



# ANC TODAY

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Conversations with the  
**President**



## Fair and inclusive trade is important for growth and jobs in SA

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

**T**RADE between nations is a vital part of economic progress. That is why, as part of our G20 Presidency, South Africa is promoting a trade agenda in which G20 members commit to measures to promote expanded, more inclusive and more sustainable value chains.

I recently came across an inspiring story of a farmer from Elukwatini in Mpumalanga that highlights how deepening G20 trade can support the growth of local industry. In February, Bongani Thobela took part in the world's largest fresh produce trade fair in Germany, a G20 member and the third largest market for South African exports. There he was able to meet potential buyers and has since secured an export

license and sent samples of his produce to Germany and China.

He was part of an initiative by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition to support local producers to attend international trade fairs and exhibitions to expose them to international markets. This reflects our conviction that greater exports of a more diverse variety of goods and service are essential for the growth of our economy and the creation of more jobs.

We are committed to measures that support industrial development and bolster the value of our exports. At the same time, we are pursuing a trade policy that uses international trade agreements to secure fairer terms, promote market access and facilitate ex-

pansion into new markets.

Developing economies such as ours are vulnerable to volatility in international trade. This is particularly the case in the face of unilateral actions and coercive measures that undermine multilateral agreements and the global rules-based trading system.

We are therefore working in different ways to make our domestic industries more resilient.

To bolster the value of our exports we are strengthening the regulatory regime. For example, last month we signed the Plant Health Act into law. This will improve domestic biosecurity and ensure there is greater alignment with international export requirements.



**Bongani Thobela, MD of Thobela Royale Farm, a company that farms in peaches, nectarines and vegetables in Elukwatini, Mpumalanga**

We are intensifying our efforts to diversify destinations for South African goods, products and services.

Last year marked a number of 'firsts' for South African agricultural exports. We gained access to the Thailand market for apples for the first time in 16 years and exported our first container of avocados to Japan. This month we also gained market access for South African table grapes to the Philippines.

We are deepening relations with countries and regions with which we have regional and bilateral trade agreements that provide preferential trade terms. These include the Southern African Customs Union and the Southern African Development Community Free Trade Area.

We are working to make effective use of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Last year, we commenced trading under the AfCFTA. A shipment of 'Made in SA' consumer

goods, copper, cement, electrical and pharmaceutical goods and fresh produce left the port of Durban for markets elsewhere on the continent.

At last month's European Union-South Africa Summit in Cape Town we signed a trade and investment package worth around R90 billion. This package will support the export of more SA-made products into the EU.

We are increasing investment in domestic industries that contribute to exports. The 2025 Budget allocates increased funding to boost manufacturing and agro-processing, as well as for incentive programmes that strengthen local value chains and open access to key international markets.

As we undertake all these measures, South Africa will continue to advocate for a level playing field in global trade.

Trade must remain free, predictable and governed by a

rules-based system. This is particularly critical for developing economies, many of which remain locked into the lower end of global value chains.

South Africa endorses the reform process underway within the World Trade Organisation (WTO) that seeks to address deficiencies in the global trade regime that work against developing economies.

South Africa remains committed to maintaining favourable relations with existing trade partners and to forging new trade relationships.

As Government, business and labour, we will continue to deepen our collaboration as we navigate a global trade environment that has become increasingly complex.

Our ultimate goal is to secure favourable trade terms that advance our national interest, drive inclusive growth and create jobs for the South African people.



# A perspective on the evolution of Value Added Tax (VAT) whose trend should inform the current debates in SA

■ By **MZWANDILE MASINA**

**F**OLLOWING the Margo Commission in 1986, the South African Apartheid Government released a White Paper in 1988 indicating its intention to replace the then 'one-stage' General Sales Tax (GST) with a Value-Added Tax system (VAT). Concerns were raised with respect to the GST evasion, the extent of the erosion of the sales tax base due to general exemption of food items and the exclusion of most services.

Businesses could partially escape the cascading effect of the GST by means of GST credit certificates. Certificates were abused, leading to concerns about tax evasion. Registration certificates used to buy goods GST-free, if bought for resale or used as intermediate inputs for further processing. However, capital goods and other intermediary inputs, such as advertising, formed part of the GST base.

Value Added Tax (VAT) was introduced on 30 September 1991. VAT is payable when invoice is issued, the payment basis for municipalities and sole traders with an annual turnover below R2.5 million per annum. The VAT Committee recommended a broad tax base with minimal ex-



clusions.

GST was introduced in 1978 at 4% and by 1982 it was increased twice, 5% and 6% respectively. In 1984, it was increased twice, 7% and 10% respectively. By 1985, it increased to 12% and until 1990, it remained untouched for five years during the political unrest, when the ANC intensified its struggle and made the country ungovernable.

In 1991, VAT was implemented by the Apartheid Government from the transitional 12% GST to 10% VAT and the transition was smooth and did not raise alarm in the public domain due to the 2% reduction and there were no

zero-rated items at this stage. Late in July that year, zero-rating of brown bread and maize meal were included. By September in the same year, more goods were added into the list of zero-rated items.

In 1993 further public protest resulted in the zero-rating of an additional nine basic food items with effect from April 1993. The VAT rate was increased from 10% to 14% on the same day. Pressures for a higher VAT rate on luxury goods were allayed, to an extent, by the extension of ad valorem excise duties revenues (Duty 1–2B are mostly derived from the "vehicles, aircraft, vessels and associated transport equipment".

VAT is the second most important source of revenue for the South African fiscus, after Personal Income Tax (PIT) at 45%. The PIT has seven different categories ranging from the 18% to 45% tax bracket and Corporate Income Tax (CIT) at 27%.

As an exemption, destination based tax exports are zero-rated and imports are subjected to VAT. Most countries exclude non-fee based financial services from the VAT base due to practical difficulties.

Many analysts have demonstrated that in absolute monetary terms, the middle and higher income earners benefit more from the zero-rating than the poor. However, public opinion is very strongly in favour of maintaining the zero rating of basic foodstuffs.

The following items are zero-rated in South Africa: export, nineteen basic food items, illuminating paraffin, petrol and diesel, international transport services, farming inputs, sales of going concerns, and government grants. The items that are exempted include the following: non-fee related financial services, educational services provided by accredited institutions, residential rental, public road and rail transport amongst others.

It must be stated that between 1994 and 2018, the Democratic Government led by the ANC did not increase VAT for almost twenty-eight years (28yrs), due to prevailing socio-economic conditions faced by masses of our people. Only in 2018 the Democratic Government increased VAT by 1% due to the pressure to fund Free Education, that was abruptly introduced without any finan-

## More essential foods added to VAT-free list



### 19 original items:

	Brown bread		Rice
	Maize meal		Vegetables
	Samp		Fruit
	Mealie rice		Vegetable oil
	Dried mealies		Milk
	Dried beans		Cultured milk
	Lentils		Brown wheat meal
	Pilchards/sardinella in tins		Eggs
	Milk powder		Edible legumes and pulses of leguminous plants
	Dairy powder blend		

### From 1 May 2025

Edible offal from sheep, poultry, goats, swine and bovine animals



Specific cuts such as heads, feet, bones and tongues



Dairy liquid blends



Tinned or canned vegetables



cial backing from the fiscus. To date, it is sitting at R59 billion per annum, funding in excess of 600 000 students across the various institutions of higher learning.

The proposed VAT increase in the 25/26 budget has no basis in logic, given that the budget is at R2,4 trillion and debt to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio is expected to peak at 76.2% and Meanwhile, debt-service costs will peak in 2024/25, stabilising at 21.7 per cent of revenue, and decline thereafter as contained in the national budget.

If you round off the two 0.5% in USD terms, you are almost talking about raising approximately 1.5 billion USD, which is completely insignificant given the size of our budget. Worse of all, the items that are suggested to cover the shortfall are normal items that the state must integrate in their normal budgeting process. If the increase is carried, the ANC will effectively be budgeting itself out of power on a matter with a questionable materiality.

