



# ANC TODAY

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## Conversations with the President



# The values, principles and rights contained in the Constitution are neither trivial, nor abstract

■ *By President Cyril Ramaphosa*

**A**S Commander-In-Chief of our country's armed forces, I officiated at the annual celebration of Armed Forces Day in the Castle in Cape Town. This important event is held each year on the anniversary of the sinking of the SS Mendi in 1917, in which more than 600 black South African soldiers and 30 crew lost their lives.

On Armed Forces Day, we remember the men and women who have lost their lives in the service of our nation. We are also reminded on this day of the responsibility that the defence force has to protect our democracy.

The Constitution asserts that the primary object of the defence force is to defend the Republic, its

territorial integrity and its people in accordance with the Constitution.

While the defence force is the only lawful military force in the country, the responsibility to defend our democracy and uphold our Constitution rests with each one of us.

Our democratic Constitution is the product of years of sacrifice and

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South Africa's apex court, the Constitutional Court in session.

struggle. Many South Africans endured great pain and hardship, and many lost their lives, so that we could live in a democracy where all may enjoy equal rights.

The values, principles and rights contained in the Constitution are neither trivial, nor abstract. They directly affect the daily lives of millions of people, preventing the arbitrary use of power, providing protection to the vulnerable, and advancing the access of all people to shelter, water, health care, education and social support.

The Constitution is also vital to maintaining a system of checks and balances to prevent the abuse and concentration of power to the detriment of the people. The three arms of the state – the legislature, the executive and the judiciary – each have a role to play in ensuring accountability and adherence to the rule of law.

Without these checks and balances, without each arm of the state fulfilling its responsibility, without adherence to the Constitution, our democracy is vulnerable and worthless.

We should therefore be concerned when those who occupy prominent positions in society make statements that demonstrate a disdain for the basic principles of our Constitution and the institutions established to defend our democracy.

Of particular concern are recent utterances directed at the judiciary, in which some judges are accused, without any evidence, of pursuing interests other than the cause of justice. Judges have been accused of political agendas and some have even been accused of accepting bribes.

Such claims are deeply disturb-

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”

ing, for at least two reasons.

Firstly, if such claims were true, it would mean that there are some within the judiciary who are failing to uphold the values and principles with which they have been entrusted.

Fortunately, our Constitution makes provision for such a possibility. The National Assembly is empowered to remove judges who are found by the Judicial Service Commission to be guilty of gross misconduct. The Judicial Service Commission is a carefully constituted body, which includes representatives from the judiciary but also the legal profession, academia and Parliament. There are clear processes established in law to deal with allegations of misconduct against members of the judiciary.

Anyone who has evidence of any wrongdoing by any judge should make use of the avenues provided in our Constitution and in our law to ensure that appropriate action is taken.

The claims that have been made

against the judiciary are disturbing for another reason.

Without the presentation of evidence to support these claims, and unless referred to the relevant authorities, all that such allegations do is to undermine the judiciary and the important function that it performs in our democracy.

Of course, South Africa is a free country, with a Constitution that guarantees freedom of expression and opinion. However, when some in positions of responsibility choose to use those freedoms to undermine our Constitutional order, they should be reminded of the possible consequences of their utterances.

One of these possible consequences is the erosion of trust in the judiciary and our constitutional order.

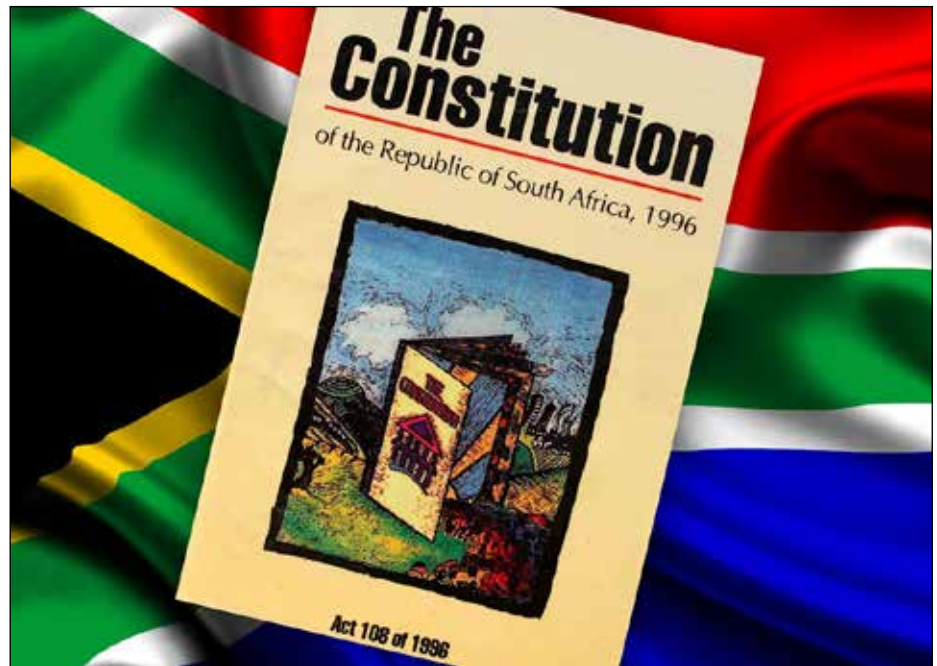
As former Chief Justice Sandile Ngcobo said in an address in 2010:

*"[W]ithout public confidence in the ability of the courts to dispense justice, there can be no faith in the rule of law. Without faith in the rule of law, valuable relationships of trust within society begin to break down.*

*"Citizens can no longer be assured that their rights will be respected. Businesses can no longer be assured that their contracts will be honored. Victims of crime can no longer be assured that justice will be served in court. Public confidence is therefore vital.*

*"That is why courts must not only be independent and effective; they must be seen to be independent and effective."*

We should therefore not take



attacks on the judiciary lightly. Such attacks shake the very foundations of our constitutional democracy. Unless supported by evidence, such claims undermine confidence in our courts, and weaken our Constitutional order.

In all our actions, we need to take heed of Section 165(3) of the Constitution, which says: *"No person or organ of state may interfere*

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*with the functioning of the courts."*

We interfere with the functioning of our courts and weaken the rule of law when we attack the judiciary. Our failure to implement our courts' injunctions weakens our constitutional democracy.

