressive sculptures. He has created numerous ones in music festivals all over the world, including the Modem Festival in Croatia; the Artwithme Festival in Tulum, Mexico; and the Electric Daisy Carnival in Las Vegas, to name but a few.

**C**ape Town-based artist Daniel Popper has become well-known for his towering sculptures of human figures adorned with or penetrated by thick canopies of foliage.

His latest piece, titled *Thrive*, stands nearly 30 feet tall and is constructed from 14 tons of glass fibre reinforced concrete. The piece was unveiled in December 2020 at Society Las Olas, a residential complex in Fort Lauderdale, and will function as a permanent public art installation at the ground floor.

The artist is no newcomer when it comes to creating impressive sculptures. He has created numerous ones in music festivals all over the world, including the Modem Festival in Croatia; the Artwithme Festival in Tulum, Mexico; and the Electric Daisy Carnival in Las Vegas, to name but a few.

Popper specialises in interactive art, public art, stage design, installation art and interior design.

Popper is most acclaimed for his massive public art installations at top festivals like the Electric Forest Festival in the United States of

America, Boom Festival in Portugal, Rainbow Serpent Festival in Australia, as well as Afrikaburn in the Tankwa Karoo in South Africa. Many of his projects include collaborations with other artists, technicians and artisans to incorporate electronic music, LED lighting and projection mapping as key components.

Popper creates both temporary and permanent work in public spaces.

Many companies have commissioned Popper to create unique installations to promote their brands. He has an interest in making a statement with his artworks, and

Popper is most acclaimed for his massive public art installations at top festivals like the Electric Forest Festival in the United States of America, Boom Festival in Portugal, Rainbow Serpent Festival in Australia, as well as Afrikaburn in the Tankwa Karoo in South Africa. Many of his projects include collaborations with other artists, technicians and artisans to incorporate electronic music, LED lighting and projection mapping as key components.



creating never-seen-before innovations. Many of his projects blur the lines between art, sculpture and brand activation.

In 2010, he created 14 giant pop puppets for MTN that captured thousands of fans at the official FIFA fan parks.

In 2011, he produced a life-size baobab tree for Siemens, which was erected at COP17 and lit up by bicycle generators. In a second project for Siemens, Popper was commissioned to build a sculpture that would stand as a defining feature for the Nelson Mandela School of Science and Technology. He created the 14-metre high *Tree of Wisdom* out of galvanised steel with a granite base. The tree is a permanent installation that has become an integral part of the landscape architecture of the school.