In the same intervening period, the PIT in 1994 was at 43%, it went down to 40% but in 2014/15 financial year and subsequently and seven-times conservatively at 45% to date. Whereas the CIT was at 48% in 1993, the democratic government took it down to 40% in 1994 and since then it went down to 28% for 28 conservative times and currently seating at 27%. Therefore the notion that CIT will lead to investment strike and losses is a scarecrow, given the interest the globe has over our natural endowment.

In conclusion, YES, there are more other options that can be explored to increase revenue for the state outside the VAT in order



to protect the poor as our the motive forces of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR). A consideration on the alternative in case we don't have enough numbers in parliament to pass the current budget through the parliamentary process, including suggestion to consider invoking Section 8(4) of the **'Money Bill and Related Matters Amendment Act'** to revise the budget, provided that we revise the debt stabilisation peak of the debt to GDP ratio in order, to a reasonable computed rate by the national treasury to close the gap covered by the 0.5% VAT increase suggested.

In the 21/22 fiscus, the debt to GDP ratio was sitting at 67.6%, in the following 22/23 fiscus, it was sitting at 70.5%, an increase by 2.9%. The following 23/24 fiscus, it was sitting at 74.1%, a further increase of 3.6% in one financial year. In four years, the debt to GDP ratio increased to 76.2% at peak, which is an increase of 8.6%.

In the final analysis, asking for 0.375% (Computed as a % of GDP equivalent to 1.5 USD (SA GDP \$403,05bn – 2024)) of the peak from 76.2% to 76.4% of the debt to GDP peak, recognising that it stood at 76,1% in 2024/25 indicating stabilisation of the debt

level hence the projected significant declines. We should rather mobilise funds from our domestic bond markets to cover the shortfall instead of the two proposed 0.5 VAT proposal in our budget is the logical proposition to consider. In case we stick to the VAT proposition, we need to identify clear items that we seek to address with the shortfall not items which were proposed as they represent normal items Government must service.

Lastly, the ANC must lead this debate and be clear, which spending items are a strategic priority to justify our posture and decisions. We appear to be losing the public debate on VAT increase as the movement and this is a matter that must concern us as a liberation movement. Consider viable alternatives, which will give confidence that indeed the leader of society cares remaining the viable option to conserved.

We equally need to lift up facts how this will contribute in moving away from austerity, which has hampered development over the past decade.

**Mzwandile Masina** is a member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC. He writes in his personal capacity.



■ By **BUTI MANAMELA**

**T**HERE was a time in our movement when the highest compliment an ANC cadre could be given was that *“this one is always with the people.”* It was not a posture reserved for elections. It was not a performance for cameras. It was an everyday ethic – of humility, service, and presence.

Reading President Xi Jinping’s reflections on *“The Basic Proficiency of Officials”* – drawing from a 1989 Party guideline on maintaining close ties with the people – I was struck by how far we have drifted from this most basic, most powerful tenet of revolutionary conduct: to be one with the people.

#### **From The People’s Forest to The Leader’s Fortress**

During the days of struggle, the people were literally our forest – hiding MK cadres, feeding them,

protecting them from the apartheid state. The people were not an electoral database; they were co-fighters, comrades, and sometimes shield against annihilation.

Can we honestly say the same today?

When the people see an ANC leader now, what do they see?

Do they see a servant leader, humble in appearance, grounded in their struggles? Or do they see a figure surrounded by bodyguards, dressed in designer labels, appearing only when votes are needed, kissing babies during campaigns, and disappearing soon after – only to resurface in the VIP section of some shebeen or an Instagram story dripping in whiskey and wealth?

Let us be frank: too many of our leaders have become distant, aloof, unapproachable, if not out-

right arrogant. For many of our people, the image of an ANC leader is no longer a symbol of hope but a symbol of tenders, consumption, and unfettered access to resources they themselves will never touch.

This is not just a PR crisis. It is a political crisis of proximity, conduct, and credibility.

#### **The Transactional Politics Trap**

We have fallen into the dangerous trap of transactional politics – appearing during elections with slogans, t-shirts, and promises; collecting votes like a tax; and retreating into our insulated lives of comfort once the campaign is over.

We have allowed the perception to take hold that to see an ANC leader is to see money, power, a convoy, and social media displays of soft life. When did being



a revolutionary become indistinguishable from being a celebrity?

Even amongst ourselves, as comrades, we display conduct that betrays our revolutionary culture – humiliating each other publicly, lashing out in anger, treating those we disagree with not as fellow revolutionaries but as enemies to be crushed.

This is not how Tambo taught us to close ranks. This is not how Mandela, Winnie, Dorothy Nyembe, or Florence Mophosho lived amongst the people.

We cannot preach about restoring the moral fibre of society while our own conduct erodes that fibre daily.

### **Renewal is Not a Slogan. It is a Lifestyle.**

The ANC speaks of renewal – and rightly so. But renewal is not a committee. Renewal is not a resolution.

Renewal is not a catchphrase. It is a way of life, beginning with each cadre.

It is seen in how we greet people in the street. In how we listen – genuinely, attentively – to the elderly woman reporting a burst sewer in her area, even when cameras are off.

In how we conduct ourselves online – not flaunting wealth, not ridiculing comrades, not projecting the ANC as an exclusive club of the powerful. In how we share a meal with ordinary people – not for photo-ops, but because they are our people.

Renewal begins in the seed of the cadre – in our choices, our daily habits, our interactions with



those we claim to represent.

as practice.

### **Be One With The People**

If we are serious about regaining the confidence of the people, it will not be because of clever slogans or renewed manifestos. It will be because we became one with them again.

We must ask: can the people still be our forest? Do they still trust us enough to shelter us – figuratively or literally – in times of hardship?

To get there, we must first dismantle the fortress we have built around ourselves. The walls of arrogance. The shields of aloofness. The barricades of materialism.

This is not a call for performative poverty. It is a call for revolutionary humility.

To walk the streets without fear. To attend funerals not just of comrades but of ordinary citizens. To respond to community calls outside the glare of elections. To correct each other, as comrades, with love and principle when we fall short.

Maybe we never needed the Integrity Commission – not if ***Through The Eye of The Needle*** was truly our daily guide. Not if the ethic of revolutionary conduct lived in us, not as text, but

### **Renewal is Nothing Without Credibility**

President Xi reminds us that *“there can be no real leadership without credibility.”* And credibility does not come from power or gimmicks. It comes from being with the people. Working with them. Living amongst them.

The renewal of the ANC will not begin in conference halls. It begins in the street. In the taxi ranks. In the rural villages. In the informal settlements. In the posture, conduct, humility, and daily choices of the cadre.

We lost elections because we lost credibility. We will win back credibility only when we win back the people.

Not by kissing their babies every five years. But by standing amongst them every day.

As we chart the next phase of our Strategy and Tactics, and assess the balance of forces, let us remember this simple, profound truth: Be one with the people.

Everything else flows from there.

**Buti Manamela** is a member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC.

# South Africa's Political Parties **ARE FIGHTING** the Wrong Budget Battle

■ By **AYABONGA CAWE** and **CHRISPIN PHIRI**

**T**HE South African budget debate has become a theatre of rancorous noise. Political parties having chosen to bicker over changes in VAT rates and inflationary adjustments on personal income tax thresholds instead have overlooked what they all seemingly agree on. Most parties in parliament concede that the current fiscal framework is unsustainable and requires radical reform. A big part of that most would concede involves greater work on the 'expenditure' side. Providing an important and opportune moment for a richer civic discussion on the budget. It is in that spirit that we write this article.

While the distributional impact of VAT and 'bracket creep' is regressive, we do not believe that this the 'sole' question which should occupy us. Precisely as the fallout from American trade policy has spiked ten year bond yields as a signal of base rates for borrowing across the economy but also the terms on which the state will borrow. This raises another fundamental question. Relating to how and where the state spends money collected from either revenue proposals or public borrowing requirements.



