

Johannesburg CBD and Cape Town, working class people (mainly black) are pushed further into shanty-towns and the abandoned city, just as they were in the apartheid era.

Another report released by StatsSA, The Social Profile of Youth: 2009-2014, paints a very scary picture of the prospects of black youth in the labour market.

This report is particularly important to me as a young black person about to graduate from university. According to the report, it is twice as difficult for a black or coloured graduate to get a job as it is for their white and Indian colleagues graduating from the same university.

This indicates that patterns of employment in post-apartheid South Africa continue to resemble

been unable to complete bachelor degrees since the mid-1990s. The result is that the representation of today's black youth aged 25 to 34 among professional, managerial and technical workers has dropped to 2 percent. This means this age group is worse off than their parents were.

This should not shock us because we should by now understand why movements like #FeesMustFall were born. Over the years, institutions of higher learning have been financially excluding students from working class backgrounds. The majority of them are black.

When it speaks about its "good story", the government emphasises the number of black students now in universities has increased exponentially post-apartheid. What

it does not say, and which the report clearly articulates, is that most of these students don't graduate.

According to StatsSA, less than 4 percent of black students graduate from university. Because education is linked to skills, it is inevitable that excluded and marginalised black students don't acquire the necessary skills to climb high up the professional ladder. Delaying free education (which is possible) clearly demonstrates the government does not understand the severity of the situation. The StatsSA report shows us that unless free education is provided to working class students, the injustices of the past

will never be redressed adequately. Black people will remain exactly where apartheid placed them: at the bottom of the pile.

Chapter six of the report looks at another critical issue: youth and violence. According to the report, young people are more likely than adults to be victims and perpetrators of crimes such as theft, assault and robbery. This aspect of the report is particularly important because of the prevailing material conditions which shape the socio-political milieu of the country. Over the years, service delivery protests have been characterised by high levels of violence and the

destruction and theft of property.

A master's thesis by Wits University student Phindile Kunene looks at the nature of protests in the country in general and in some Free State townships in particular. It concludes that young people are at the forefront of the protests, and that many of them have been hurled to the periphery of economic activity and opportunity. The StatsSA report confirms Kunene's research findings and this should scare us. According to the 16th Commission for Employment and Equity report, not only are senior jobs in the private sector going to white males, but training

to be racialised and gendered ... it remains hierarchical, with blacks concentrated at the lower levels and the white group occupying decision-making positions."

The report concludes that at this rate it will take many years to achieve equitable representation in the labour market "especially at the upper levels of management, where the white group has a tight grip".

It is clear the future for black people, particularly for black youth, is not very promising. But this is not a new revelation. We have long known that conditions for black people are becoming more difficult in the democratic dispensation, and that at the heart of this is government's lack of political will to reconstruct South Africa.

Statistician-General Pali

disenfranchised black people.

These laws and policies have failed, mainly because government did not monitor their implementation in the private sector, which has been allowed to perpetuate and commit injustices with impunity. This lack of political will has put my generation in a very dangerous position.

We have given this government more than two decades to govern this country and do right by its disenfranchised majority.

We can choose to ignore these huge red flags and prepare ourselves and our children for a life of insecurity. Or we can fashion change by putting in power a radical government that takes its youth and its future seriously. It's our choice as the youth to make.

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South Africa strengthens bilateral trade relations with Iran

MAITE NKOANA-MASHABANE

THE recent state visit by President Jacob Zuma to the Islamic Republic of Iran took place at an opportune time following the lifting of sanctions against Iran. South Africa had consistently pledged its solidarity with Iran during the sanctions period and supported Iran's inalienable right to pursue nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

South Africa recognises that Iran is a pivotal and influential player regionally and internationally. Iran has a large and growing economy and possesses skills and expertise that could influence the countries around it – and even beyond – in a very positive manner. Iran is one of the world's largest sources of energy, be this crude oil or gas.

South Africa-Iran relations

date back to pre-1994 when Iran supported South Africa's liberation movement by severing relations with the apartheid regime in 1979 and imposing a trade boycott.

In 1994, Iran lifted all trade and economic sanctions against South Africa and re-established diplomatic relations on May 10 1994.