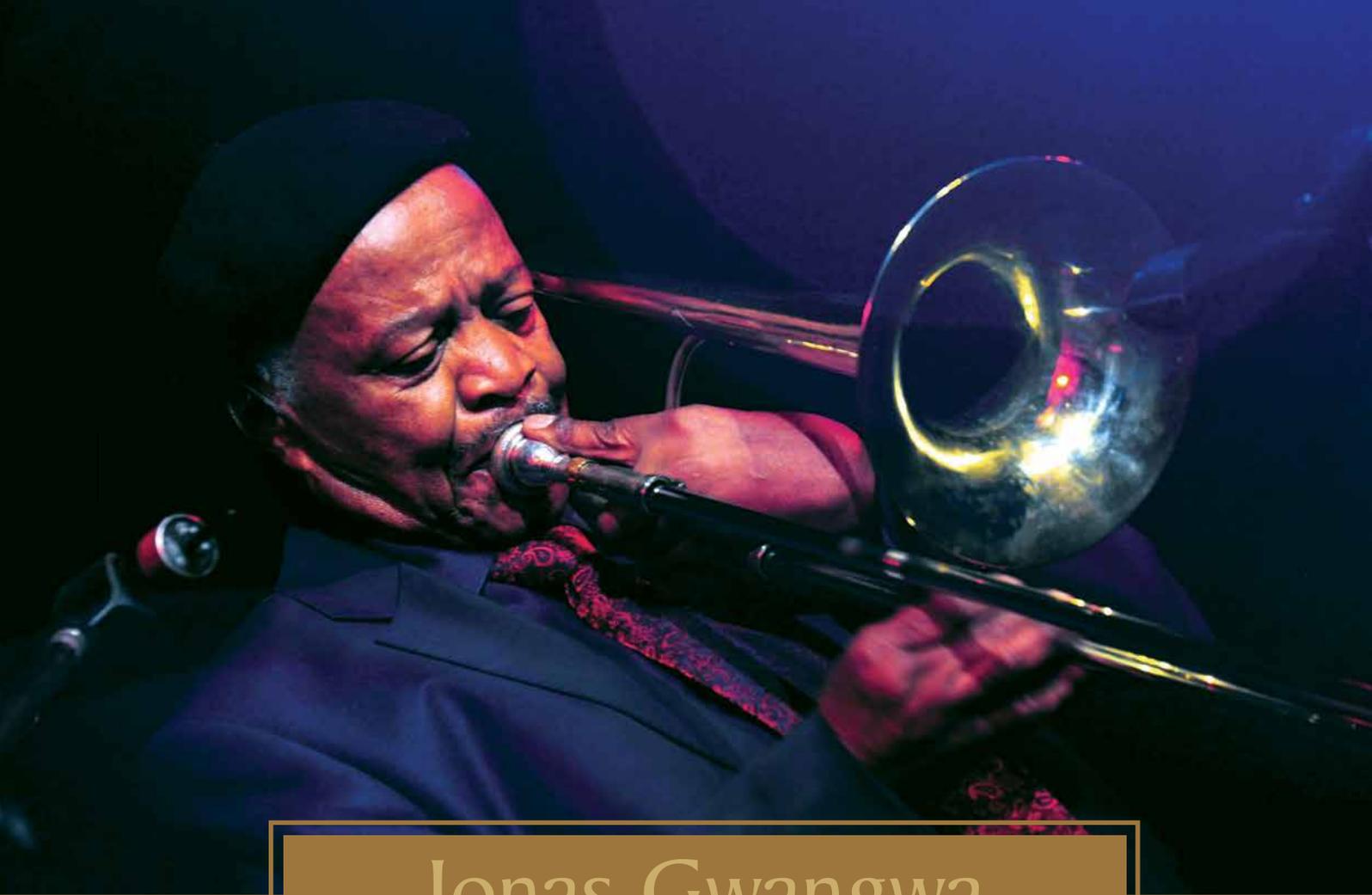
Popper founded a production company Pop Productions, which focusses on creative concept design, innovative advertising, brand activation, decor planning and fabrication, stage design and fabrication, interior design, spacial planning, lighting solutions and sculpture, both temporary and permanent.

Collaboration is key to his work. Pop Productions has worked with a core crew over the years who have all grown together as a collective and as individuals. They consist of master fabricators and industrial designers such as Robert Bernicchi and Samuel



Murgatroyd from Now Now Design, Brian Tompkins from Introspect Design and Brett Blake from Sets and Devices. For specific public works, Pop Productions also collaborates with master artisans and fabricators in South Africa, China and Bali. 🇺🇸

[www.danielpopper.com](http://www.danielpopper.com) / [www.thisiscolossal.com](http://www.thisiscolossal.com) / [www.demilked.com](http://www.demilked.com)



## Jonas Gwangwa

# embodied South Africa's struggle for a national culture

Gwangwa's love for the struggle was genuine and deep, never cosmetic – and he couldn't have written an unattractive tune if he tried.

By **Gwen Ansell**

Associate of the Gordon Institute for Business Science, University of Pretoria

Music is not a zero sum game with only one "best". But, if you seek to name one musician whose life embodies the South African people's struggle for a national culture, it must be trombonist, composer and cultural activist Jonas Mosa Gwangwa, who was born on 19 October 1937 in Orlando East, Johannesburg, and died on 23 January 2021 in Johannesburg aged 83.

Through 65 years on stage, Gwangwa's playing contributed to every genre of South African jazz. Overseas, he was hailed as player, producer and composer. Yet, he chose to step away from mainstream success for 10

years, leading the Amandla Cultural Ensemble of the African National Congress (ANC) to win hearts for the anti-apartheid struggle everywhere and present a vision of what post-apartheid national culture could be.

He battled painful injury (accidents shattered the same femur three times), was hunted for his life by the regime's forces and experienced both the heyday of South African liberation culture and the far more ambivalent times since.