The soldiers who we honoured on Sunday during Armed Forces Day have taken an oath to dedicate their lives to protect our democracy. Like them, we all have a responsibility to defend the Constitution upon which our democracy is founded.

We have a responsibility to the generations of our forebears, many of whom gave their lives so that we may have a democratic Constitution.

We have a responsibility to the millions of South Africans who look to the Constitution for protection and relief.

And we have a responsibility to future generations who will look to this Constitution as the foundation of a stable, peaceful and just nation.



# A People's Budget during a pandemic

Dear Mr President

**A**PPROXIMATELY at this time twelve months ago, Patient Zero hadn't as yet set foot on South African soil when Finance Minister Tito Mboweni presented the national budget. Even at that time, it was not a secret that our economy was hemorrhaging amid low growth and a shrinking tax base.

Little did we know just how worse things were about to get and a month later, the first positive case of the lethal coronavirus was diagnosed and the country went into lockdown. Almost a year later, the country is still under a lockdown as the virus shows no signs of abating.

The world has fundamentally changed and daily routines are no longer what they used to be.

The workplace has also restructured to reflect the new normal as people work from home to prevent unnecessary movement and spreading the pathogen.

Our already buckling economy has taken a beating and the budget that was presented at the beginning of last year had to be readjusted to reflect the reality of an economy brought to a halt by the virus.

Thus, this week's budget was a tough balancing act and no easy



*Comrade Pule Mabe*

task for those involved. Even so, as the African National Congress, we are confident that there is cause for optimism. The ANC, despite being a broad church whose membership includes all spheres of the socioeconomic strata, has always been passionate about the plight of the poor and less fortunate.

We are pleased that in spite of the economic pressure and much-needed fiscal consolidation, the budget managed to pull off grant increases. While the pandemic has been a leveller, it is mainly the poor who have borne the brunt of its devastation as they lacked the means to shield themselves from its wrath.

The extension of the special

COVID-19 social relief grant to April is another crucial intervention to ease the burden on the people who most need it. In an utopian society, there would not be a need for social grants but ours is not an utopian world. Our country is buckling under severe socioeconomic disparities and there is urgent need to restructure the economy to level the playing field.

Mr President, the ANC will also be pleased that the personal income tax remains unchanged to help households and stimulate economic recovery.

This is good news for taxpayers after the National Treasury reversed an earlier decision to increase personal income taxes.

Many households have been battered by joblessness in the year of the pandemic and an increase in personal tax would have undermined the sorely needed economic recovery.

Many analysts were pleasantly surprised that there were no major tax increases and no introduction of new taxes even though the government had been touting the wealth tax for a while.

Crucially, Mr President, the R10.3 billion allocation to a massive vaccination programme to shield the population against COVID-19 shows that the earlier noise from



**Minister Tito Mboweni and team from the National Treasury making their way to the National Assembly.**

doomsayers that the government was dragging its feet on the acquisition of a vaccine was inconsequential.

We are on course as a country to achieve population immunity once the projected percentage of our people has been inoculated. The misplaced sound and fury from the naysayers has not deterred the ANC government from doing the right thing to ensure that correct processes are followed in the race to protect our people from the excesses of the pandemic.

Last but not least, Mr President, there is a glimmer of hope that our unemployment rates will soon head south. The Jobs Fund Project has already created more than 175 000 permanent jobs and 59 000 short term jobs, of which 65% went to the youth.

While this is a trickle, given our country's staggering youth unemployment figures, this is no doubt a huge boost to chip away the intractable problem.

Youth unemployment is a ticking time bomb which requires urgent intervention. Whereas a young population has been an important shield against the pandemic in terms of mild infections which

do not require hospitalisation, unemployment itself presents an epidemic that needs to be cured urgently.

A stagnant youth is a waste of crucial human resource capabilities and is a source of discontent and social instability.

We have already seen how young people are in the forefront of community disorder in the form of service delivery protests when they ought to be channeling their energies on worthwhile pursuits.

As the ANC, Mr President, we should not shy away from taking responsibility by not allowing the Youth League to weaken and thus allowing the voice of young people to be silenced. A strong ANC Youth League would have served as a bulwark to mobilise young people into productive endeavours. Mr President, the young lions need to roar again!

It has been said that the pandemic will fundamentally restructure our way if life and technological revolution currently underway is set to be permanent and this is where young people have an advantage as they are best placed to adapt to the new normal.

The virus has provided impetus to accelerate the adoption of new technologies to respond to the Fourth Industrial Revolution after initially dragging its feet on the release of spectrum and forcing the reduction of expensive data costs. As the vaccine roll-out gathers momentum, this does not in any way mean that people should revert to the past and drop the ball. We have already seen the devastating repercussions of ignoring hygiene protocols when our country was forced back into alert level 3 as infection rates spiked.

The wearing of masks, washing our hands regularly and maintaining social distance should remain the norm for the foreseeable future. As the country approaches the winter season, the danger of a third wave of the coronavirus lurks ominously to reverse the gains we have already made against the pandemic

Our cadres should remain in the front of fighting misinformation and fake news that permeate our social spaces, especially with the vaccine now being rolled out.

#### **Pule Mabe**

National Spokesperson and Head of the Department of Information and Publicity



# We must become **resolute** in the **mission to recover** and **shape our destiny**

■ *An edited version of the Budget Speech by Finance Minister Tito Mboweni, 24 February 2021*

**O**FTEN, we speak about how we must leave this earth better than we found it for future generations. Today I want to leave you hopeful and outline how we will leave this economy in a better shape for those who come after us.

Under the leadership of our President, we have crafted a Fiscal Framework that extends support to the economy and public health services in the short-term, while ensuring the sustainability of our public finances in the medium term.

This is our first reason for hope.

My second reason for hope stems from a much-improved economic outlook.

Global economic growth is expected to rebound to 5.5 per cent in 2021 before moderating slightly to 4.2 per cent in 2022, spurred on by the expected rollout of COVID-19 vaccines and other additional policy initiatives.

I am also hopeful because we are making meaningful progress in the implementation of our structural economic reforms. Our struc-

tural weaknesses limit the rate at which our economy can grow. Our structural reform agenda, as articulated in the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan, is aimed at removing these brakes on growth.