This question uncovers institutional and other challenges in the state, not just in relation to what it collects, but how it spends what it collects. The fixation on VAT – a regressive but easy-to-collect revenue stream distracts from the real crisis unfolding on the 'expenditure' side. Our country faces pervasive public goods unavailability and service delivery crises, despite its over R2 trillion gross revenue take. Until parties shift their focus from tax tinkering to more stringent expenditure accountability, South Africa's fiscal debates will remain esoteric exercises with little impact on citizens.

## **The VAT Obsession: A Convenient Distraction**

The VAT discussion, as in 2018, has become a political football. Amid the rivalrous chatter about it, lies a concerning reluctance to confront systemic execution failures in expenditure. The 2018 VAT panel, appointed by then Minister Nhlanhla Nene to consider a list of food and non-food items to incorporate in the basket of VAT zero-rated goods made an important and prescient observation – it would be cheaper to return the cost of the VAT increase to the poorest households by expenditure programmes, than to extend zero rating.





The Panel further noted that the challenge rested on the extent to which social wage and public goods-focused investments actually reach 'the bulk of low-income households'. Whether the money spent 'ultimately' benefited townships, villages, and cities with the envisaged growth, investment, and jobs impact.

### **Expenditure: Where the Real Crisis Lies**

Municipalities and state owned entities are the main 'agencies' seized with capital expenditure on roads, bridges, clinics, schools, treatment works and dams among other areas. All the arena crucial to economic and social reproductive activities. The South African legal framework requires that budgets of organs of state are spent in an economic, efficient, and effective manner. The Auditor General South Africa (AGSA) highlights the impact of underspending of conditional grants linked to service delivery, contributing to delays in completing infrastructure projects aimed at improving service delivery to communities. So too have we

seen crucial grants made to state owned companies for commuter rail, passenger bus services and other service-focused infrastructure being chronically underspent.

The reasons? Poor project management, ineffective contract management, and delays in procurement processes rank high as causes for chronic underspending in municipalities and state owned entities.

### **A Way Forward: From VAT Battles to Spending Realism**

While proposing a way forward may be tricky. A starting point has to be 'systemic' rather than 'episodic' issues. For instance, is it still sustainable to assume that over two hundred or so local authorities will all have the personnel and other capacity to spend on capital budgets linked to their areas of functional authority? Or that receiving a tenth of nationally collected revenue they can build the long term institutional capability without 'own revenue' from a taxable base, if they have no industry in their ar-

reas? Similarly, do demarcations and the functional borders in our areas reproduce ethno-national boundaries while lacking some administrative-industrial articulation that could make these 'viable' subnational boundaries? What role for state owned entities who might have the capacity and scale economies to deliver in these areas?

South Africa's parties are stuck in a VAT-centric time warp, debating tax rates while the quality of services objectively declines. The budget is not a piggy bank to be cracked open or guarded; it is a tool to build a society that works. If parties cannot shift their focus from how much we tax or borrow to how well we spend, election manifestos are rendered obsolete.

The people need more than a debate on the regressivity of VAT. That is moot. They need a government that can fix a pothole. And fast.

*The authors write in their personal capacities.*

# We need to rethink South Africa's GROWTH MODEL

■ By **ASHLEY NYIKO MABASA**

**S**OUTH Africa's economic growth has been sluggish since 2008, failing to meet expectations. While it remains Africa's largest economy, its growth rate lags behind many of its peers. The country is grappling with global inflation, energy shocks, currency volatility and high interest rates, compounded by stagflation, soaring unemployment and rising inflation. Exacerbating these problems is the withdrawal of USAid support and the potential loss of benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (Agoa).

Productivity is central to any economy, enabling greater output with the same or fewer resources. From 2015 to 2021, the World Bank ranked South Africa 80th out of 170 nations for productivity growth. Over this period, South Africa's productivity – measured as GDP per employed person – grew at only two-thirds of the global average. This stagnation is concerning, as higher productivity not only buffers economies against shocks and aids recovery but also raises wages and improves living standards.

But South Africa's productivity has stagnated for 15 years because of persistent issues such as load-shedding and logistical bottlenecks. While the easing of load-shedding may offer some

respite, logistics remain a serious impediment. Transnet's inefficiencies have placed South Africa's ports among the worst globally, with Cape Town ranking last out of 405 ports in the World Bank's Container Port Performance Review. Four of the country's ports feature in the bottom 15 by performance indicators.

The government needs to refocus on economic growth and repair its strained relations with the US while strengthening ties with the European Union to bolster exports. South Africa's industrial policy has overly emphasised localisation and sectoral protection at the expense of export-driven expansion. By failing to embrace global markets, it has ceded ground to competitors. South Af-

rica has been losing the battle for export-led growth by choosing short-term protectionist policies over long-term competitiveness.

Economic growth is crucial for managing South Africa's debt crisis. Over the past seven years, GDP growth has averaged just 0.8% annually, underscoring the need for a new growth model, one that is difficult to conceive yet essential to implement. The economy must pivot towards export-led growth, because productivity, rather than labour or capital accumulation will be the primary driver of long-term prosperity.

To boost productivity, South Africa needs to revise its trade policies. Growth will not come from shielding local industries from







competition but from fostering global competitiveness. While the World Trade Organisation's trade liberalisation policies have enabled technological transfer and innovation, South Africa has failed to capitalise on these opportunities, instead resorting to tariffs and subsidies that provide short-term relief but hinder long-term progress. Sustainable growth requires a robust manufacturing sector capable of competing globally.

There is a persistent fallacy that economic growth is driven purely by demand. While increasing domestic demand has been a key government strategy, long-term growth depends on supply-side factors. South Africa's economic prosperity hinges on its ability to produce, not just consume. The key determinants of this capacity are labour, capital investment (in machinery, infrastructure, and technology) and, crucially, productivity – how efficiently these inputs are converted into outputs.

To secure sustainable growth, South Africa must protect and enhance its productive capaci-

ty by prioritising export-oriented policies. The country's declining export-to-GDP ratio highlights its diminishing global competitiveness. While other nations drive growth through exports, South Africa lags behind. The failure to transition from a resource-based economy to a manufacturing-driven, export-oriented model has only deepened its economic woes. Manufacturing still accounts for just 30% of exports, an alarmingly low figure for a country seeking industrialisation.

South Africa represents a mere 0.6% of global GDP – focusing solely on the domestic market ignores the vast opportunities in international trade.

Beyond trade policies, South Africa must address its infrastructure deficit, particularly in energy and logistics. Eskom's failures have significantly hampered industrial productivity, while Transnet's inefficiencies have crippled trade. Without significant investment in energy security, rail networks and port facilities, South Africa will struggle to compete in global markets.

Innovation is another area requiring urgent attention. South Africa has lagged in research and development, with limited government incentives for technological advancement. A shift towards digitalisation, automation and artificial intelligence could unlock significant productivity gains. The government must encourage private-sector investment in these areas while improving the country's education and skills base to match the needs of a modern economy.

Ultimately, productivity is the most reliable driver of long-term economic growth. It enhances per capita income and defines a nation's ability to innovate, invest and convert inputs into higher-value outputs.

Failure to act decisively will entrench the country's economic stagnation further. The government must abandon macroeconomic gimmicks in favour of a coherent, long-term growth strategy. This requires structural reforms, improved governance, and a renewed commitment to integrating South Africa into the global economy.



# ON POLICY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

■ By **WELILE NHLAPO**

**A**N understanding of the Washington establishment is critical. This is a network of centres of policy formulation and influence that are funded by multi-national corporations and extremely rich influential individuals, who are driven by benefits from the implementation of US foreign policy.

These constitute the following:

- Ideologically based Foundations
- Organised factions in the political parties and Congress
- Law firms/lobbyists
- Business organisations

- Religious, cultural, and other social formations and groups
- Interest groups
- Political, military and security strategists
- Exclusive membership clubs
- Institutes and universities
- Research institutions and Think Tanks.

