

UBUNTU NEWSFLASH



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WEEKLY ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER * THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & COOPERATION

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SUPPORT AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA, SAYS PRESIDENT



President Ramaphosa made the clarion call at the 13th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union on the AfCFTA that he presided over on Saturday, 5 December 2020.

African Union Chairperson, President Cyril Ramaphosa, has rallied for support of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which comes into operation in January 2021.

“Our continent is one of the fastest growing markets in the world with a projection of more than a billion consumers.

“The AfCFTA brings with it the promise of new beginnings and increased opportunities for our continent and its people.

“We reaffirm our optimism that the AfCFTA will leverage on these opportunities by attracting more foreign direct investment and expedite the implementation of post-COVID-19 economic recovery plans,” he said.

President Ramaphosa made the clarion call at the 13th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union on the AfCFTA that he presided over on Saturday.]



The operationalisation of the AfCFTA is a historic milestone that brings together all 55 member states of the AU covering a market of more than 1.2 billion people and aims to accelerate intra-African trade and boost Africa’s trading position in the global market.

At its core is a developmental approach that seeks to liberalise trade, build value chains and overcome the infrastructure deficit on the continent.

For the AfCFTA to succeed, the President highlighted that the continent must address the political and socio-economic challenges that face the continent.

“We have to address issues of poverty, inequality and underdevelopment. We have to address issues of security and instability, which are causing untold suffering for the African people and holding us back from realising our full potential.

“We have to renew our collective commitment to realising the aspirations of Agenda 2063, and not waver in our resolve to meet the Sustainable Development Goals by the end of this decade,” he said.

With plans for the operationalisation of the AfCFTA momentarily disrupted by the devastating coronavirus pandemic, President Ramaphosa urged the continent to remain united in implementing the AfCFTA while battling the pandemic.

“As we continue to battle this public health crisis, we are determined to remain firmly on the path of progress. In confronting this pandemic, we came together as never before.

“We have shown just what we Africans are capable of achieving when we stand united.

“Let us in the same spirit of unity and solidarity take forward the operationalisation of the AfCFTA and drive the post-pandemic economic recovery effort,” said the President. – SAnews.gov.za

PRESIDENT SADDENED BY PASSING OF AMBASSADOR LENIN SHOPE

President Cyril Ramaphosa has expressed his sadness at the recent passing of South Africa’s Ambassador to Senegal His Excellency Lenin Magigwane Shope. Ambassador Shope passed away at his official residence in Dakar, Senegal, last week.



President Ramaphosa offered his sincere condolences to Ambassador Shope’s mother, Ma Gertude Shope, a struggle stalwart who spent many years in exile, became President of the ANC Women’s League and served as a member of South Africa’s first democratic Parliament.

In a statement on 5 December 2020, the Presidency said President Ramaphosa’s thoughts were also with Ambassador Shope’s siblings, Ms Lyndall Shope-Mafole, and South African Ambassador to Cuba, Ms Thaninga Shope-Linney. Their father was the late trade unionist, freedom fighter and revolutionary intellectual Mark Shope.

Ambassador Lenin Shope represented South Africa in Cuba during a diplomatic career in which he also served as Head of Mission in Botswana, Italy and Australia. He was educated in Cuba from 1976 and trained as an engineer at the Technological University of Havana from 1982 to 1986.

President Ramaphosa said: “Our country and one of our distinguished revolutionary families have lost a son who dedicated himself to attaining our freedom and establishing and deepening the democratic South Africa’s relations with our global partners.

“His early life in Cuba shaped the world view and passion with which Ambassador Shope advanced South Africa’s interests, and especially the betterment of the lives of ordinary South Africa, through his diplomatic career.

“We therefore share this loss with the Government and people of Cuba who adopted the young Lenin Shope as one of their own and gifted South Africa with a disciplined cadre and outstanding patriot.”

SA PRESIDES OVER HIGH-LEVEL DEBATE ON UN-AU COOPERATION



African
Union



South Africa’s current term of the Security Council focussed on preventing and resolving conflicts on the African continent, advancing the Women Peace and Security Agenda and the promotion of

the pacifist settlement of disputes as well as conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

On Friday, 4 December 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa presided over a United Nations (UN) high-level debate on “cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organisations with a specific focus on the UN and the African Union (AU)”.

South Africa hosted the high-level debate as part of its Presidency of the UN Security Council (UNSC). This role draws to a close at the end of December.

During the event, UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, and AU Commission Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat, highlighted their respective interventions for cooperation between the UN and the AU in seeking peace and security solutions in Africa.