Throughout, he cherished a half-century-plus love affair with his wife Violet, and brought his family – scattered across half the globe – home intact to a free South Africa. Violet's death, only a few short weeks before his, left him and the rest of the family devastated.

Gwangwa started his career in the 1950s in the Father Huddleston Band at St Peter's College in Johannesburg. When instruments were allocated he hoped for a clarinet, but was shy to object to the offered trombone.

There was music in the family, lessons at school, and from American jazzmen on the bioscope screen at the Odin Cinema in Sophiatown. From Dizzy Gillespie, the schoolboy Gwangwa borrowed his lifetime trademark: a jaunty black beret. He became, in his own words, "this little bebopper".

Politics shaped Gwangwa too. The 1954 Bantu Education Act ended Father Huddleston's St Peter's, but not before the band had played at the adoption of the Freedom Charter in Kliptown.

He said: "Everybody shared a perspective – you didn't even classify it as 'being political' ... nobody separated the music from the politics."

Because trombone was a scarce sound in African jazz bands, Gwangwa's tricky bebop chops caught the ears of the elite Jazz Dazzlers. His vision expanded with the Jazz Epistles, whose *Jazz Epistles: Verse One* became the first modern jazz album from a black South African band.

That was the first of several firsts. Gwangwa was co-copyist for the first all-black South African stage musical, *King Kong*, travelling with the show to London and starting a lifelong love affair with the stage musical format:

"Words, action, and music! I became fascinated with just how you ... put all those pieces together."

### Seven curtain calls

London contacts helped Gwangwa secure a place at the Manhattan School of Music in New York. There, sharing a flat with Hugh Masekela, his meagre allowance went as often on gig tickets as food, as he imbibed mainstream classics and the new "free jazz".

Equally active in politics, he helped organise South African students in America, and served as first eye on the text drafted by old schoolfriend, poet Keorapetse Kgositsile, of Miriam Makeba's 1963 anti-apartheid address to the United Nations.

He worked with Makeba and Harry Belafonte, most famously as arranger, adapter and conductor for the 1965 Grammy-winning Best Folk Album, *An Evening with Harry Belafonte/Miriam Makeba*: another first.

Then came residencies, film scores, multiple recordings across genres, musical direction and tours; with the Union of South Africa, and with Herb Alpert, when the trombonist won seven curtain calls for a barnstorming solo on his own *Foreign Natives*. Despite its painful interruption midstream by the reckless driver who first crushed his leg, Gwangwa's American jazz star was rising.

But he had loyalties bigger than the stage.

### This is a liberation movement!

In 1980, Gwangwa answered the call from ANC President OR Tambo to scour the military camps of Angola for young talent to establish the campaigning Amandla Cultural Ensemble. The call was too politically important to ignore, and the opportunity to create an entire stage show excited Gwangwa so much that "sometimes ... I couldn't sleep".

He spent most of the next decade between Amandla (rehearsing in Angola and touring the world) and Botswana (with his family and contributing to the local cultural scene with the Medu Arts Ensemble). In both settings, he was an innovator. Botswana musicians say he helped build their professionalism and shifted

their focus towards indigenous inspirations. In Amandla, he consciously revisioned traditions, casting female performers in previously all-male traditional dance roles:

"Why not? ... this is a liberation movement!"

Some cynical analysts suggest Amandla's winning musical arrangements and dramatic stage interludes simply prettied-up struggle culture for overseas audiences; they miss the point. Gwangwa's love for the struggle was genuine and deep, never cosmetic – and he couldn't have written an unattractive tune if he tried.

Gwangwa believed that political theatre deserved exactly the same high aesthetic standards as any other stage performance, and according to the memories of other Amandla performers, he enforced these relentlessly at rehearsal. Audiences everywhere responded to that combination of passion and professionalism.

Amandla's impact put the Gwangwa family home on the South African Defence Force hit list for the 1985 raid on Botswana.

It was razed (fortunately the occupants were elsewhere) and the regime's hunt did not cease. Roots were pulled up again, for London, then America. During that uneasy, unsettled time, Gwangwa scored another first: an Oscar nomination (and more) for his *Cry Freedom* film score, co-composed with George Fenton.

### For the people

Finally home again in 1991, some recognition arrived: Orders of Ikhamanga for both him and Amandla; commissions for various official and pan-African causes; honorary degrees and more.