These are the real power brokers and centres of immense influence. They include government agencies and corporate lobbyists. US President Donald Trump calls this 'the deep state' his administration is trying to dismantle. These formations are well re-

sourced in terms of financial and human capital. Lobbying in the US is legal, therefore, they have access to the most senior administration officials including aspiring or incumbent presidents. They provide a revolving door for highly experienced senior bureaucrats between electoral cycles.

These engage in a deliberate and systematic way with embassies, regional or geographical groups of diplomats, especially ambassadors, usually political appointees. They offer services based on interests of these groups, the countries they represent and US



national security and foreign policy interests. It is from these engagements that the hard and soft power of the US is designed, derived and elaborated.

For the African National Congress and the South African government an understanding of these operators is critical for developing a strategy to engage the United States. South African missions in the US, SA Tourism and Brand SA must be capacitated and well-resourced to pursue our country's public diplomacy in a more structured and coordinated way. The bilateral diplomatic mechanisms must be serviced for more deliberate and structured engagements between our governments. To do so, South African diplomats must have the capacity to network beyond the administration but importantly with stakeholders who are be-



hind policy formulation in the US.

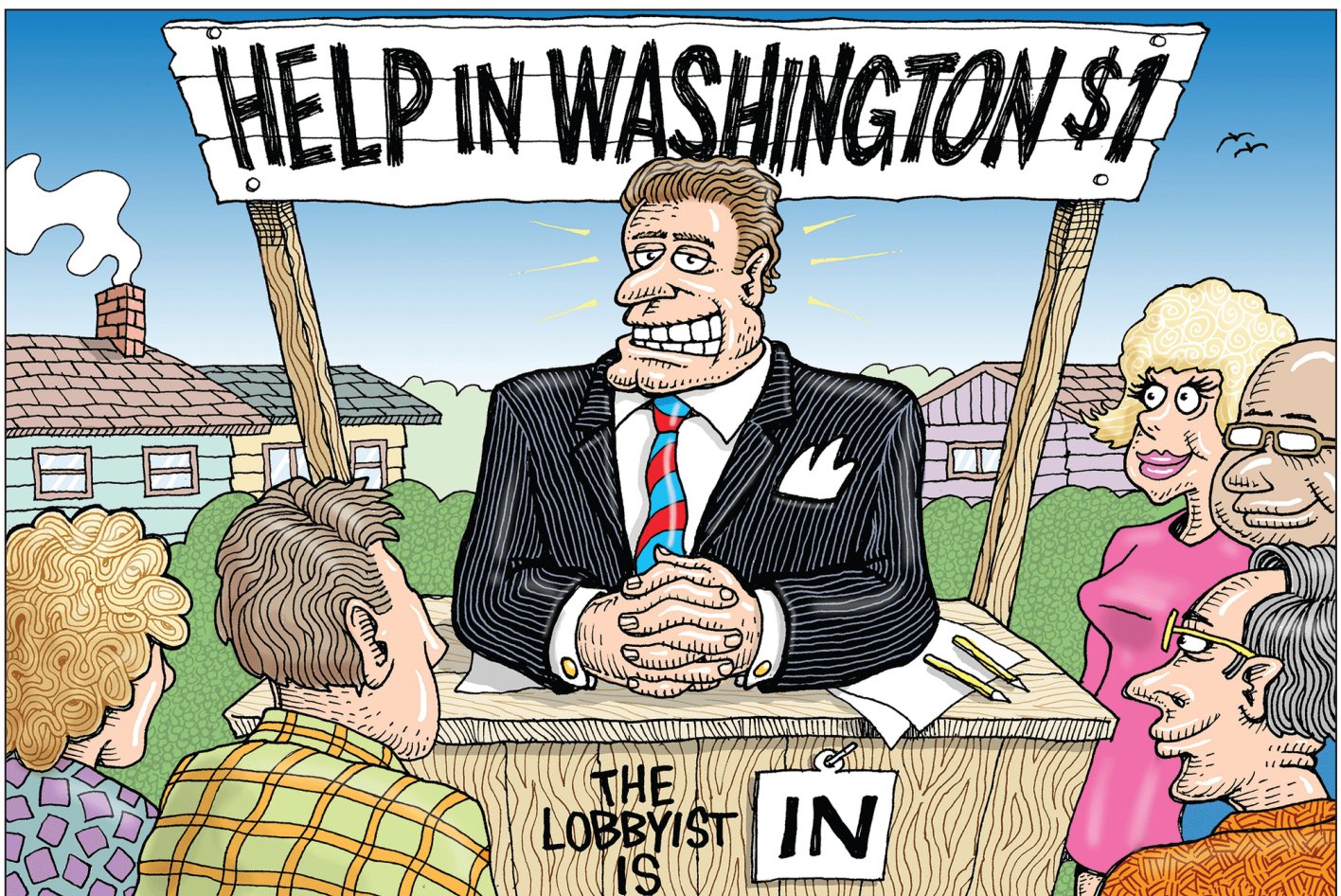
At the same time, we, the ANC and South African government, must be able to revive and build on the bonds of friendship and solidarity which remain a solid base and which supported our struggle against apartheid, colonialism and imperialism.

In the pursuit of our national democratic revolution objectives, we

should be guided by our Pan-African commitments and progressive internationalism.

We must never compromise our values and principles, sovereignty, and national interests in the same manner that the US would not compromise its positions.

**Ambassador Welile Nhlapo** served as South Africa's ambassador to the United States from 2007 to 2009.





# Celebrating 31 Years of Democracy: A Pro-Poor, Developmental Budget for Limpopo Education

■ By **MATOME MOREMI-TAUEATSOALA**

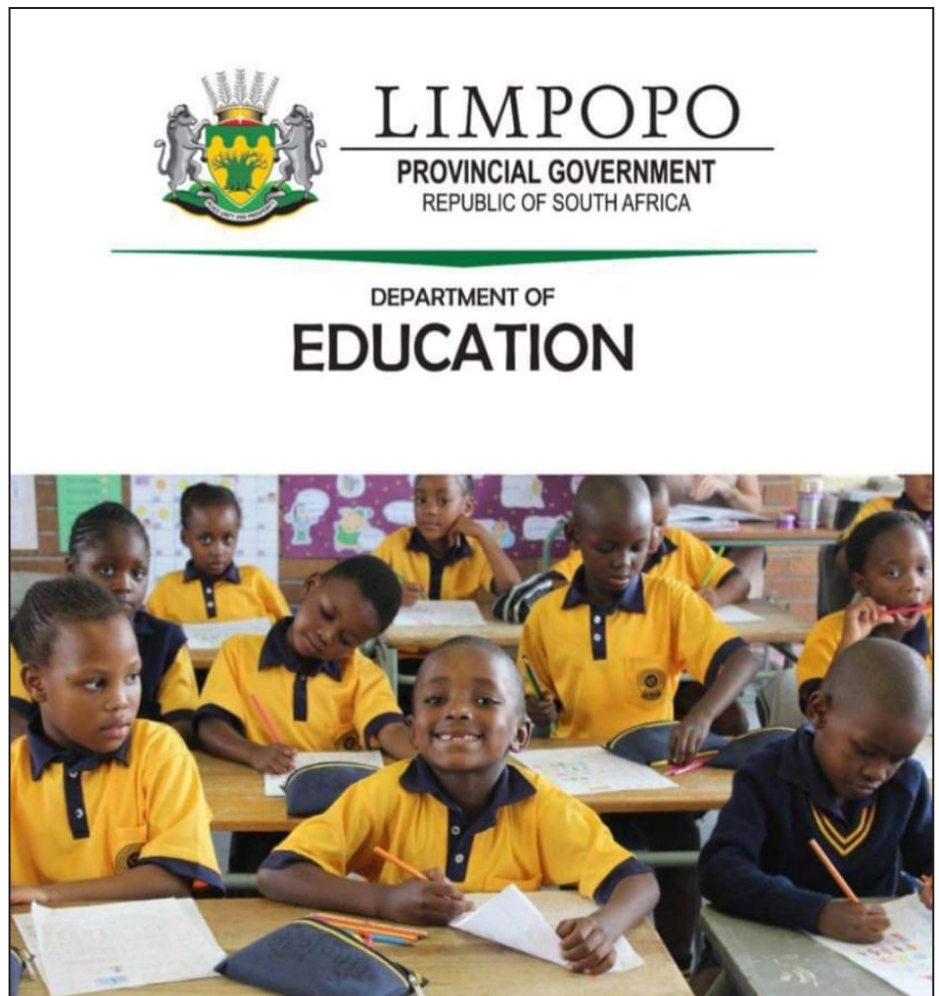
**T**HE budget speech delivered by MEC Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya for the Limpopo Department of Education marks a significant milestone in our journey towards achieving academic excellence. As we celebrate 31 years of democracy, this budget embodies the values of a pro-poor, developmental state.