In line with the theme of the debate, heads of state and government of African countries currently on the agenda on the UNSC set out their experiences in terms on the UNSC’s maintenance of peace and security on the continent. These countries include the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Mali and Libya.

During this month, South Africa will focus on strengthening UN-AU cooperation and emphasising the importance of a proactive approach to the maintenance of international peace and security through greater attention to preventative diplomacy mechanisms and post-conflict reconstruction and development.

South Africa’s current term of the Security Council focussed on preventing and resolving conflicts on the African continent, advancing the Women Peace and Security Agenda and the promotion of the pacifist settlement of disputes as well as conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

“Serving on the UNSC has provided South Africa with an opportunity to meaningfully contribute towards the AU’s goal of ending conflicts and silencing the guns on the continent by 2020, specifically during this year where we concurrently chair the AU,” said The Presidency. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

SOUTH AFRICA DONATES ELECTORAL MATERIAL TO THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC



The first round of Presidential and Legislative elections are scheduled to be held on 27 December 2020.

The South African Government is donating electoral material to the Government of the Central African Republic (CAR) aimed at assisting the National Elections Authority of the CAR with the forthcoming elections in that country.

The donation follows a request for assistance made by President Faustin-Archange Touadéra to President Cyril Ramaphosa during a Working Visit to South Africa in March 2020.

The electoral material was procured by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) of South Africa with funding from the African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund (ARF). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has donated additional materials and provided logistical support.

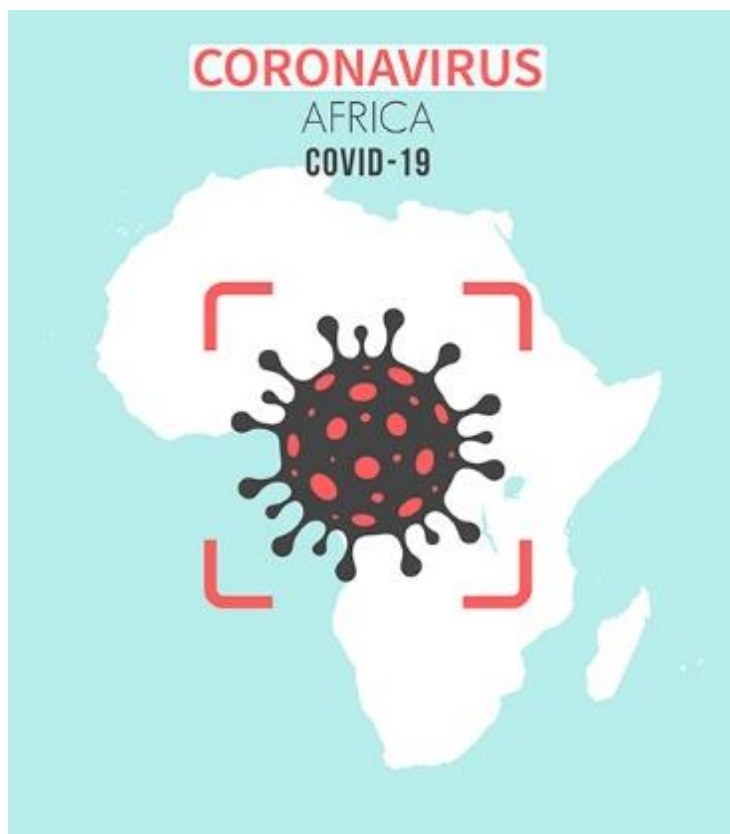
The South African Government commends the leaders of the CAR, including leaders of political parties and former armed groups, for participating in the electoral process.

The South African Government further commends neighbouring countries of the CAR, regional leaders, the Economic Community of Central African States, the African Union and the UN for their continued support to the CAR in its pursuit of peace, stability and economic prosperity.

PRESIDENT RALLIES SUPPORT AS AFRICA RECOVERS FROM COVID-19

President Cyril Ramaphosa says African countries will continue to need substantial support to

recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.



“We reiterate our call for a comprehensive economic stimulus package for Africa, for a suspension of interest payments on Africa’s external and public debt and for the lifting of all economic sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe and Sudan to allow them to adequately respond to the pandemic.

“It is only through multilateral cooperation that we can overcome this global emergency,” the President said on Thursday, 3 December 2020, in a pre-recorded message delivered virtually at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly Special Session on the Coronavirus pandemic. The session was held at the level of heads of state and government.

President Ramaphosa called for equitable access for all to an effective COVID-19 vaccine.