Yet, he still constantly struggled to earn from tours, shows and recordings, encountered record label problems over material deemed "political" – and "state composer" was not who he wanted to be. Although he was committed to the new South Africa and happy to contribute, he really "wanted to be on the ground with the guys", he told me in 2019 from his sickbed, "doing something important".

He was saddened by globalised, commoditised official perspectives on the arts, and by the sidelining of everything Amandla had tried to build. His music had always explicitly been his weapon and "we are still within an era of struggle".

In June 2019, Gwangwa was struck by a serious illness that left him bedridden. He struggled valiantly towards recovery and was never bitter.

Interviewing him for his forthcoming biography, I asked him what he was proudest of. "Amandla. Because it involved all the things in music that excited me the most, and gave me the opportunity to bring them together ... for the most important reason possible: it

was for the people." *Hamba Kahle umkhonto* (spear). 🗡️

This article first appeared on *The Conversation*.



President Cyril Ramaphosa expressed his deep sadness at the passing of award-winning jazz musician, Jonas Gwangwa, on Saturday, 23 January 2021.

Aged 83, the esteemed member of the Order of Ikhamanga was a globally recognised and awarded composer, arranger, producer and jazz trombonist.

In a statement, President Ramaphosa said his thoughts and prayers were with Gwangwa's family, friends, colleagues, comrades and followers around South Africa, the continent and the world.

"A giant of our revolutionary cultural movement and our democratic creative industries has been called to rest; the trombone that boomed with boldness and bravery, and equally warmed our hearts with mellow melody has lost its life force.

"Jonas Gwangwa ascends to our great orchestra of musical ancestors, whose creative genius and dedication to the freedom of all South Africans inspired millions in our country and mobilised the international community against the apartheid system. As we mourn the loss of many precious lives around us, we pray also that the soul of Jonas Gwangwa will rest in peace," President Ramaphosa said.

The citation for Gwangwa's National Order, which he received in 2010, recalls how this South African paragon enthralled audiences around the world with his artistry as a composer and all-around creative genius.

For over 30 years, he travelled the world as an exile, collecting accolades wherever he went.

Ntate Gwangwa narrowly escaped death in 1985, when his home was blown up by the apartheid security forces.

A product of the turbulent but musically significant 1950s, he emerged from the humble environs of Orlando East in Soweto.

He delighted audiences in Sophiatown until it became illegal for black people to congregate and South African musicians were jailed merely for practising their craft. In spite of the restrictions, he established and played with virtually every important band of the era, and icons such as Kippie Moeketsi, Abdullah Ibrahim, Johnny Gertze and Makhaya Ntshoko.

Jonas Gwangwa was also a compatriot of famous musicians, including Ahmad Jamal, Herb Alpert, Hugh Masekela, Miriam Makeba and Caiphus Semenya. [SAnews.gov.za](http://SAnews.gov.za)



Chapman's Peak Drive on the Atlantic Coast between Hout Bay and Noordhoek in the Cape Peninsula is one of the most spectacular marine drives in the world. Initially constructed during the First World War, this 9-km route with its 114 curves, skirts Chapman's Peak, the 593-m high southerly extension of Constantia Berg, and follows the rocky coastline to unfold breathtaking views in both directions.





# Remembering Sibongile Khumalo: South Africa's divine diva

In a world of great voices, hers was a truly great South African voice. In its tonal beauty and through the wide repertoire to which she applied it, Khumalo's voice represented everyone.

By Christine Lucia  
Extraordinary Professor, Stellenbosch University

The passing of Sibongile Khumalo at the far, far too young age of 63 was a body blow. Khumalo epitomised “the new South Africa”, as it was born and as it matured. She sang in every style – from *Carmen* to *UShaka* – with equal accuracy, generosity and *joie de vivre*, making everything “popular” to millions of people without ever sacrificing vocal or musical professionalism.

This was one of her greatest gifts, that she made a place for everyone with her voice, a golden, melting voice that made all, young and old, rich and poor, professors and farmers, feel “at home”.

To paraphrase the closing text of the *Alto Rhapsody*: “If there is on your psaltery, Father of love, one voice our ears can hear, then refresh our hearts! Open our clouded gaze to the thousand springs next to us who thirst in the wilderness”.