During his visit to Iran in September 1996, the late President Nelson Mandela noted that, after the Iranian revolution of 1979, the country "sacrificed much in support of our cause" and "refused to oil the [apartheid] system which the world regarded as a crime against humanity".

Trade between South Africa and Iran was interrupted by the imposition of unilateral sanctions against Iran primarily by the US and the EU, rather than the UN Security Council. The sanctions impacted negatively on our own economic development agenda.

Iran was one of the biggest suppliers of crude oil to South Africa prior to the sanctions. Whereas South Africa imported about one-third of its crude oil requirements from Iran in 2011, it was forced to end imports by June 2012 altogether, due to the sanctions.

As a result, total trade between the two countries stood at R358 million by 2015.

This figure does not reflect the optimal capabilities of the two economies. Despite the setback of sanctions, South Africa remained committed to consolidating bilateral relations with Iran.

With the sanctions now lifted, there is immense potential for closer commercial and investment co-operation between the two countries, including the eventual resumption of crude oil imports from Iran.

President Zuma and President Hassan Rouhani undertook to



President Jacob Zuma and President Hassan Rouhani during a state visit in Tehran, in the Islamic Republic of Iran. PICTURE: GCIS

take co-operation to a higher level in the fields of trade, education and skills development; science and technology; energy, including petrochemical gas exploration and refining capacity; agriculture;

mining and mineral beneficiation; infrastructure development and transport; finance, banking and insurance; and tourism.

Among the eight Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)

signed during the state visit was the establishment of the Joint Investment Committee, which puts in place a measured and pragmatic form of co-operation. These measures will enable us to significantly increase our levels of trade.

The MOUs on Insurance Co-operation and on Co-operation in the Field of Trade and the accompanying Roadmap, provides a good departure point for establishing financial and banking relations in order for our two countries to strengthen economic and trade cooperation.

The establishment of the South Africa-Iran Business Council will further complement the objectives of the Roadmap.

This would translate into tangible deliverables and would add further impetus towards expanding on the economic ties between our respective business communities.

The MOU between the Petroleum Oil and Gas Corporation of South Africa and the Research Institute of Petroleum Industry will attract inward investment into South Africa in the petrochemical sectors with emphasis on co-operation in the construction of a South African refinery and supply of crude oil from Iran.

President Zuma and President Rouhani agreed to increase non-oil trade to a billion dollars by 2020.

It is imperative that the two countries focus on diversifying trade.

Apart from the focus on improving economic and trade relations, President Zuma's visit also provided an opportunity to solidify co-operation with Iran on a broader range of issues.

■ Nkoana-Mashabane is Minister of International Relations and Co-operation

HEADS UP

HAVING overcome apartheid in South Africa with the support of the international community, it is natural to extend our ubuntu principles as Africans and stand in solidarity with those nations experiencing various forms of political and humanitarian unrest. – Joburg mayor Parks Tau, speaking after the unveiling of a 6m statue of Nelson Mandela in the Palestinian city of Ramallah on the West Bank on Tuesday.



I think it's great to be able to receive this award on her behalf and take it back home and say, 'Ma, thank you for the lessons you have imparted not just (to) me but South Africa and the world! I don't feel my grandmother is celebrated enough. I still feel she should have at least won it in the gold category, but we are thankful she is finally being recognised for the work that she's doing and I'm more inspired to fill those very big shoes. – Zoleka Mandela, accepting the Order of Luthuli in silver on behalf of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela from President Jacob Zuma on Thursday.



I AM not going anywhere. These speculations about me leaving have gone on for ever. I was appointed by the council with the recommendation of the senate and the stakeholders of the university. Instead they have asked me the opposite, which is that I shouldn't go. Are you really going to listen to students who opportunistically demand vice-chancellors must fall? I still have a lot to do, and when the time is right, I will obviously leave. – University of Free State vice-chancellor Professor Jonathan Jansen, denying rumours that he is quitting his job.



WE truly do not understand the story which is running, which is saying police training has been slashed from 24 months to eight months. We will never compromise on training because police officers in the country are faced with challenges and demands no other country (has) encountered. (The 21 months' training is) literally three months (less), but there are more benefits now. – Acting national police Commissioner Lieutenant-General Khomotso Phahlane, addressing journalists in Cape Town on Tuesday.