## Prioritizing Academic Excellence

The budget's focus on improving learner outcomes, increasing access to quality education, and promoting academic excellence is commendable. Initiatives such as teacher development programs, infrastructure upgrades, and learner support services will undoubtedly enhance the learning environment.

## Teacher Development A Key Driver of Excellence

Investing in teacher development is crucial for academic success. The budget's allocation for teacher training and support programs will equip educators with the necessary skills to deliver high-quality education. This investment in human capital will yield long-



term benefits for learners and the province. The budget breakdown for 2025/26 financial year of the department of Education in Limpopo is as follows:

- **Equitable share:** R37.888 Billion.
- **Conditional Grants:** R3.847

Billion.

- **Own Revenue:** R794.721 Million. This represents an increase of R2.683 Billion [6.7%] from the R39.846 Billion adjusted appropriation in 2024/25 financial year.





**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**

2025/26 Budget Vote

# Teacher Development

R16.821 Million

**“**

Our educators are the backbone of our education system. We will invest in professional development programs that equip our teachers with the skills and knowledge they need to inspire and engage our learners. By fostering a culture of continuous learning, we will empower our educators to be the change-makers in their classrooms.

Matric Results Intervention Strategy, R15.0 million; Our matriculants are the pride of Limpopo, yet systemic barriers persist. The R15.0 million Matric Intervention Strategy is a lifeline for the Class of 2025. It funds after-school boot camps in high-enrollment subjects, such as Mathematics and Physical Science, distributes curated revision booklets aligned with the curriculum, and equips teachers with data-driven diagnostics to address areas of weakness.

Learning recovery, R10.460 million; The scars of the pandemic linger in our classrooms, where disrupted learning deepened inequalities. With R10.4 million, we reignite a culture of resilience. This funding supports targeted catch-up programmes, including weekend classes, digital learning tools, and psychosocial support for learners still grappling with academic gaps.

**”**



[www.edu.limpopo.gov.za](http://www.edu.limpopo.gov.za)
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[limpopodepartmentofeducation](https://www.facebook.com/limpopodepartmentofeducation)

The heartland of southern Africa-development is about people

efforts to eradicate pit toilets, provide sanitary dignity, and support learners with disabilities demonstrate a commitment to creating a more equitable education system.

### Conclusion

The budget speech outlines a clear vision for transforming Limpopo's education system. With a focus on access, quality, and inclusivity, this budget has the potential to positively impact the lives of learners and educators alike. As the department implements its plans, transparency, accountability, and community engagement will be crucial in ensuring the successful delivery of services.

*Matome Moremi-Taueatsoala is the Media Liaison Officer in the office of the MEC for Education in Limpopo, Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya.*

### Addressing Historical Inequalities

This budget acknowledges the historical inequalities in our education system. By prioritizing pro-poor initiatives, the department is working towards redressing past injustices and promoting social justice.

The allocation of R42.529 billion for the department demonstrates a significant investment in education. The emphasis on Conditional Grants, such as the National School Nutrition Programme and Education Infrastructure Grant, highlights the department's commitment to addressing historical inequalities and promoting social justice.

### Addressing Challenges

While challenges persist, the budget's focus on infrastructure development, inclusive education, and skills development is commendable. The department's



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**

2025/26

# School Safety

R4.000 Million

**“**

Due to escalations in incidents of crime and violence, which are manifesting in more social ills, random searches and seizures for dangerous objects will continue in the new sets of HOTSPOT schools (2025-2028). Social ills such as bullying is on the rise, drug abuse, gangsterism, rape and suicides are prioritized for more intervention through strengthening our partnerships with the renewal of MOUs with sister departments and stakeholders of interest.

**”**



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The heartland of southern Africa-development is about people

## Budget Vote



**MEC Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya:**  
Budget Speech – Department of Education

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

19–25 April 2025

Source: SA History Online, O'Malley Archives, Africa Today/Yesterday, The Africa Factbook and Amazwi SA Museum of Literature

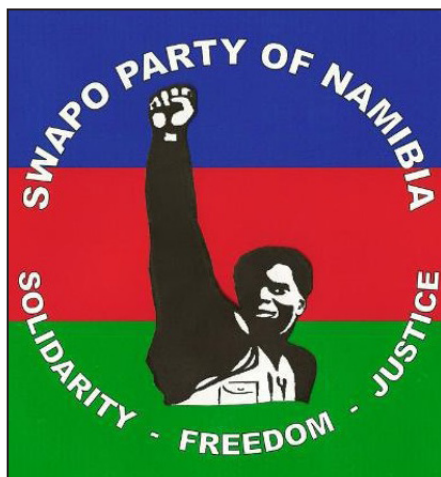
### 19 April 1906 Bambatha Rebellion



In one of the last stance in centuries of wars of resistance against colonial occupation of South Africa, the Bambatha Rebellion took place near Greytown in KwaZulu-Natal, prompted by the introduction of a new £1 poll tax on top of existing hut and dog taxes. Mining companies needed cheap labour, but most African people lived off the land as farmers, tenants on White farms or in reserves created by the colonial government. The tax was instituted to force Blacks from rural areas to the cities to fulfil the labour needs of mines. In 1906 Chief Bambatha and his people refused to pay the tax, and led an uprising against white rule. After the killing of two policemen, martial law was declared and soldiers sent in. Huts of suspected rebels were burned, their

possessions taken and a violent rebellion started. Over 7,000 British troops were called out to suppress the Zulu uprising and 4 000 rebels lost their lives in the battle. The number of Zulu males working on the Witwatersrand mines increased to 60% and by 1909, 80% of all males in Zululand were migrant labourers working away from home.

### 19 April 1960 Formation of SWAPO



The South West African Peoples Organisation (SWAPO) was formed in Windhoek, to fight against apartheid occupation. After a long liberation struggle led by SWAPO, often fighting and campaigning together with the ANC and other Southern African liberation movements, Namibia gained independence on 21 March 1990. Sam Nujoma was elected president of SWAPO of this day, and became the first President of a free Namibia.

### 19 April 1986 Another death in detention

Johannes Mashego (26) died in police custody in Parys (Free State). His relatives reported extensive bruising and swollen face upon identifying the victim's body. The police claimed that he died during interrogation.

### 19 April 2001 Big Pharma drops lawsuit against cheaper Aids drugs

After a prolonged battle to produce and buy cheaper, generic AIDs drugs, global pharmaceutical companies which banded together, dropped a lawsuit against South Africa, ending an international battle over patent rights and profit. This allowed the country to get millions of people onto anti-retroviral treatment.

### 20 April 1957 Writer and activist Saudatu Mahdi born

Nigerian women's rights activist and writer was born in Katsina State. In 2001, she led the successful efforts to get convictions overturned against two women convicted of adultery and who faced death penalty by stoning, under Islamic laws. She also led the 2014 #BringBackOurGirls campaign to raise the plight of the 270 Chibok schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram. She is currently



## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

serving as Secretary General of the Women's Rights Advancement & Protection Alternative.