In a world of great voices, hers was a truly great South African voice. In its tonal beauty and through the wide repertoire to which she applied it, Khumalo's voice represented everyone.

## From choral to classical to jazz

Khumalo found a place for classical music junkies with a glorious, tremulous rendition of Brahms's *Alto Rhapsody*.

She made a place for indigenous choral music, with which she was well acquainted since childhood through many choirs and choral competitions and above all through her father, Music Professor Khabi Mngoma, and his inimitable Ionian Male Choir. Her unique solo renderings of choral songs, in beautiful arrangements, include John Knox Bokwe's *Plea for Africa*, Joshua Pulumo Mohapeloa's *U Ea Kae*, BPJ Tyamazshe's *Isithandwa Sam* and Michael Moerane's gauntly tragic *Della*.

She made a place for herself with overwhelming success even in the highly populated area of jazz singing and in a land of great female jazz singers, with numbers such as Strike Vilakazi's *Meadowlands*, Todd Matshikiza's *Back of the Moon* and Winston Mankunku's *Yakhal'inkomo* – which she sings in her own distinctive style and fuses into a unique vocal medley, on this recording.

Above all, Khumalo did more than any other professional singer of her time to bring African traditional music into the public ear and

the popular imagination, onto radio, television and recordings, and into the concert hall.

Again, with the help of magnificent arrangers and composers, she performed and recorded the songs of Princess Constance Magogo KaDinuzulu, which can be heard on tracks five to 12 of one of her most “classic” albums, *Sibongile Khumalo*.

## Her life

Sibongile Khumalo (née Mngoma) was born in Soweto in 1957, the daughter of Khabi and Grace Mngoma. Her father was Professor of Music at the University of Zululand and one of the great conductors and vocal coaches of his generation. He gave Khumalo her first voice lessons.

She qualified at the universities of Zululand and the Witwatersrand in both Music and Personnel Management. She went on to have a distinguished career as a singer as well as an arts advocate and member of numerous national arts committees.

She sang at Nelson Mandela's inauguration as South Africa's President in 1994 and in 2008, she was awarded the Silver Order of Ikhamanga by the President.

Above all, Khumalo did more than any other professional singer of her time to bring African traditional music into the public ear and the popular imagination, onto radio, television and recordings, and into the concert hall.

Khumalo performed internationally with a number of orchestras and jazz bands.

Among her most memorable albums are *Ancient Evenings* (1996), *Live at the Market Theatre* (1998), *Sibongile Khumalo* (2005), *Sibongile's Greatest Hits* (2006), *Sibongile Khumalo Live* (2009) and *Breath of Life* (2016).

### Her voice

Khumalo's voice was officially mezzo but she commanded an enormous range, both in pitch and expression. She could become a soprano and a contralto, at will, and explore profound vocal contrasts.

No other professional singer, for example, has captured the husky, throaty low register of Zulu *umakweyana* and *ugubhu* bow singers. Perhaps the reason for this is that she heard Princess Magogo herself perform, at her homestead in Nongoma, when she was about 13. As she described it in the sleeve notes of *Sibongile Khumalo*:

"My dad made me sit at her feet to listen to her play *ugubhu* and sing. At the time it did not make sense, but I had to obey. I thought he was being very unkind to me because all the other children were out in the yard playing. It must have been destiny. In my professional years the music came back and it began to make sense."

She also described how South African playwright and film producer Duma Ndlovu, who had been in exile for many years, challenged her to include this material in her repertoire and she took the bait.

She approached the South African Music Rights Organisation to have the music commissioned and they approached Professor Mzilikazi Khumalo, who arranged eight songs from Magogo's very extensive repertoire, and Professor Peter Klatzow, who first created a piano accompaniment and later orchestrated the song cycle.

Khumalo made everyone love her – no mean feat in the world of singers, especially opera singers. She was a prima donna, although not in temperament, and was most certainly South Africa's "diva". 🇿🇦

This article first appeared on *The Conversation*.



President Cyril Ramaphosa paid tribute to jazz and opera musician, Dr Sibongile Khumalo, for advocating for the rights of performing arts, women, as well as human rights.