Operation Vulindlela, which I introduced to you last year, has already made demonstrable progress in accelerating the pace of implementation of high-impact structural reforms.

Government has committed to a R791.2 billion infrastructure investment drive to this end. We are already partnering with the private sector and other players to rollout infrastructure through initiatives such as the blended finance.

However, all these efforts to expand infrastructure will be wasted if the end user does not pay a cost-reflective tariff for usage.

My fourth reason for hope is that this Budget explicitly supports economic transformation and job creation. Our R6.2 trillion spending envelope over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework gives expression to the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery.

The Minister for the Department of Public Service and Administration, Minister Senzo Mchunu, is working with our partners in organised labour to achieve a fair public-sector compensation dispensation when negotiations on a new multi-year wage settlement begin later this year.

We have cumulatively made R83.2 billion available for the public employment programmes since the 2020 Special Adjustments Budget. We are now augmenting this by R11 billion for the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative, taking the total funding for employment creation to nearly R100 billion. This is in response to the job creation targets for young people outlined by the President.

Government plans to finalise 1409 restitution claims at a cost of R9.3 billion over the next three years to achieve redress and equitable access to land. The Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development has also set aside R896.7 million for post-settlement support. This will include the recruitment of approximately 10 000 experienced extension officers.



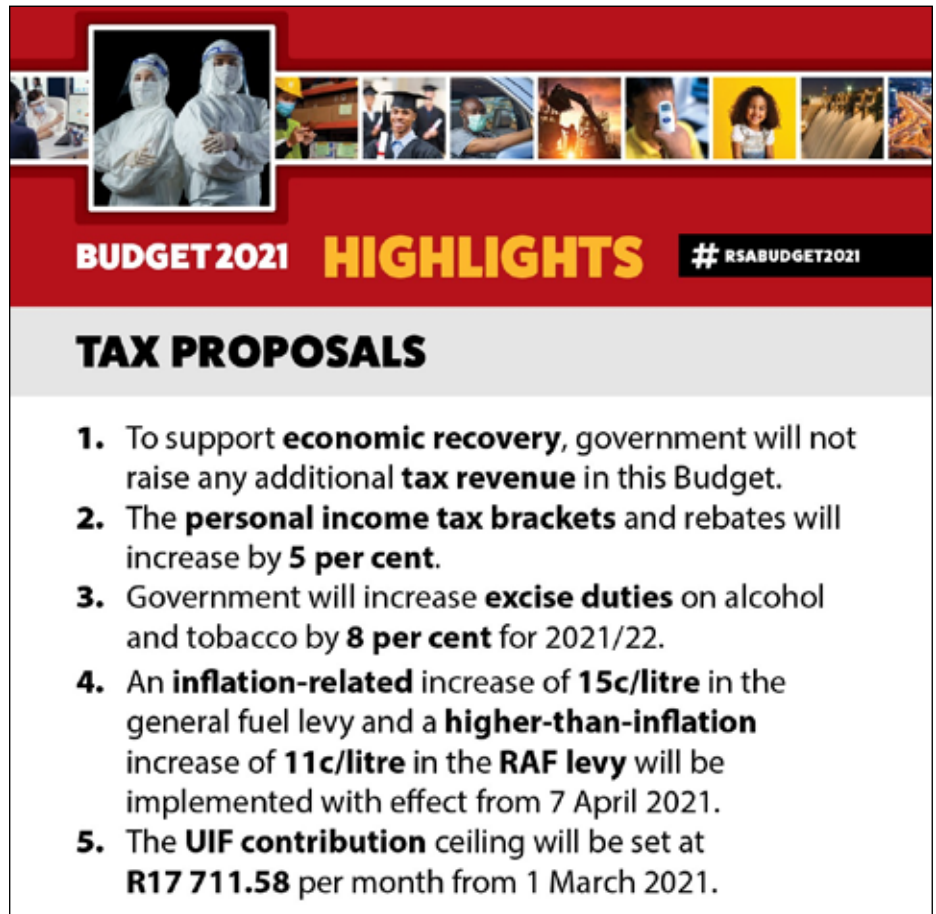
A total MTEF allocation of R7 billion is made to the Land Bank. This allocation will help to resolve the bank's current default and re-establish the development and transformation mandate. This amount will not affect the expenditure ceiling but will be offset through an expenditure reprioritisation process. Any support to state-owned companies and public entities will have to be done through budget reprioritisation as outlined in the 2020 MTBPS

The Department of Small Business Development has allocated R4 billion over the medium term to township and rural enterprises, including blended finance initiatives.

The Department of Tourism has reprioritised R540 million over the medium term to establish the Tourism Equity Fund (TEF) as one of the measures to support the tourism sector recovery. The fund will acquire equity stakes in existing tourism enterprises, support expansion of operations and development of new operations. I have outlined a few of the reasons we have to be hopeful but also acknowledge that much work remains to be done.

An incorrect notion has taken hold that government is *"swimming in cash"*. Certainly, compared to last October, we are in a better place. But our assessment from the Supplementary Budget in June last year still stands: our public finances are dangerously overstretched. Our borrowing requirement will remain well above R500 billion in each year of the medium term despite the modest improvements in our fiscal position.

Consequently, gross loan debt will increase from R3.95 trillion in the current fiscal year to R5.2 trillion in 2023/24. We owe a lot of people a lot of money. These in-



**BUDGET 2021 HIGHLIGHTS** #RSABUDGET2021

### TAX PROPOSALS

1. To support **economic recovery**, government will not raise any additional **tax revenue** in this Budget.
2. The **personal income tax brackets** and rebates will increase by **5 per cent**.
3. Government will increase **excise duties** on alcohol and tobacco by **8 per cent** for 2021/22.
4. An **inflation-related** increase of **15c/litre** in the general fuel levy and a **higher-than-inflation** increase of **11c/litre** in the **RAF levy** will be implemented with effect from 7 April 2021.
5. The **UIF contribution** ceiling will be set at **R17 711.58** per month from 1 March 2021.

clude foreign investors, pension funds, local and foreign banks, unit trusts, financial corporations, insurance companies, the Public Investment Corporation and ordinary South African bondholders. We must shore up our fiscal position in order to pay back the massive obligations we have incurred over the years.