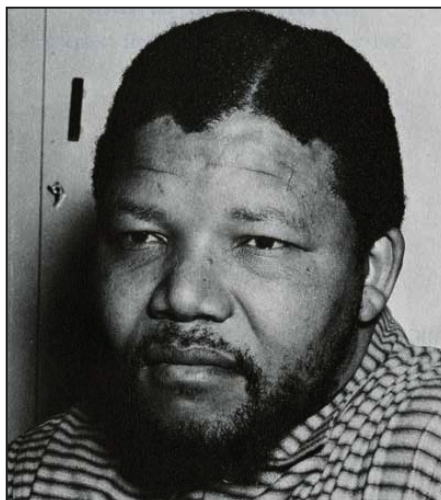
### 20 April 1959 Cheryl Carolus born



Cheryl Carolus was born on this day in Silvertown on the Cape Flats. A SASO activist from the 1970s, she went on to play a leading role in the United Women's Organisation and the UDF during the 1990s. After the unbanning in 1990, she formed part of the ANC's negotiations team and was elected as the ANC Deputy Secretary General in 1994, the first woman to serve as an ANC official. After completing her term in 1997, she served as High Commissioner in the UK, headed SA Tourism and went into business, co-founding wholly women-owned company Peotona.

### 20 April 1964 Mandela's speech from the dock

During the trial where Nelson Mandela and others were standing trial in Pretoria for plotting violent insurrection against the apartheid state, Nelson Mandela told the court: *"I have already mentioned that I was one of the persons who helped to form Umkhonto (weSizwe). We who formed Umkhonto were all*



*members of the African National Congress, and had behind us the ANC tradition of non-violence and negotiation as a means of solving political disputes. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."*

### 20 April 1999 Judge declares HIV status

One of South Africa's first Constitutional Court Judges, Edwin Cameron made public that he had been living with HIV for twelve years. Judge Cameron was inspired by Gugu Dlamini, a woman who was killed after disclosing on a local radio show that she had HIV.

### 20 April 2006 Mam Ephainette Mbeki honoured

Mam Ephainette Mbeki, at the age of 90 received the Order of the Baobab in Gold for her work as community worker, anti-apartheid activists and business woman in Idutywa, Eastern Cape. A teacher, she was recruited to join the Communist Party of South



African in 1938 by Bettie du Toit, the second black woman to become a CPSA member after Josie Palmer. MaMbeki volunteered for the Child Welfare Organisation in Durban, helped to organise a rent boycott, worked as an agent for Inkululeko (the CPSA's newspaper), and ran the Party's night school, before moving back to the Eastern Cape after getting married.

### 20 April 2018 Post-TRC Missing Persons Task Team established

The Missing Persons Task's Team (MPTT) emerged after the conclusion of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC was committed to correcting the injustices of apartheid; one way was through locating the graves of those who went missing between March 1, 1960 and May 10, 1994. Due to the large number of people who were still missing (estimated around 477), at the end of the TRC, the MPTT was entrusted with this task. As part of the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), the MPTT was established in 2005, and was responsible for locating the graves of the deceased under apartheid, exhuming their remains, and identifying the remains for reburial to take place. They have uncovered

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

the remains of 138 missing persons as of 20 April 2018, but this number increases every month. The task team worked alongside the Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense (EAAF) better known as the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team which was established in 1984 and which examined 9000 cases of disappeared persons in Argentina.

### 20 April 2019 Nairobi Tech Week

One of the continent's largest gathering of ICT experts took place in the capital of Kenya, bringing together, against the backdrop of several undersea fibre cables going on line in West and East Africa. This increased broadband, internet speed and the continent's number of ICT users.

### 20 April 2021 President Idriss Déby mortally wounded

Chad President Idriss Déby was mortally wounded while commanding troops against rebels in the town of Mele. He was rushed to the capital N'djamena, but died from gunshot wounds.

### 21 April 1937 Artist Benjamin Macala born

Benjamin Mzimkulu (Ben) Macala was born in Bloemfontein. As a young boy he tended cattle on a farm in the Free State and drew on rocks with stones. He was largely self-taught, although he studied for a few months under Cecil Skotnes at Jubilee Art Centre. He was also guided by Ephraim Ngatane in the mid 1960s, and was a pupil of Bill Ainslie for a short time. He held 13 exhibitions from 1967-1985 in South Africa, Europe and the US. Macala's chosen technique was



pastel on paper, though he did use other media from time to time. His subject matter of Picasso-like portraits with huge black eyes is easily identifiable in almost all his works. He died in 1997.

### 21 April 1940 Filmmaker Souleymane Cissé born

Malian film director was born in Bamako, an outstanding member of Africa's first generation of filmmakers. He is best known for his 1987 masterpiece *Yeelen*, some regarding it as 'Africa's greatest film.' He also directed *Baara* (1978), *The Wind* (1982), *Waati* (1995).

### 21 April 1952 Sisulu, Dadoo and others arrested

On a country-wide tour to organise and mobilise for the Defiance campaign, Walter Sisulu, Dr. Y.M. Dadoo, A.M. Dadoo and Y.A. Cachalia were detained at Idutywa in the Transkei, because they entered the area without the necessary permission

### 21 April 1975 Killing whales no longer profitable

After 175 years of killing whales for profit by the South African set-

ters, it was no longer profitable as whale populations became extinct, with the fin, sperm and sei whales disappearing from the country's coastal waters. Durban hosted a whale butchery.

### 21 April 1982 Labour Bulletin editor released from prison

Merle Favis, editor of the Labour Bulletin, who was arrested with about 16 other trade union leaders, labour experts and student leaders, was released from detention without being charged.

### 21 April 2005 Former ANC Gauteng Secretary Bavumile Vilakazi passed on



The former African National Congress (ANC) Gauteng provincial secretary and South African High Commissioner to Uganda, Bavumile Vilakazi, died of a heart attack in Kampala. Vilakazi was the first mayor of the Ekurhuleni Metro on the East Rand before he was posted to Uganda. He was tried in the United Democratic Front (UDF) 1985 Delmas treason trial.

### 22 April 1834 St Helena colonized by the British

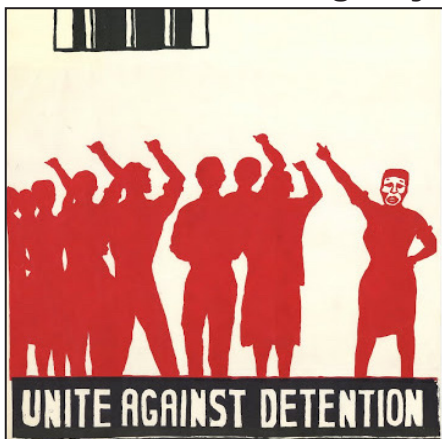
The small Atlantic ocean island of St Helena, which used to be part of South Africa became a British



## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

colony. It hosted prisoners such as Napoleon in 1815, Dinizulu, son of the Zulu King Cetuywayo in 1802, and 6 000 Boer prisoners from 1900-1902.

### 22 April 1960 Over 1500 people detained under state of emergency



Following mass protests throughout South Africa after the Sharpeville massacre on 21 March 1960, a state of emergency was declared and over 1500 people detained without trial on the day of its declaration. It is estimated by the time the emergency was lifted in August of that year, over 23 000 people were detained.

### 22 April 1990 Mandela visits family home in Umtata

Following his release from prison after 27 years, Nelson Mandela visits his family home at Qunu, and addresses a rally of 50 000 people in Umtata, with Gen. Bantu Holomisa, then leader of Transkei.

### 22 April 1992 Squash Champ Ali Farag born

Egyptian squash player, 2018/19 and 2020/21 world champion, was born on this day in Cairo. In 2022 he was ranked as number 1 squash player in the world.

### 22 April 2020 Sudan bans Female Genital Mutilation

The Sudan, with one of the highest rate of FGM on the continent (over 80% of girls), followed other African Union member states to criminalise this widespread cultural practice.

### 22 April 2021 Black farmers Marijuana protest

The Black Farmers Association held a protest against the issuing cannabis growing licenses only to white farmers and foreign companies. Licenses were issued by the public agency, the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (Sahpra). BFASA charged that the process excluded indigenous people from receiving medicinal cannabis licenses.