Khumalo, an esteemed member of the Order of Ikhamanga, passed away on Thursday, 28 January 2021, at the age of 63.

"This is a moment of great sadness for all of us who were mesmerised and moved by the power, sensuality and improvisation of Khumalo's unique voice.

"Not only was she an unmistakable voice on concert stages around our country and the world, but she was a voice of advocacy for the performing arts, for the rights and place of women in our society, and for human rights at large.

"As a music academic, she was also a voice of instruction and inspiration to new generations of artists who had the privilege of learning from a performer who was at the pinnacle of her career. We will miss her greatly," the President said.

The Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture, Nathi Mthethwa, expressed his deepest sympathies to the family, friends and fans of Khumalo.

"Khumalo was an ambassador of our heritage. A musical genius who enchanted diverse audiences all over South Africa and beyond. She will eternally be remembered for her repertory, which was similarly eclectic.

"She was a musical maestro who made it her life's purpose to tell the story of our people through music. She left a legacy that will forever go down the annals of history," Minister Mthethwa said.

"Most notably, she was awarded the Order of Ikhamanga in 2008, a South African honour that is granted by the President of South Africa for achievements in arts, culture, literature, music, journalism and sport.

"Khumalo was so passionate about music and heritage that at the age of 14, she knew she wanted to be an opera singer. Due to the lack of opportunities for people of colour at the time, she decided to teach music instead, going on to complete a Bachelor of Arts in Music at the University of Zululand and obtaining a Bachelor of Arts Honours from the University of the Witwatersrand," the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture said.

Furthermore, she concentrated on the musical heritage of the Zulu, Sotho and Tsonga people.

"The department would like to extend its deepest sympathies to the family, friends and fans of the late Dr Sibongile Khumalo. May her soul rest in peace." SAnews.gov.za





# CAPE TOWN

## art deco



# Delving into Cape Town's Art Deco heritage

Art Deco presented a new type of architectural language. It intended to represent an anti-traditional elegance, symbolised by wealth and sophistication and a modernist aesthetic.

By Farah Khalfe  
University of Cape Town

On Thursday, 14 January 2021, Summer School attendees were treated to an insightful lecture on Cape Town's Art Deco heritage, presented by Dr André van Graan – a heritage architect and the former Head of Architectural Technology and Interior Design at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Dr Van Graan's particular interest lies within the development of architecture in the 20th century, specifically Art Deco architecture, and his PhD thesis explored the way architecture developed around Cape Town from 1918 to 1948.

### What is Art Deco?

But what exactly is Art Deco? And who were the architects responsible for making it such a prominent and distinctive building style?

Art Deco (also known as *style moderne*) is an architectural movement that developed in France in the 1920s just after the First World War. It was first debuted in Paris at the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts, and from there developed into a major architectural style in the United States and Western Europe.

Art Deco presented a new type of architectural language. It intended to represent an anti-traditional elegance, symbolised by wealth and sophistication and a modernist aesthetic.

"The style was disruptive and at odds with the prevailing – and extremely conservative – approach."

The distinguishing features of Art Deco can be found in its simplicity. Simple, clean lines; geometric shapes; and stylised forms. "It has a streamlined, symmetrical appearance, and can

be characterised by a sense of movement," said Van Graan.

The movement made its way to Cape Town in the 1930s. The style was disruptive and at odds with the prevailing – and extremely conservative – approach of the practitioners at the Cape Institute for Architecture. Instead, Art Deco architects were taking inspiration from worldly developments, natural phenomena and archaeological discoveries.

Across the city, office buildings, apartment blocks, cinemas and petrol stations were adopting the new style.

### Cultural impact

Van Graan introduced his breakdown of Cape Town's Art Deco heritage by starting with what he calls "entertainment buildings". He mentioned the former Plaza Cinema, which is located on the corner of what is today St George's Mall and Waterkant Street.



"When you look at it from the outside, you can see it very much has elements of Art Deco," he said.

"There is this kind of classical language; it has a central section with directed bays. There is curving and a distinctive corner, and then a sense of movement at the top."

He continued: "When we look inside, in the foyer, we can see ... Art Deco elements. It had gilded ceiling then stiff ceiling, playing into the idea of stiff forms. Then there was the decorative patterning on the walls, the Art Deco carpeting and decoration on the end of the columns."