We must advise this House that we now expect to collect R1.21 trillion in taxes during 2020/21, which is about R213 billion less than our 2020 Budget expectations. This is the largest tax shortfall on record.

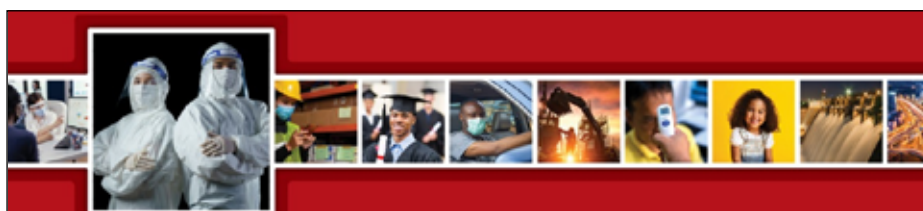
In 2021/22 government expects to collect R1.37 trillion, provided our underlying assumptions on the performance of the economy and tax base hold.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those South Africans who

diligently continue to pay their taxes.

In this Budget we make the following tax policy proposals.

1. The corporate income tax rate will be lowered to 27 per cent for companies with years of assessment commencing on or after 1 April 2022. This will be done alongside a broadening of the corporate income tax base by limiting interest deductions and assessed losses
2. The personal income tax brackets will be increased by 5 per cent, which is more than inflation. This will provide R2.2 billion in tax relief. Most of that relief will reduce the tax burden on the lower and middle-income households.
3. Fuel levies will be increased by 27 cents per litre, comprising



## BUDGET 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

#RSABUDGET2021

## ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

1. Government will support the **economic recovery** by extending short-term economic support and undertaking reforms to **lower the cost of doing business** and stabilise the public finances.
2. Real GDP is expected to grow at **3.3 per cent** in 2021 and **2.2 per cent** in 2022.
3. The global economic outlook is uncertain; however, additional policy **stimulus packages** and successful rollout of COVID-19 vaccines will **boost global growth**.
4. A successful **rollout of COVID-19** vaccines will support the **economic recovery** and global trade.
5. Government will take steps to **promote faster growth** by stabilising electricity supply, supporting industries with **high employment potential** and undertaking partnerships with the private sector.
6. Operation Vulindlela is supporting the implementation of **key structural reforms**, but faster progress is needed to generate an **economic recovery**.

15 cents per litre for the general fuel levy, 11 cents per litre for the Road Accident Fund levy and 1 cent per litre for the carbon fuel levy.

4. An 8 per cent increase in the excise duties on alcohol and tobacco products.

SARS has started to deepen its technology, data and machine learning capability. It is also expanding specialised audit and investigative skills in the tax and customs areas to renew its focus on the abuse of transfer pricing, tax base erosion and tax crime.

In this coming fiscal year, SARS will establish a dedicated unit to

improve compliance of individuals with wealth and complex financial arrangements.

This first group of taxpayers have been identified and will receive communication during April 2021. In support of these efforts, we request that this House approve an additional spending allocation to SARS of R3 billion over the medium term.

Let me turn to the division of revenue. The 2021/22 Division of Revenue stands as follows: 48.7 per cent of nationally raised funds are allocated to national government, 41.9 per cent to provinces and 9.4 per cent to local government. This is after providing for debt-service

costs, the contingency reserve and provisional allocations.

The provincial equitable share will be augmented by R8 billion for provincial health departments in 2021/22 to deal with COVID-19. Of the R10.3 billion for vaccines, R2.4 billion is allocated to provincial departments of health to administer the COVID-19 vaccine programme.

The local government equitable share is set to increase to 9.7 per cent of the Division of Revenue in 2023/24. We are aware that financial governance remains a challenge for many municipalities. Therefore, the Municipal Systems Improvement Grant is extended for the rollout of the District Development Model.

Government remains committed to ensuring that deserving students are supported through higher education. The National Treasury is working with the Department of Higher Education and Training to work on policy and funding options that will be detailed in the MTBPS.

This Budget takes seriously our commitment to the continent of which we are a part. Payments to the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) have been revised upwards by R1.9 billion in 2022/23 and R15.5 billion in 2023/24 to R137.3 billion over the medium term.

The African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund will over the MTEF support projects that enhance African trade, economic development and integration. An allocation of R148.1 million is set aside for this purpose.

The Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCTA), part of which



came into effect earlier this year, presents the opportunity to deepen our trade and financial linkages with the Continent. Following last year's Budget announcement on supporting the African Continental Free Trade Agreement through a more modern risk-based capital management flow system, much progress has been made to implement the new system, and new regulations will be published by the South African Reserve Bank shortly.

The National Treasury also continues to work with industry bodies to promote South Africa as a financial hub for Africa. From 1 March 2021, companies with a primary listing offshore, including dual-listings, will be aligned to current foreign direct investment rules, which the South African Reserve Bank will oversee.

Finalisation of the Public Procurement Bill is urgent. The National Treasury is fast tracking it. The bill addresses fragmentation in procurement legislation.

We aim to table this reform before Cabinet before the end of this year.

The Department of Public Enterprises and the National Treasury will be first to pilot a new budgeting methodology. The intention is to produce significantly re-costed budgets from 2022/23.

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development is allocated R1.8 billion to improve business processes. This allocation will support our brave law enforcement agents in the fight against crime and corruption. We are bringing the long arm of the law into the digital age through the Justice Modernisation Programme.

SARS, SARB and the Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC) are working jointly on combating criminal and illicit cross-border activities through an inter-agency working group. This group has completed 117 investigations, and found R2.7 billion for our fiscus.

Customs and excise operations are reducing the illicit movement of goods across borders, assisted by specialised cargo scanners, resulting in 3 393 seizures valued at R1.5 billion for the fiscal year to January 2021.

We announced in the MTBPS the historic agreement with all NED-LAC constituencies for the annuitisation of provident funds. This will enable all workers to continue to enjoy tax deductions on their contributions.

I can announce that annuitisation for provident funds takes effect from 1 March 2021, and provident fund members will continue to enjoy a tax deduction on their contributions. In addition, the National

Treasury will this week publish draft amendments to Regulation 28 for public comment. The proposed amendments to Regulation 28 seek to make it easier for retirement funds to increase investment in infrastructure.

