

EDITORIAL

United now but no medical care

IF WE look back to the time of our political transition from the apartheid era to the democratic country we are now so proud of, there are many historical milestones that contributed to the overall paradigm shift that was necessary to effect real and meaningful change.

One of the most important of these changes came about in the drive to halt the hostilities between the apartheid armed forces and the armed wings of the liberation movements. If we go back in history we see a country at war with itself.

On the one side we had the apartheid security forces that had a formidable conventional warfare capacity augmented by a vast array of undercover and covert security capabilities.

On the other, ranged against the South African Defence force we had the armies of MK and Apla waging a tough guerilla war.

In the period of transition, steps were taken to cease all hostilities and to blend together all combatants in a new national defence force that would defend our democracy.

This was a triumph for peace and justice in our land. So it is very upsetting to hear that a R200m tender dispute has led to a position where many of our ex-military personnel are not being afforded the medical treatment they need.

Surely, we should by now be in a position where all ex-combatants are being well looked after? The South African National Military Veterans Association which is the umbrella body charged with providing people with the correct support in terms of not only their pensions but also their medical needs must quickly step in and ensure the situation is rectified.

Commonwealth Games on track

CONFIRMATION from Sports Minister Fikile Mbalula and Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) president Louise Martin that the 2022 Games to be hosted by Durban is still on track, will help allay fears that the coastal city is on the verge of losing its hosting rights.

While the games do not have the same appeal and allure of the Olympic Games, it would still be a major boost for tourism and job creation in the city and province.

It is therefore imperative that the city gets its act together regarding its commitments to ensuring the event is a resounding success.

Of immediate urgency is the appointment of a local organising committee (LOC) who will take immediate charge of all organisational aspects. South Africa's reputation for the successful hosting of global events like the soccer, cricket and rugby world cups is lauded globally.

Given the current negative perceptions of our country in some quarters, it is imperative that the organisation of the Durban games is not jeopardised.

As the joint custodians of the games, the eThekweni metro and Sasoc have a huge responsibility in ensuring its success.

WISE WORDS

"Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud." - Maya Angelou

THE NEW AGE

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HIGH ON RELIGION: Muslim pilgrims gather on Mount Mercy on the plains of Arafat during the annual hajj pilgrimage, outside the holy city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia yesterday. PICTURE: REUTERS

South Africa's role in the Group of 20

Greater drive for policy beneficial to developing countries, particularly in Africa

Analysis

MAITE NKOANA- MASHABANE

THE recent summit of the Group of 20 (G20) in China placed emphasis on the urgent need to increase multilateral cooperation for the recovery of the global economy, to bring stability to the global financial system, promote long-term sustainable growth and strengthen global economic governance.

As South Africa's economic prosperity is linked to the global economy, it is important for our country to advance its national economic interests within the G20 framework.

South Africa further seeks to use its participation in the G20 to promote and strengthen the interests of Africa, on the understanding that if managed carefully, the G20 presents meaningful opportunities for advancing much-needed global governance reforms and orientating the international development agenda.

While South Africa is appreciative of the leadership the G20 has demonstrated in helping to achieve progress in multilateral institutions, we maintain the G20 is not a substitute for the UN, but should support and add value to what is being done within the UN context.

Apart from championing the interests of our continent and the broader developing world, South Africa's engagement within the G20 is to advance the objectives of our National Development Plan (NDP). Our work in the group is underpinned by our national priorities, including reducing inequality, eliminating poverty and addressing unemployment.

At the summit, President Jacob Zuma said industrialisation, infrastructure development, intra-Africa trade and curbing illicit financial flows are crucial goals for the development of Africa as stipulated in Agenda 2063.

In this regard, South Africa's proposal that illicit financial flows from trade mispricing be

KEY POINTS

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studied by the World Trade Organisation was accepted. If addressed, this has the potential to unlock millions of dollars that could be used by African governments to the implementation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and their development programmes.

As co-chair of the G20 development working group, we therefore seek to advance issues key

to fast-tracking the development of low income countries, particularly those in Sub-Saharan Africa. A noteworthy initiative introduced by the Chinese G20 presidency is for the group to support industrialisation in Africa and least developed countries, as well as a G20 action plan in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development.

In this context, South Africa sought to advance the African Union's priorities by coordinating closely with African observers in G20 meetings, such as the African Union chair and the New Partnership for Africa's Development chair in an effort to strengthen the voice of Africa within the G20.

Furthermore, South Africa also continues to assess approaches to influence multilateral development banks to assist with the financing and preparation of transformational regional infrastructure projects, especially green-field energy projects. In the area of governance reform in the International Monetary Fund (IMF), we have consistently advocated for improving the voice of sub-Saharan Africa in the IMF board of executive directors. In this regard, South Africa will continue to call for a third chair to be awarded to sub-Saharan Africa in the IMF board.

Peace and development are mutually reinforcing. As there cannot be development without peace, nor peace without development, the promotion of a peaceful and prosperous world necessitates that both the economic and security challenges confronting the globe receive equal attention.