### 23 April 1908 Bram Fischer born



Abraham (Bram) Fischer, lawyer and champion against apartheid, was born in Bloemfontein, Orange Free State on 23 April 1908. This man, from staunch Afrikaans descent (he was the eldest son of Percy Ulrich Fischer, Judge President of the Orange Free State, and a grandson of

Abraham Fischer, prime minister of the Orange River Colony), became a member of the Communist Party of South African (CPSA), openly participating in its activities. His anti-apartheid stance led him to be a member of the Congress of Democrats and to form part of the defense team for the leaders of the movement during the Treason Trial of 1956 to 1961. He also defended the accused during the Rivonia Trial in 1964.

### 23 April 1959 Unity Dow born

Motswana lawyer, human rights activist, writer and member of Botswana's parliament was born in Mochudi. Raised in a rural village, with her parents investing in their children's education, she earned a law degree, opened Botswana's first all-woman law firm, and was the first woman to be appointed as a judge to Botswana's High Court in 1997.

### 23 April 1960 First Steers restaurant opens in Benoni

First of the iconic Steers restaurants opened on this day in Benoni, under the name Burger Ranch. Owner and restaurateur George Halamandaris visited the US and sought to replicate the American fast-food restaurant concept in South Africa.

### 23 April 1991 Minister lifts restriction on number of black students at white universities

Minister of National Education Louis Pienaar announced that the government would abolish restrictions on the number of Black students who might be accepted by White universities.

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

### 23 April 1993

#### Eritrea referendum starts

On this day in 1993, after a long history of foreign rule and decades of war, the East African country of Eritrea, started three days of voting in a referendum on independence from Ethiopia. The result was over 99% in favour of independence, after a war that lasted for decades.

### 23 April 1998

#### Mossel Bay floods

Mossel Bay and surroundings were flooded as 238 mm of rain falls within 24 hours. In June 2011 the town is again flooded when 250mm of rain fell within one day, causing severe damage to infrastructure. The coastal town was included in a 2010 study by the Department of Environmental and Development Planning on Sea Level rise and Flood Risk assessment, and declared one of the disaster-prone areas.

### 24 April 1901

#### Great Comet of 1901

'Great comets' are so named if they are visible with the naked eye. On 24 April 1901 a comet that became known as 'The Great Comet of 1901' or 'Viscara' was visible to the naked eye over most of South Africa. The comet was yellowish in colour and remained visible for the next month (until 25 May). The comet was first spotted by astronomers at the Royal Observatory in Cape of Good Hope, and a certain Mr. Innes was the first person to observe the comet using a 10-inch guiding telescope.

### 24 April 1954

#### British start Operation Anvil against Mau Mau

In order to quell the anti-colo-

nial Mau Mau movement of Kenya, the British started this operation, a mass forced removal of over 50,000 people from Nairobi, many of whom were detained, to cut off support by the local population to the movement. The operation was based on a similar operation of forced removals of Palestinians that the British conducted in Tel Aviv.

### 24 April 1964

#### Actor Djimon Hounsou born

The actor and model, who rose to fame for his role as Cinqué, the leader of the slave revolt in the 1997 movie *Amistad*, was born on this day in Cotonou, Benin. Hounsou began his career starring in music videos, but went on to act in *Gladiator* (2000), *Black Diamond* (2006), *Never Back Down* (2008), *The Legend of Tarzan* (2016) and *Shazam, Fury of the Gods* (2023) and in a number of other Marvel movies.

### 24 April 1966

#### World Festival of Black Arts

The first of its kind was held in Dakar, Senegal on this day, a historic gathering of African and Diaspora artists, musicians and writers, including historian Cheik Anta Diop, dancers Arthur Mitchell and Alvin Ailey; musicians Duke Ellington and Marion Williams; singers Julie Akofa Akoussah and Bella Bellow and writers Aimé Césaire, Langston Hughes and Wole Soyinka.

### 24 April 1976

#### Benjamin Tyamzashe received Fort Hare Honorary degree

Benjamin John Peter Tyamzashe, Xhosa composer and musician, received an honorary M.A. De-



gree from the University of Fort Hare in recognition of the major contribution he had made to Xhosa music. In the 1988 Old Mutual-Telkom National Choir Festival, Tyamzashe was again honoured posthumously for his immense contribution to the field of music.

### 24 April 1977

#### Zola7 born

Bonginkosi Dlamini, popularly known as Zola7, is a South African kwaito musician, actor, writer, TV presenter and poet. Dlamini began his career as an actor, achieving national recognition in *Yizo Yizo 2* (2002), *Drum* (2004) and the hit Academy Awards winning film *Tsotsi* (2005) which he wrote the musical score.

### 24 April 1984

#### Second Poverty study published

The second Carnegie Report on Poverty in South Africa was published (the first focused on 'poor whites'). The report gave account of the structural poverty because of apartheid colonialism amongst the majority black population. The report revealed levels of poverty as "devastating and extensive", especially in former homeland areas. "In Ciskei, the study found



## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

*elderly people living in darkened hovels, sitting on ragged, filthy beds and with no food on their shelves. Malnutrition was common. In the Orange Free State province 800 residents of a Black township were forced to share 12 open-pit toilets, which led to an outbreak of infectious diseases."*

### 24 April 1987

#### **Barclays Bank SA changed its name to First National Bank**

After protests against Barclays Bank's involvement in South Africa and its apartheid government, Barclays Bank (SA) announced its new name – First National Bank of Southern Africa (FNB) – a wholly South African owned and controlled entity. Sir Timothy Bevan, chairman of Barclays, admitted that while the decision to pull out of the South African

market was a commercial one, the pressure exerted against the bank by anti-apartheid protesters had a detrimental effect on the bank's business in other areas. Student campaigns against Barclays Bank, initiated in the 1960s, were carried on year after year, especially at the beginning of every academic year, to persuade students not to open accounts with the bank.

### 24 April 1991

#### **UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara established**

The mission, also known as MINURSO was established to provide security for the referendum by the people of Western Sahara on self-determination. Western Sahara is the last remaining colony in the continent, occupied by the Kingdom of Morocco.

### 24 April 1993

#### **ANC President OR Tambo passed on**

Oliver Reginald Kaizana Tambo, ANC President from 1967 until 1991 passed away after a life-long service and commitment to freedom of South Africa and Africa. Cde OR, as he was affectionately known was born in Bizana, Eastern Cape in 1917, went on to study BSc at Fort Hare University in 1941, but was expelled for his political activities before he completed his degree, and went on to become a teacher of mathematics. He was a founder of the ANC Youth League formed in 1944, becoming its first secretary and was elected onto the NEC of the ANC in 1948. OR played a critical role in the mass defiance campaigns of the 1950s, was elected as ANC deputy president in 1958 and after the Sharpeville massacre he was tasked to establish the ANC's exiled wing, a role he played with distinction and dedication until the unbanning of the ANC in 1990. The ANC's Political School launched on 12 April 2019 is named in his honour.

### 24 April 2014

#### **Ethiopian government crackdown on Oromo protests**

The crackdown began this day, when federal police started beating and shooting peaceful protesters demonstrating against plans to expand the city of Addis Ababa onto Oromo Lands. About 140 protestors were eventually killed, and only in 2016 was the capital city expansion discarded.

### 25 April 1859

#### **Construction starts on modern day Suez canal**

The Suez canal, linking the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, and

"Oliver lived not because he could breathe.

He lived not because blood flowed through his veins...

Oliver lived because he had surrendered his very being to the people.

He lived because his very being embodied love, an idea, a hope, an aspiration, a vision."

- Nelson Mandela



**Oliver Reginald Tambo**  
27 October 1917 - 24 April 1993



## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

providing a short cut between Europe and Asia. The canal existed as far back as 19th century BC during the reign of Pharaoh Sesostris III. The modern day version started construction on 25 April 1859, and took the Suez Canal Company a decade to complete, with its official opening in November 1869. On July 26, 1956 Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalised the canal to help finance construction of the Aswan Dam on the Nile.