This 2021 budget framework puts South Africa on course to achieve a primary surplus. By doing this, government debt will stabilise at 88.9 per cent of GDP in 2025/26.

The path is challenging but achievable. It is the most prudent way to achieve higher levels of prosperity and avoid a sovereign debt crisis.

When the Constitution was adopted 25 years ago, the words **"Nothing can stop us now!"** resonated in this House.

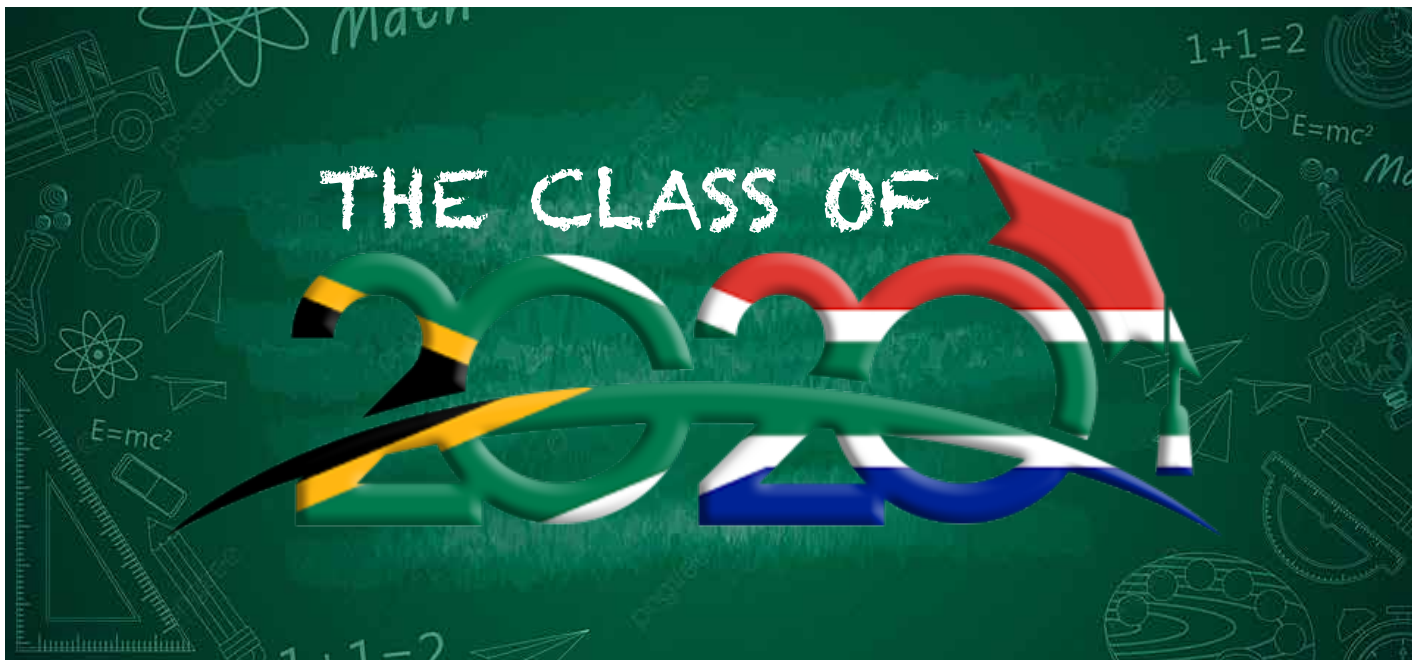
**As we affirm our commitment to sustainable public finances and the supremacy of our Constitution, we must again become resolute in the mission to recover and shape our destiny.**

## BUDGET 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

#RSABUDGET2021

### SPENDING PROGRAMMES

1. Total consolidated spending amounts to **R2 trillion** each year **over the medium term**.
2. The bulk of the spending is allocated to learning and culture (**R402.9 billion**), social development (**R335.2 billion**) and health (**R248.8 billion**) in 2021/22.
3. The fastest-growing functions over the medium term are **economic development, community development** and **general public services**.
4. The majority of **funding** for new and urgent priorities is provided through **reprioritisation** and **reallocation** of existing baselines.
5. The **UIF** increased the budget allocation for the **COVID-19 TERs** benefit by **R13.6 billion** from R60 billion to **R73.6 billion** in 2021/22.



# We are indeed proud of the Class of 2020

■ *Extracts from the speech by Minister Angie Motshekga on the Release of the 2021 National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examination Results, 22 Feb 2021*

**W**E are announcing these results in the context of what the NDP 2030, enjoins us to do, that “by 2030, South Africans should have access to education and training of the highest quality, leading to significantly improved learner outcomes. The performance of South African learners in international standardised tests should be comparable to the performance of learners from countries at a similar level of development and with similar levels of access”. It is without doubt that the 2020 academic year, will

be remembered as the year that, not only presented major health challenges, but a year when the entire world was engulfed by the by the novel COVID-19 pandemic. Government, with its education departments and its strategic partners, worked very hard to strike a balance between saving lives and the 2020 academic year.

During the announcement of the 2019 NSC exam results, we informed the nation about the seven Basic Education Sector cardinal priorities for the Sixth Administration. We can report that we are

continuing to participate in international benchmark assessment studies, such as the Progress in International Literacy Study (PIRLS) for Grade 4; the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) for Grade 5, and the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) for Grade 6, to benchmark the performance of our system with other systems of the world. All of these international benchmark assessment studies have been providing evidence that our Basic Education system is definitely on the rise.

We are proud to announce that in 2020, South Africa's participation in benchmark studies, again pointed towards an upward trajectory in the past eleven years. The latest release of the TIMSS 2019, explained that in the context of many forms of inequalities, the education system continues to improve on its achievements, and continues to bridge gaps on disciplinary knowledge and educational outcomes. The 2019 TIMSS results indicate a steady increase in the percentage of Grade 5 learners, acquiring basic Mathematics and Science skills at lower levels of the system. From 2003 to 2019, the Mathematics and Science achievements, increased by 104 points and 102 points, respectively.