A prosperous and peaceful Africa and world must be based on inclusive growth and sustainable development. Our efforts of promoting global economic growth and stability must therefore be viewed from this perspective. Maite Nkoana-Mashabane is the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation.

Kinross mine disaster a reminder that safety comes before profit

Analysis

THEMBILE NDABENI

KINROSS is a small mining town in Mpumalanga with four gold mines in the region. It was named after Kinross in Scotland. But there is a further significance that clings to this town, and which will be forever remembered in South African mining history.

As this year marks the 30th anniversary of the Kinross mine disaster on September 16, 1986, it is appropriate to address this catastrophe, which was the worst mining disaster in South Africa since 1946.

An underground fire started by an acetylene tank led to the death of 177 mine workers and 235 injured. Shortly before the disaster, the National Union of Mineworkers raised the alarm about the safety conditions at these mines.

Union leader at the time, Cyril Ramaphosa insisted that the disaster could have been avoided and lamented that "we are obviously back to the dark ages of mining".

An unnamed British citizen working there at the time observed that "they didn't stand a chance they were trapped by the smoke".

A report from the company pointed to the recklessness and unpreparedness of the mine

and the consequences of negligence when "the fire spread rapidly".

A spokesperson from the mine confirmed "many of those killed had little chance of escaping".

After the disaster at Kinross, the union decried the low safety standards and occupational health at the mines and organised a protest, which on October 1, 1986, became one of the largest and most determined protests staged in the country. Deeply touched by the mine disaster the workers simply stayed away from work while others held memorial services to mourn the dead.

The Kinross mine disaster is of significance as it took place precisely 30 years after the historic May Day celebrations. The broader struggle was aimed to achieve better working conditions. A labour historian confirmed that "it was the dawning of the day when the term 'dignity of labour' meant something".

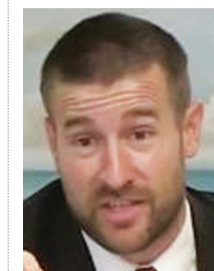
It's surprising that after 30 years of putting into place safety measures for black and white workers and safeguarding the dignity of workers, that some workers could die in that reckless way.

The consequences were grievous as families lost husbands, parents, or even the sole breadwinners. Who would cater for those families because there was no welfare for black miners at that time?

Workers in South Africa undeniably suffered under the ill-treatment of twin conditions of brutality of capitalism and apartheid. That these were identical or fraternal depend where the workers were born. In the case of South Africa, these twins are today practically, or seemingly identical, though they try to be less identical as they grow up.

White workers would have refrained from working under such horrible, hazardous and dangerous conditions, (remembering the suffering of children in England during the Industrial Revolution). These are some of the reasons that led to the development of the phrase "racial capitalism".

It basically boiled down to the underlying



"If he was going to ban me, he would have done it months ago, he is just stringing those sodomites along." - Controversial pastor Steven Anderson commenting on Home Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba



"The people of Gauteng are urged to respect these water restrictions and to ensure they use water sparingly at all times." - Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Des van Rooyen



"The government is looking at the introduction of free undergraduate education for the poor and funding for the entire tertiary education system." - Deputy Minister of Higher Education Mduzizi Manana



September 12, 1989

ADVOCATE Anton Lubowski, 37, secretary-general of the South West African People's Organisation (Swapo), was shot dead at close range with an AK47 rifle outside his home in Windhoek, South West Africa (now Namibia) on September 12, 1989.

The Civil Cooperation Bureau (CCB) was held responsible for the assassination. The accusations levelled against the CCB were confirmed by judge Harold Levy of the Namibian Supreme Court when he concluded that the CCB conspired to murder Lubowski.

Levy's report named as accomplices CCB members Joe Verster, Staal Burger, Abraham "Slang" van Zyl, Calla Botha, Leon "Chappie" Maree, Johan Niemoller junior, Capt Wouter Basson (aka Christo Britz), Ferdi Barnard and Charles Wildschudt (formerly Neelse).

Levy's report was corroborated by a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report, which dismissed claims made by Gen Magnus Malan that Lubowski was a paid informant for the South African Military Intelligence. - www.sahistory.org.za



factors that mining companies only aimed to make profit while not valuing their workers because they were black.

The information from the British miner and the mine owners spokesperson justified what Ramaphosa at the time said in respect of the whole perspective on the carelessness involved. They belonged to a nation of a discriminated race. This was the principal reason why the workers stayed away from work and held memorial services.

By staying away it demonstrated their discontent and plight about their working conditions. Memorial services were intended for mourning the death of the fallen comrades.

After 30 years there is a need to gain clarity whether those workers' families received compensation.

The best way of honouring those fallen workers is to make sure that workers are treated with dignity and to prevent a repeat of the Kinross mine disaster, which is only possible by applying the principle, "safety before profit".

Thembile Ndabeni is a freelance writer focusing on political economy