### 25 April 1918 Father of Swahili literature born

Muhammed Said Abdulla, Tanzanian author and journalist was born in Makunduchi, Zanzibar on this day. Author of *Mzimu wa Watu sa kale* (Shrine of the Ancestors, 1958), his novels starred a detective lead character, Bwana Msa, catapulting Swahili literature into popular contemporary fiction, earning him the title of Father of Swahili literature. Abdulla passed on in 1991.

### 25 April 1932 First Speaker of Parliament, Dr Frene Ginwala born



The first speaker of a democratic and non-racial parliament, Cde

Frene Noshir Ginwala was born on this day. She went into exile, trained as a lawyer and worked as a journalist and in ANC offices in Britain, before returning to South Africa after the unbanning of the ANC. Cde Frene was also a member of the National Executive Committee, until her retirement.

### 25 April 1945 Conference to establish United Nations sits

The United Nations Conference on International Organisation opened in San Francisco with 45 nations in attendance to set up the UN. The only African nations attending were Egypt, Ethiopia and Liberia. South Africa attended as part of the UK.

### 25 April 1986 HRM Mswati III takes up reigns as monarch of the Kingdom of Eswatini

King Mswati III (Makhosetive Dlamini), became King of Swaziland (now Eswatini) when he succeeded his late father King Sobhuza II, who died of pneumonia in 1982. Two relatives, Queen Dzeliwe Shongwe and Queen Ntombi Thwala, served as regents until Makhosetive, who was fourteen years old when his father died, was ready to take the reins. Queen Shongwe ruled from 1982-1983 while Queen Thwala ruled from 1983 until 1986. During that time the prospective King was pursuing his studies at the English Sherborne School.

### 25 April 1986 Africa's fastest blind sprinter born

Ananias Shikongo, Namibian runner and Africa's fastest blind sprinter was born in Okankolo, Namibia. He lost one eye at the

age 3 when accidentally hit by an arrow shot by his brother, who was aiming at a bird. He lost his second eye at age 6 when kicked by a donkey whilst working the fields. Competing in the T11 (totally blind) category at the 2016 Paralympic Games, he became the first Namibian man to win an Olympic gold medal and set a Paralympic record for the 200m.

### 25 April 2005 Obelisk of Axum returns to Ethiopia

This cultural treasure was returned to Ethiopia after being airlifted in pieces from Italy, after fierce lobbying by the African Union Ministers. The obelisk was stolen by the army of Italian fascist Benito Mussolini in 1937.

### 25 April 2007 First African Malaria Day

The African Union declared this as African Malaria Day, given the devastation of the tropical disease throughout the continent. In 2014, it was changed to World Malaria Day following a lobby by African member states of the World Health Organisation. The AU has an ongoing #RollBack-Malaria campaign.

### 25 April 2019 Cyclone Kenneth hits Mozambique

Tropical cyclone Kenneth, which started in Madagascar on 23 April 2019, with winds of 220 km/h made landfall in Mozambique. It was the strongest tropical cyclone to make landfall in Mozambique since modern records began, killing 28 people and causing extensive damage. The cyclone also caused significant damage in the Comoro Islands and Tanzania.



## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

# INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

19–25 April 2025

Source: [www.un.org](http://www.un.org), [www.au.int](http://www.au.int), *The Africa Fact Book (2020)*, [www.daysoftheyear.com](http://www.daysoftheyear.com)

### 19 April

#### World Jackal Day

Jackals are related to dogs, foxes, coyotes and wolves, but they are a unique species of their own occurring in Africa, Europe and Asia. There are three species of Jackal in Africa: the Common or Golden Jackal (*Canis aureus*), found in East and North Africa and the Black-Backed Jackal (*Canis mesomelas*) and Side-striped (*Canis adustus*), that are more widely spread over the continent.

### 20 April

#### World Chinese Language Day

The United Nations has 6 official languages – Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Since 2010, each of them have had their own days when the UN and its affiliates promote multiculturalism and cultural understanding by showcasing the rich history and literary culture of each language. Chinese Language Day is celebrated on 20 April each year, in honour of Cangjie, an ancient legend credited for inventing Chinese script. Mandarin and Cantonese are spoken Chinese dialects, with over 1 billion Chinese speakers. It is one of the oldest written languages in the world with around 49,000 characters in the alphabet. To read a newspaper, you only need to know 2000 – 3000!

### 21 April

#### World Creativity and Innovation Day

Innovations can be a new way of doing something, a new product or service or new technologies. This can be local, continental or global, it can be at home, work, school, in the public or private sector. Creativity and innovation, at both the individual and group levels, have become the true wealth of nations in the 21st century, according to the findings of the special edition of the Creative Economy Report “*Widening local development pathways*”. The



day also celebrates the importance of the Creative industries – which include audiovisual products, design, new media, performing arts, publishing and visual arts – and its role in job creation and development. According to UNESCO, the sector accounts for close to 29.5 million jobs worldwide.

### 22 April

#### Mother Earth Day

The Earth and its ecosystems are our home. In order to achieve a just balance among the economic, social, and environmental needs of present and future generations, it is necessary to promote harmony with nature and the Earth. International Mother Earth Day is celebrated to remind each of us that the Earth and its ecosystems provide us with life and sustenance.

### 22 April

#### International Girls in ICT Day

Although girls across the world tend to outperform boys in reading and writing skills, they continue to be under-represented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). International Girls in ICT Day builds awareness about the gender digital divide, support technology education

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

and skills training, and encourage more girls and young women to actively pursue careers in STEM.

### 23 April

#### World Book and Copyright Day

The day focuses on the importance of books and reading, with celebrations across the world on the power of books – a link between the past and the future, a bridge between generations and across cultures, as well as the three major sectors of the book industry – publishers, booksellers and libraries. It is as a symbolic date in world literature, the date on which several prominent authors, William Shakespeare, Miguel Cervantes and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega died.

### 23 April

#### World Spanish Language Day and English Language Day

The United Nations has 6 official languages – Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Since 2010, each has their own day when the UN and its affiliates promote diversity, by showcasing the history and literary culture of each language. World English Language day falls on 23 April each year, the date of birth and death of William Shakespeare. 23 April, World Spanish Language day also coincides with the death of the great genius of Spanish letters, Miguel de Cervantes, best known for his novel Don Quixote. An estimated 237 million people speak English as native, or second or language on the African continent. Equatorial Guinea and Western Sahara are the only countries in Africa that speak Spanish.

### 23 April

#### World Table Tennis Day

Also known as ping pong, table tennis is an indoor sport, played competitively in a number of countries in the world today. Initially, world championships were dominated by Eastern European countries but in the 90s Asian countries started dominating, especially China and Japan. Table tennis became an Olympic sport in 1972.

### 24 April

#### International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace

The values of multilateralism and international cooperation, which underpin the UN Charter, is fun-

### International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace

Only together, through a strong, cooperative, and multilateral approach, we can overcome the current threats and work towards a more peaceful, secure, and prosperous world.

COALITION  
OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
CRIMINAL COURT

#multilateralismmatters

damental to promote and support the three pillars of the UN – peace and security, development and human rights. **Multilateralism and international cooperation means an international norms and rules based system that is fair and promotes equality, and helps to foster common and more just approaches to development,** global trade, climate change, geopolitical tensions, humanitarian and migratory crises.

### 24-30 April

#### World Immunization Week

Led by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and national governments, the day aims to highlight the collective action needed to protect people from vaccine-preventable diseases.

### 25 April

#### International Delegates Day

Delegates refer to all the country representatives in multilateral organisations that work tirelessly to protect and advance national and common global interests at the United Nations.

### 25 April

#### World Malaria Day

According to the WHO, in 2020, there were an estimated 241 million new cases of malaria and 627,000 malaria-related deaths in 85 countries. More than two thirds of deaths were among children under the age of 5 living in the WHO African Region.