The total number of candidates, who registered for the 2020 NSC exams was seven hundred and twenty-five thousand and thirty-four (725,034), comprising six hundred and seven thousand, two hundred and twenty-six (607,226) full-time candidates, and one hundred and seventeen thousand, eight hundred and eight (117,808) part-time candidates.

In addition to the full-time and part-time candidates who enrolled for the 2020 NSC exams, we combined the November 2020 NSC examinations with the June 2020 Senior Certificate, and June 2020 NSC exams. This increased the number of candidates who wrote the combined 2020 November exams to a record of more than a million (1,054,321) candidates.

We set one hundred and forty-seven (147) question papers; printed eight (8) million question papers; produced seven point six (7.6) million scripts, which we delivered countrywide to six thousand, eight hundred and seventy-two (6,872) in secure examination centres; in



**Minister Angie Motshekga with some of the country's top achievers**

which sixty-five thousand (6,000) invigilators were on duty. Forty-five thousand, two hundred and seventy-two (45,272) markers were appointed, in one hundred and seventy-nine (179) secure marking centres.

In the 2020 NSC examinations, we saw seventy thousand, five hundred and sixty-five (70,565) progressed learners enrolling for the exams. Sixty-five thousand, four hundred ninety-nine (65,499) of these candidates, actually wrote the requisite seven subjects during the 2020 NSC examinations. Twenty-four thousand, two hundred and forty-four (24,244) progressed learners passed the 2020 NSC examinations.

Three thousand and twenty-six (3,026) of the progressed learners, achieved Bachelor passes; ten thousand, one hundred and seven (10,107) obtained Diploma passes; eleven thousand and eighty-eight (11,088) obtained Higher Certificate passes; eleven (11) obtained NSC passes; and a total of one thousand, six hundred and fifty-five (1,655) distinctions, including distinctions in critical subjects, such as Accounting, Business Studies, Economics, Mathematics and Physical Science.

The significance of these achieve-

ments, is that the twenty-four thousand, two hundred and forty-four (24,244) progressed learners, who passed – were the would-be-high-school repeaters and dropouts, who have a golden opportunity to access either higher education institutions, TVET Colleges, and other skills development institutions. What a positive story!!

We strongly believe that an Inclusive Education system makes an immense contribution towards an inclusive economy, to serve an inclusive society. We have for the past few years included the learners with special education needs in tracking learner performance in the NSC exams

We are happy to announce that out of the two thousand, one hundred and sixty-one (2,161) learners with special education needs, who enrolled for the 2020 NSC examinations, two thousand and fifty-eight (2,058), wrote the 2020 NSC exams.

One thousand, seven hundred and fifty-seven (1,757) learners with special education needs passed the 2020 exams. Nine hundred and forty-three (943) and five hundred and eighty-two (582) of these learners, achieved Bachelor and Diploma passes, respec-

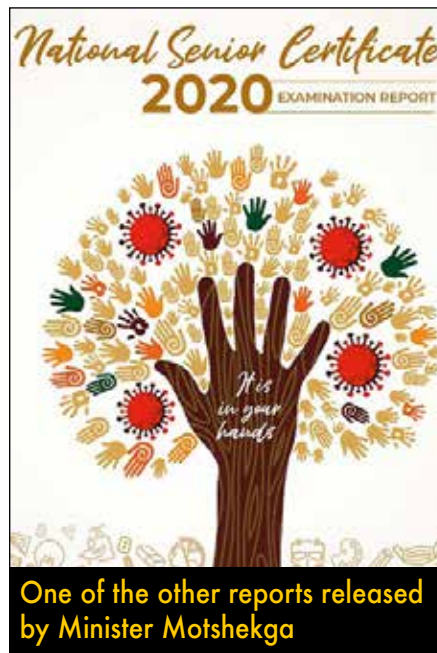


tively. Two hundred and four (204) and twenty-eight (28) of them obtained Higher Certificate and NSC passes, respectively. Learners with special education needs achieved a total of six hundred and fifty-three (653) distinctions, including distinctions in the critical subjects.

The 2020 NSC exam passes for “no fee” schools combined, stand at two hundred and seventy-five thousand, six hundred and fifteen (275,615). Bachelor passes achieved by learners in “no fee” schools, stand at one hundred and fifteen thousand, four hundred and forty-four (115,444). The poignancy of this increase lies in what research tells us, that in 2005, 60% of the Bachelor passes, came from the best performing 20% of the schooling system.

However, with the introduction of a pro-poor policies in the education system in 2015, “no fee” schools produced 51% of the Bachelor passes, which increased to 58% in 2020 (compared to 55% in 2019). Therefore, the significance of this, is that the gap between the Bachelor passes produced by “no fee” schools versus those produced by fee paying schools has significantly and progressively increased from 2% in 2015, to 13% in 2020 – a 3% improvement from 2019. This is remarkable indeed!!

Whilst imperatives related to equity and redress are systematically addressed, there are stubborn inequalities that still remain in the system. Government must however, be applauded for its pro-poor policies, which in the Basic Education arena, alleviate poverty through the pro-poor funding of schools; school feeding; and scholar transport to deserving learners. Among the Class of 2020, we must indicate that we had young people who are recip-



ients of social grants; and some wrote their exams in correctional facilities. Ministers Zulu and Lamola will announce the impact of social grants and restorative justice on the beneficiaries, who were part of the Class of 2020.

There were seventy-two thousand and thirty (72,030) more girls than boys, who enrolled for the 2020 NSC examinations; and there were sixty-six thousand, six hundred and twenty-six (66,626) more girls than boys, who actually wrote the 2020 NSC examinations. Overall, there was 75.8% girls, and 76.7% boys passed the 2020 NSC exams. More girls than boys achieved Bachelor and Diploma passes, as well as passes with distinctions. These distinctions include passes with distinction in critical subjects such as Accounting, Business Studies, Economics, Mathematics, and Physical Science.

For the past ten years, we have noted that the NSC pass rates have consistently been improving from 60% in 2009 to above 70% in recent years. The Class of 2020 must be commended for maintaining this trend. The 2020 NSC

overall pass rate, with the progressed learners included, stands at 76.2% – a decline of 5.1% from the record pass of 81.3% achieved by the Class of 2019. This represents a record of four hundred and forty thousand, and seven hundred and two (440,702) passes – an increase of 7.5% in the number of passes from 2019. Without the progressed learners, the overall pass rate stands at 81.2% – a 1.1% decline from 2019.