When it comes to commercial structures, Van Graan pointed to the work of Paarl-based architects Louw & Louw on the Santam building in the CBD. Situated on the corner of Wale and Burg streets, the building functioned as the headquarters of Santam Insurance and represented the emergence of Afrikaner culture into the commercial world.

"Prior to this, they were always seen as a farming community, but with the rise of Afrikaner nationalism, there was more engagement with and assimilation into the city.

"What's interesting about this building, as the first of its kind in Cape Town, is that the language it adopted is Art Deco, as opposed to a modernist architecture."

This was a surprising move from architect Wynand Louw, who was known for his signature Cape-Dutch style on the many buildings he completed in Paarl.

"Here, however, he expands into this American Art Deco tradition," said Van Graan.

"My view on this is that he was avoiding anything that was vaguely British. And the idea is that this sort of vertical Art Deco that he was implying here was very much American. And, of course, we know the Americans won the [American] War of Independence, so they would set a good precedent as a language."

The bar reliefs seen at the top of the building relate to farming activities and are another symbol representing the emergence of Afrikaner culture into industry.

Then there was renowned architect Herbert Baker, who represented the antithesis of what Art Deco stood for. Much like his older colleagues, Baker believed that modern architecture, both in terms of the modernist movement and Art Deco, should be rejected. This illustrates the barriers Art Deco was up against, as well as the barriers it was breaking down in the process.

Greenmarket Square is another location where Art Deco is prominent. However, in many of the residential buildings there is evidence of a mixed architectural language between an Edwardian Classical style and Art Deco elements.

"If you look at the projecting balconies, you'll know those details are not classical, they are Art Deco. So, the overall language is classical, yet the details are Art Deco."

#### Art Deco adaptations

Scottish-born architect WH Grant relocated to Cape Town in the late 1920s, where he adopted Art Deco after numerous transitional architectural phases. One of his most notable works is the Commercial Union building in Greenmarket Square. The building has 10 storeys and is walled with travertine stone. Black marble skirting and golden tone mosaic form part of the interior.

On the outside, however, there is a particular focus on verticality. Decorative elements, which draw on the patterns of the Aztecs and the Incas, are notable features of the Art Deco style. The elements, although eye-catching, are added high up on the building, forcing you to look up, creating a sense of height, significance and movement.

Interestingly, the Commercial Union building once again reinforced the notion of Art Deco populating the city through insurance buildings – a rather unexpected pairing. However, Van Graan theorised that while banks had to uphold a more conservative image, insurance companies were focussed on growth and the future.

"We don't insure the past or the present – we insure the future in an uncertain time. So, the language it adopted was this modern, futuristic form. That's one of the reasons why I believe insurance buildings so happily adopted Art Deco," he said.

Lastly, Van Graan pointed out what he believed to be "the jewel of Art Deco in Cape Town" – the Old Mutual building. It is grand: The building has one of the longest granite friezes in the world, which stretches around three sides of the building. Designed by architects Louw & Louw, in association with Fred Glennie, the building was intended to be a regal and impressive space, and for many years, was considered the tallest building in South Africa.

Glennie, who trained with Baker, was also an architect who came from an older, traditional background of arts and crafts, and yet he adopted modernism after he travelled to America and was exposed to Art Deco.

There was absolutely no expense spared in terms of the granite on the façade and the decorative elements," said Van Graan.

Bronze windows, pink marble and black granite all contribute to the monumental atmosphere of the space. In addition, the emphasis on verticality is what gives the building its rich feel.