“To ensure that there is equitable access for all to an effective vaccine, we call on UN member states to work with the World Health Organisation on the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator and the COVAX Facility.”

The Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-Accelerator) is the proven, up-and-running, global collaboration accelerating the development, production and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments and vaccines.

“In the spirit of solidarity and cooperation, let us continue to work together to overcome this crisis and build a better, safer,

more equitable, peaceful and prosperous world.

“We must continue to drive a holistic response to COVID-19, which recognises the relationship between health, social, economic and environmental measures.”

The President said the pandemic must not detract from the commitment to both the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

As South Africa marks 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children, President Ramaphosa said gender equality must be placed at the forefront of recovery efforts.

Africa’s efforts to deal with COVID-19

The continent, led by the African Union (AU), has established a COVID-19 Response Fund to contain the pandemic in member States and enable their economies to recover.

“As the African continent, we have driven a deliberate, targeted and coordinated response to COVID-19.

“The AU appointed several special envoys to solicit concrete support for the continental effort, as pledged by the G20, the European Union and international financial institutions,” President Ramaphosa said.

The continent launched the African Medical Supplies Platform to facilitate access for all African countries to critical equipment and supplies.

“We have also established a COVID-19 African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team to ensure that African countries are able to access and distribute affordable and effective vaccines without delay.

“In addition, an African Green Stimulus Programme is being developed to ensure our economic recovery takes place in a more sustainable manner,” President Ramaphosa said. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

EFFORTS TO ENSURE ACCESS TO COVID-19 VACCINE ON TRACK

With many initiatives around the world to speed up the development of a COVID-19 vaccine, President Cyril Ramaphosa has assured South Africans that government is working with its partners to ensure all countries have access to the vaccine.



“We continue to collaborate with our partners in the international community to ensure that all countries have access to an effective and affordable vaccine,” the President said.

He was addressing the nation on Thursday, 3 December 2020, on the country’s risk-adjusted response to the Coronavirus pandemic. The address followed a special sitting of Cabinet, which considered recommendations of the National Coronavirus Command Council (NCCC) meeting.

“We are participating in the World Health Organisation’s COVID-19 Global Vaccine Access Facility – known as the COVAX Facility – which aims to pool resources and share vaccine development risk, and thus ensure equitable access to vaccines when they become available,” President Ramaphosa said.

The Solidarity Fund will be making the initial contribution of R327 million towards the vaccine procurement on behalf of the country.

“We are also encouraged by the promising results from three trials of candidate vaccines, which have shown efficacy levels of between 70% and 95%.

“We await confirmation from medicine regulators that these vaccines are safe, effective and suitable for our needs,” President Ramaphosa said.

The South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) will review the approval applications when received from the developers and authorise their use.

The President warned that until a vaccine is developed and distributed, “we remain our own best protection against COVID-19”.

Festive season

As the festive season is approaching, the President reminded South Africans to be cautious and continue to regularly wash or sanitise their hands, observe social distancing and avoid large gatherings and indoor spaces where ventilation is poor.

“Travel carries great risks, which we can be reduced by avoiding unnecessary travel. We can also reduce infection risk by wearing a mask in public transport, keeping the vehicle windows open and maintaining prevention measures on arrival.

“The summer season is traditionally a time for social gatherings, attending festivals and events, and socialising at weddings, religious gatherings and in both public and private spaces,” President Ramaphosa said.

He said social gatherings could be “super-spreader” events that carried a huge risk of transmission of the virus.

“Each of us needs to ensure we take precautions to avoid spreading the virus to our families, especially our elders. We should keep gatherings small, have them outside or in well ventilated venues, ensure social distancing and wear masks as much as possible,” President Ramaphosa said.

He reminded every resident in the country to take the appropriate steps to prevent the virus from spreading any further.

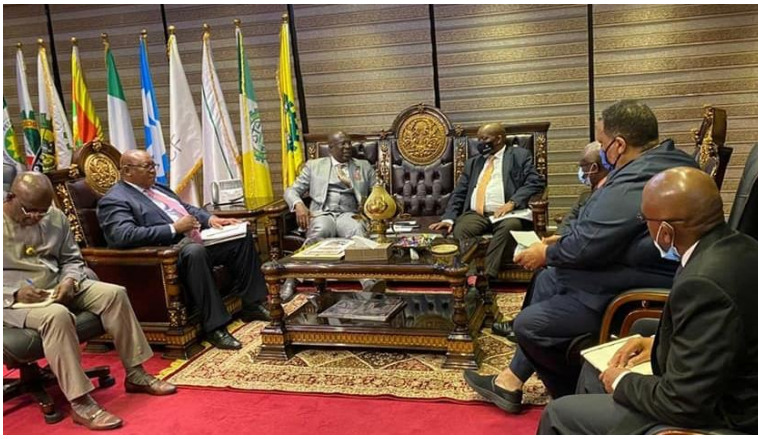
“Just as we did in the early days of the pandemic, let us stand together and let us work together. Just as we know that a second wave is possible, we know too that it is not inevitable.