There is no doubt that the system has begun to reach the desired stability; which is healthy for a large system, as large and important as ours. It is a pity that we missed the 80% glass ceiling we achieved last year; though we appreciate the unquestionable resilience our school community has shown against such a devastating pandemic; and managed to achieve a plausible 76.2% national pass.

The high quality passes we have achieved this year, especially the number of Bachelor and Diploma passes, the overall pass mark, and the passes with distinctions, even in critical subjects, are the hallmarks of the performance of the Class of 2020.

We are of the strong view that, had it not been for the novel COVID-19 pandemic, the Class of 2020 could have been the best performers, since the inception of the National Senior Certificate. We are indeed proud of the Class of 2020, which persevered against such monumental challenges, that our system was never exposed to in the past. This Class, has characterised the resilience of the system, which withstood an unprecedented test of administering an examination of the largest number of candidates; faced by the worst pandemic in human history.

# A Tribute to My Dear Friend, Colleague, Comrade and Heroine

■ By Isithwalandwe/Seaparankwe Sophie De Bruyn

ON Thursday night the 18th February, Marie Theresa (Terry) Van der Merwe passed away, in the arms of her daughter Nita and in the comfort of her home and family. She fought almost a year long battle with cancer and a number of years with diabetes. She made the decision in mid-October that she was no longer prolonging life but shall await death, and die at home with the same courage and clarity that she had brought to life, and to the people and work that she loved. I will miss her *"fierce dedication to doing what is right"* (her words and my sense of her core values), her council and her friendship.

She meant a lot to the Newclare/Westbury/Coronationville communities and the communities of the former coloured areas that she served as an ANC Councillor and to me personally. Her dynamic, physical presence is gone, but the lessons she taught us in life and while courageously approaching death, will serve us all well for many years to come.

I first met Theresa in 2004, when she was an ANC Ward Councillor and I began my service in the Gauteng Provincial Legislature as an MPL. It was her deep knowledge and understanding, of all the Wards she knew like the back of her hand, which I admired and appreciated. Her time and love



HAMBA KAHLE COMRADE  
**Theresa Van Der Merwe**

serving the communities was extremely valuable. ANC projects, programmes and campaigns, including site visits and all manner of monumental issues, were never too big a challenge for Theresa to willingly take on!

Theresa was more than just a close friend. She was a younger sister, true friend, a colleague, a confidante and comrade in the true sense. Her qualities had no limits. She was an honest woman, loyal, kind hearted and always willing to please. Her friendly, good-hu-

moured nature was pleasing to all she interacted with and she was well spoken.

Theresa had immense capacity, skills and intelligence. You could rely on the copious notes she took at meetings, small or large meetings, seminars, conferences, board meetings etc. She always took pride in transcribing her notes into neat and perfect minutes, excellent reports and documents.

She was a hardworking, disciplined cadre, who never shirked any responsibility given to her and would go that extra mile to complete and hand in her tasks, always on time. She would always attend any ANC meeting with her ANC constitution, ready to correct, in the event of an anomaly, thus bringing understanding and clarity in a prevailing situation.

These are my experiences having served as an MPL and Theresa as an ANC councilor in a vast constituency in the city of Jo'burg. Thereafter, she joined me as a Personal Assistant in the office in which I served, as the Deputy Speaker of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature and where Theresa unleashed her strengths and qualities as a member of the Speaker and Deputy Speakers' office and the Gauteng Provincial Legislature.

*continues on page 19*

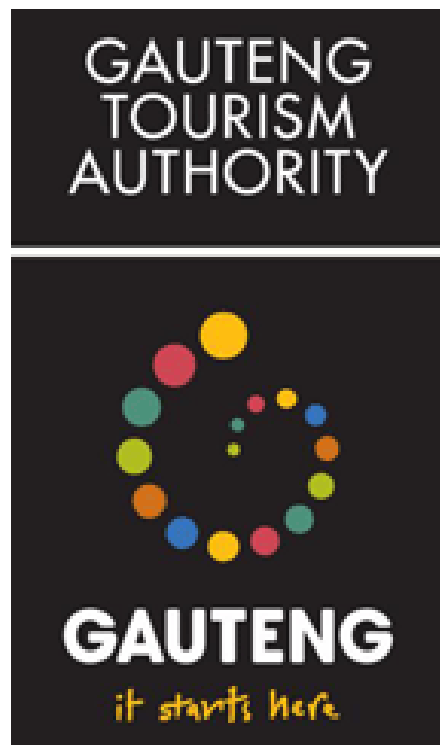


# Gauteng tourism set to drive economic recovery

■ *By Barba Gaoganediwe*

**T**HE tourism sector is undoubtedly one of the key economic growth and development sectors not only in the Gauteng province but in the country and the world. It has the potential to mobilise consistent foreign currency into the economy, stimulate local demand and interface very well with other sectors like manufacturing, transport and logistics, finance and commerce, sporting and food production, and creative industries. For every tourist that arrives on our shores, over six jobs are created ranging from tour operators, hotel cleaners, culinary chefs and entertainers, to transportation and financial services providers. It is for this reason that the Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA) is mainstreaming this sector across the different work disciplines.

The GTA is charged with the responsibility of positioning the Gauteng City Region (province) as a globally competitive tourist destination leveraging the trade, investment, competitive sport and creative sectors, among others, to do so. The GTA is developing targeted and programmatic inter-



ventions centred on destination marketing, visitor experience and the bidding and hosting of business and leisure events to grow the economy.

For a province that accounts for almost 33% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 9% of Africa's GDP, and which is a serial net exporter of domestic travel in South Africa, Gauteng possesses

the punch and positioning to lead economic recovery for the benefit of the country and the region.

This is a positioning they are not taking for granted. They have used the period of the hard lockdown this year to strengthen their internal capacity – to engender thought leadership, develop partnerships and drive strategies. This they do in order to stimulate demand for their offerings and adapt their processes and systems to the new normal, with the adoption of a digital-led strategy and approach.