#### End of an era

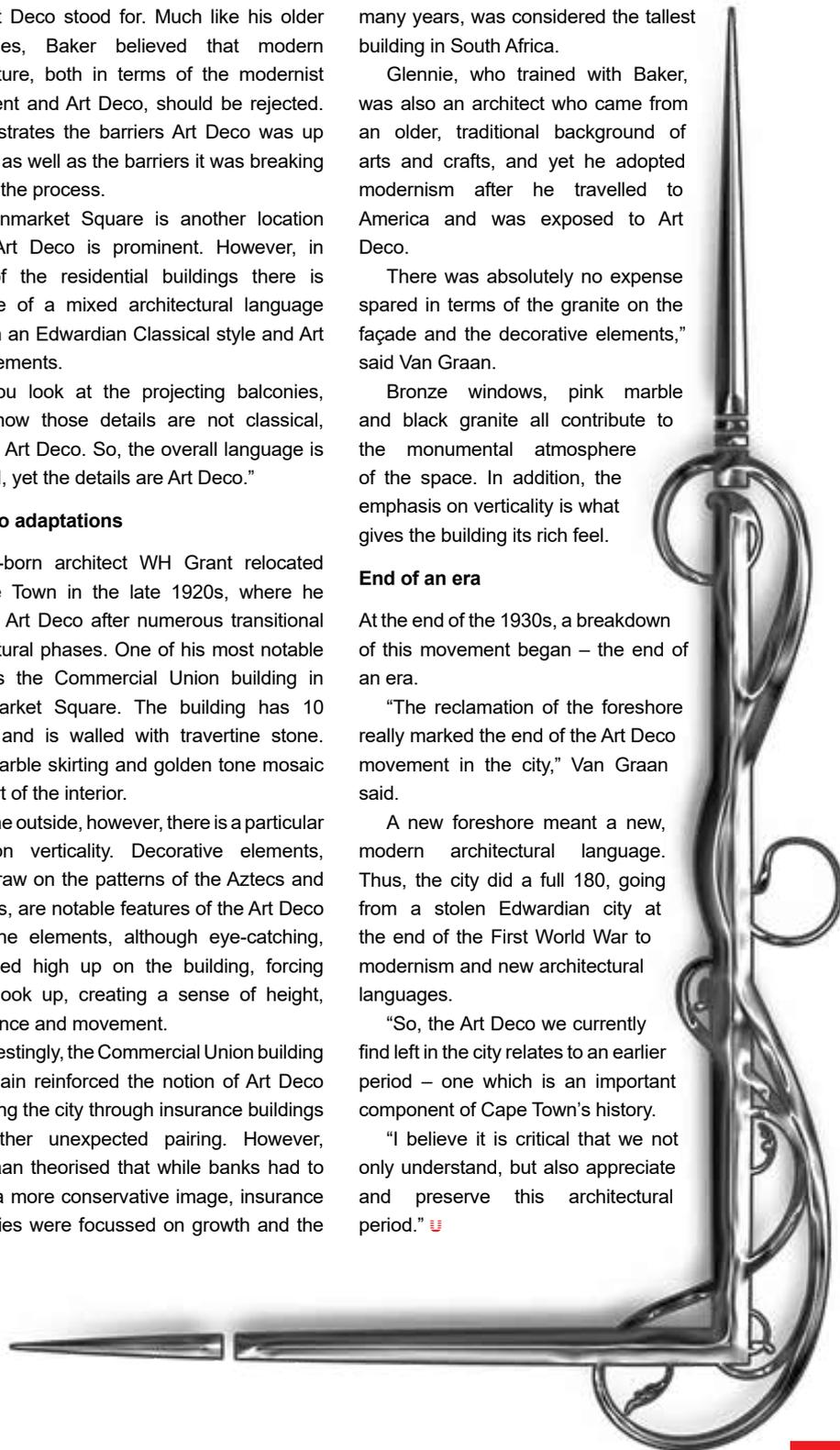
At the end of the 1930s, a breakdown of this movement began – the end of an era.

"The reclamation of the foreshore really marked the end of the Art Deco movement in the city," Van Graan said.

A new foreshore meant a new, modern architectural language. Thus, the city did a full 180, going from a stolen Edwardian city at the end of the First World War to modernism and new architectural languages.

"So, the Art Deco we currently find left in the city relates to an earlier period – one which is an important component of Cape Town's history.

"I believe it is critical that we not only understand, but also appreciate and preserve this architectural period." 📖





Early in February 2021, the Augrabies Falls in the Augrabies National Park near Kakamas in the Northern Cape were in full flood, living up to its name: "Place of Great Noise". The falls, which lie on the Orange River, the largest river in South Africa, are about 60 metres high and awe-inspiring when the river is in flood. The gorge below the falls averages about 240 m deep and runs for 18 kilometres. The gorge provides an impressive example of erosion into a granitic basement.



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