“So tonight, I am asking you to recommit yourself to this fight. We will get through this period of difficulty, as we did the ones before.” – Source: SAnews.gov.za



WORKING VISIT TO NIGERIA A SUCCESS

The visit sought to take advantage of, and strengthen the human and political and economic relationships between the two countries.



Mineral Resources and Energy Minister, Gwede Mantashe has concluded a successful Working Visit to Nigeria. The Minister visited the West African country to meet with his Nigerian counterpart, Chief Timipre Sylva, Minister of State for Petroleum Resources in Abuja.

“This was an important and successful visit that will impact positively on investment between our countries, and also assist our government’s commitment to ensure security of energy in South Africa,” said the Minister in a statement on 5 December 2020.

The visit sought to take advantage of, and strengthen the human and political and economic relationships between the two countries. This as the South African Government

recognises the significance of the relationship it has with Nigeria and the potential impact it could bear on the advancement of the two countries respectively, and on the continent as a whole.

“Among the concrete expressions of the relationship is the need for both countries to trade and to invest in each other’s economies, by tapping into their existing capacities and capabilities. Consequently, discussions focussed on the oil and gas sectors and the extent to which these can benefit South Africa and Nigeria. Already, Nigeria is a substantial supplier of crude oil to South Africa,” said the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy.

Minister Mantashe also paid a courtesy visit to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

GERMAN PHILANTHROPIST INVESTS R500M IN KZN GAME RESERVE LODGE

Community to benefit from creation of 140 jobs at Babanango Game Reserve's Zulu Rock Lodge.



German efficiency continues to meet South African passion and ubuntu through the new lodge at Babanango Game Reserve. Perched high on a crest overlooking more than 22,000ha of picturesque topography, Zulu Rock Lodge was officially opened on 18 November as a new addition to the African Heritage Conservancy (AHC) portfolio.

The story of Babanango Game Reserve, one of the province’s youngest reserves, is one of conservation that brings everyone into the conversation. Given its location in the lands where great Zulu kings once ruled, there is an unmistakable respect for tradition, with the local chiefs playing a full role in discussions around the development.

Community leaders, amaKhosi, as well as municipal managers from both Zululand and Ulundi districts, attended the launch to give the project their blessing. The massive development is fuelled by the support of German

philanthropist Hellmuth Weisser and his wife, Barbara; directed by the creativity of AHC COO Jeff van Staden; and driven by a local community directly benefitting from the creation of more than 140 jobs.

Rehabilitation of these magnificent hills in a previously neglected corner of KwaZulu-Natal is under way, while also providing employment stimulus to the surrounding communities.

“We must say a massive thank you to Hellmuth and to Barbara for what they have done for this community,” Zululand district municipality deputy mayor Mavis Kunene said.

“Eco-tourism provides so many opportunities for our youth and we welcome this latest development.”

All told, the investment from Weisser will be R500 million — a godsend to the community and life-changing for those involved in the AHC project.

There are still another two developments to be completed within the reserve. As one stands on the Zulu Rock balcony, an image of *The Lion King’s* Mufasa and Simba on Pride Rock comes to mind. The land is vast and many discoveries for visitors await.

The plan is to introduce the Big Five over the next two years, with rhino and buffalo already in amongst a plethora of grazers. There are leopards in the area and the arrival of lions rumbling across the hills is much anticipated. Staff are also being taught

the ropes by experienced guides.

“Given the scale of Mr Weisser’s generosity, we could have had a conservation project anywhere in the world,” Van Staden said.

“The fact that we are in this area, which matters so much to me and to so many people here, really fills my heart.”

Van Staden was born in KwaZulu-Natal and his roots are so entrenched in the culture that he was given a Zulu nickname as a young boy.

“Jamludi!” he said, acknowledging the deep sense of community that exists around the entire Babanango Game Reserve property.

Working closely with Van Staden is Eric Buthelezi, a pillar of the community. For Buthelezi, this project and the opportunity it presents for his people has been a near lifelong mission. He cares greatly about the symbiosis between conservation and his people.

“What Mr Weisser has given us as a community is beyond words. Growing up, this area has always had very little and many of our people were neglected,” he said.

“I remember, as a young boy, the effects of apartheid. I remember houses being demolished, and men being taken away and not coming back for a long time,” Buthelezi said.

“To see this transformation of the relationships between black and white in this area is like a dream. We are all South Africans and we are all invested in making this great place work.” – Source: www.thesouthafrican.com

SHAMBALA GLORY: LIMPOPO PRIVATE GAME RESERVE VOTED BEST IN THE WORLD

Shambala Private Game Reserve, in Limpopo, was voted the world’s top luxury private game reserve in the World Travel Awards 2020.



Luxury safari hotspot Shambala Private Game Reserve snapped up the title as the World’s Leading Private Game Reserve in the 2020 World Travel Awards.

South Africa is well known for its superior wildlife experiences and ranks highly as a safari destination, alongside other countries in East Africa which also offer similar experiences.

And this year Shambala Private Game Reserve, in the Limpopo province, snapped up first place on the prestigious annual travel awards' list of the World's Best Luxury Private Game Reserves ahead of three other nominees from the African continent:

- Londolozi Private Game Reserve (in Sabi Sand Game Reserve in Kruger National Park)
- Shamwari Game Reserve (Eastern Cape)
- Wolwedans Dune Lodge & Dune Camp (in Namibia).

The World Travel Awards were launched in 1993, as a way to acknowledge excellence across all sectors of the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors.

Throughout the course of the year, members of the public, as well as experts from within the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors can vote online for the contenders in the various award categories.

Shambala Private Game Reserve, a member of Leading Hotels of the World, is situated on 10 000ha in the Limpopo province, is a two-and-a-half-hour drive from Johannesburg. The reserve is located in the picturesque Waterberg Mountains and is home to a variety of fauna and flora species.

Guests can enjoy the African Bushveld, while given the opportunity to view the Big Five at the reserve. The Waterberg is a malaria-free area, so guests do not need to take malaria precautions when planning trips to Shambala.

"It is indeed a great honour to be recognised by the industry and our guests, and of course, I am standing here on behalf of my team," Shambala Executive Director, Anton Gillis, said at the awards presentation. – Source: www.thesouthafrican.com

NDLOVU YOUTH CHOIR PERFORMS WITH PINK

The Ndlovu Youth Choir's performance with Pink leaves one with all the feels.



The performance was part of UNICEF's exclusive, virtual fundraiser, which took place on 1 December 2020 to celebrate and empower children around the world.

The programme featured changemakers from around the globe and included UNICEF experts, advocates and future leaders who use their voices to support and amplify UNICEF's lifesaving mission. The event showcased the breadth of UNICEF's work, highlighting UNICEF's global response yesterday, today and tomorrow.

"It was an honour to collaborate with the Ndlovu Youth Choir on this new version of *A Million Dreams*. Although we were thousands of miles apart due to the pandemic, we were connected by UNICEF's lifesaving mission of putting children first. Join me in supporting UNICEF by donating to their lifesaving work around the world." Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

BOKS TO FACE SCOTS IN NOVEMBER 2021

The Springboks will travel to Edinburgh to face Scotland on 13 November 2021 in one of their end-of-year Tests in Europe next year.



The Boks are set play the Scots as one of three internationals in Europe, with the other matches scheduled for 6 and 20 November 2021. The identity of the other two opponents on the traditional November tour will be confirmed in due course.

Scotland will host the reigning World Cup champions at Murrayfield, where the home side will try to break an 11-year win drought against the South Africans.

The last time the Springboks lost to Scotland was by 21-17 at Murrayfield on 20 October 2010, with Dan Parks kicking all their points. Since then, the South Africans have won six on the trot against the Scots, including a World Cup pool match in England in 2015, and three Tests in Edinburgh.

In their last meeting in 2018, the Boks edged the match 26-20 mainly due to superior goal-kicking after both sides scored two tries apiece. Handre Pollard – one of the try-scorers with Jesse Kriel the other – added two conversions and three penalty goals, while Elton Jantjies slotted the remaining penalty goal.

The Scottish Rugby Union has launched their tickets for next year's big international meeting with the world champions and the encounter is expected to attract a sell-out crowd. Tickets for the match went on sale on scottishrugby.org recently.

All the fixtures of the Springboks' 2021 end-of-year tour will be confirmed in due course. Source: www.sarugbymag.co.za



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