The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly had a significant effect on the tourism industry. This is reflected in the forecasted performance for 2020 and the outer years. As the country's number one destination for international arrivals and Africa's preferred playground for entertainment, lifestyle, fashion, shopping, sporting and quality musical experiences, the province is reeling from the devastating impact of the pandemic on its revenue, employment figures and the social and solidarity actions brought about by the visitor economy.



The iconic Orlando Towers in Soweto



Cosmopolitan and globally competitive city regions like Gauteng across the world became the epicentres of the coronavirus. With a strong multinational and expatriate community, mobile and youthful population, dynamic cultural vibe and the quest to win against all odds, the province saw a rise in the numbers of COVID-19 cases and deaths, but also recoveries.

Encouraged by the progress made in fighting the coronavirus as a united pact, the strengthening of health systems and infrastructure and human solidarity demonstrated, the GTA believes we are on the right path to recovery, and reignition of the tourism sector and the broader economy.

They have already secured massive international business events thanks to their expert bidding and hosting machinery, with a projected R2.3-billion injection into the provincial GDP. They are prioritising airlift and cross-border transportation and logistics capacity to leverage the Africa Free Trade opportunities, inter-regional trade and the ever-increasing visiting friends and relatives (VFRs) market segment.

They are also implementing, as

part of the provincial tourism recovery plans, a dedicated marketing campaign aimed at encouraging locals to be tourists in their own backyard. Domestic tourism growth is key to stimulating tourism demand, showing market confidence and creation of local consumption and production of local products and experiences.

The GTA encourages locals to take the responsibility to get to know their own “hood”, local tourist attractions, experiences and products – to buy locally, live life locally and become a champion host to visitors this festive season. Underpinning this work is their strict adherence to the COVID-19 health and safety protocols, taking personal responsibility for actions and instituting measures to protect locals and visitors alike from any possible infection.

They are putting the health and wellbeing of their people first, while balancing the need to reignite the economy. To that effect, the GTA is working with all partners in instituting responsible and heightened coordination of health measures, new travel etiquettes and the use of data- and technology-driven interventions to guide recovery and enhance competi-

tiveness.

Tourism, and the broader visitor economy, is a key feature of the **Growing Gauteng Together Vision 2030**. It is also the mainstay of the Gauteng Economic Recovery Plan and an expected major beneficiary of the recently announced Reconstruction and Recovery Plan of government. Quality destination infrastructure creates liveable cities, integrated and sustainable neighbourhoods, improved living standards, a favourable share economy growth, and a work, stay and play environment, all of which are important ingredients in building a thriving destination brand.

Small- and medium-sized enterprises – which make up around 80% of the tourism sector – are expected to be the major beneficiaries of the revitalised strategies and action plans. The GTA is mindful of the impact of this sector on vulnerable communities who rely on tourism as a vehicle to spur their development and economic inclusion. They are uncompromising in directing their funds to drive the development, strengthen the competitiveness and secure market access for these communities.

Due to its cross-cutting economic and deep social footprint, tourism in Gauteng is uniquely positioned to help societies and communities affected to return to growth and stability. Over the years, the sector has consistently proven its resilience and its ability not only to bounce back but to lead the way to economic and social recovery.

**Barba Gaoganediwe** is Acting CEO at Gauteng Tourism Authority

*First published in **Business Update, Issue 19***

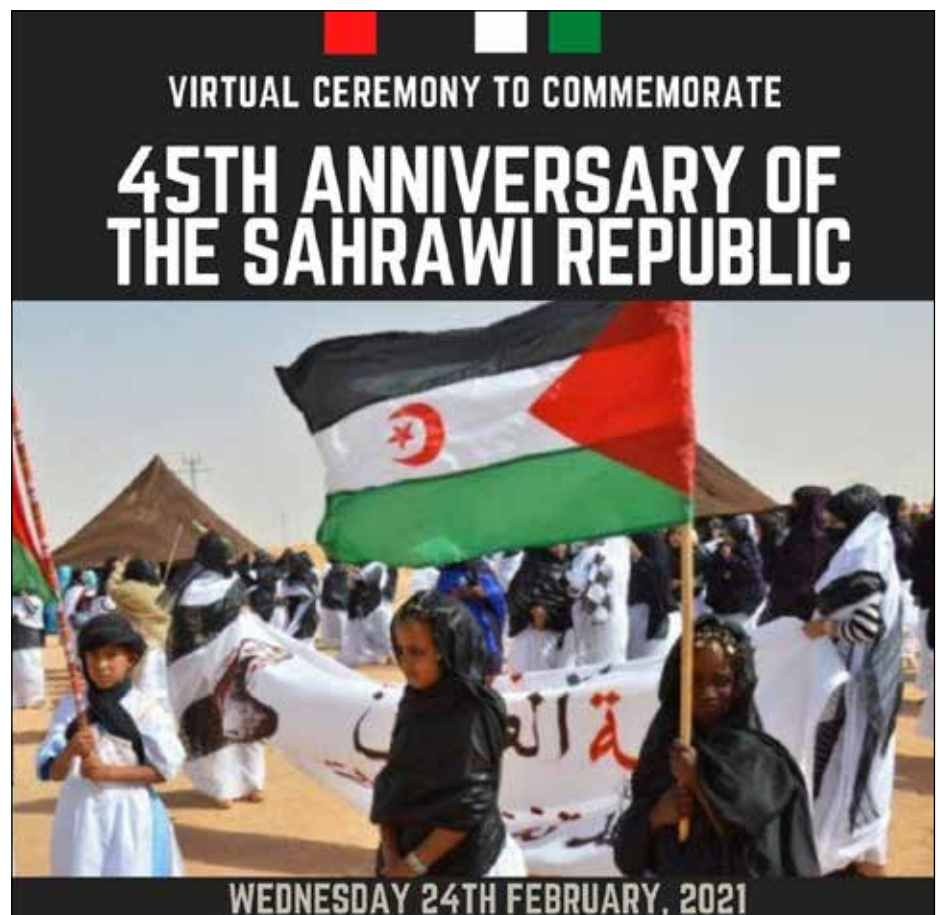
# A siren call for solidarity with the Saharawi people

■ *Statement of the virtual conference of African Movements in solidarity with Western Sahara on the occasion of the 45th anniversary of the Saharawi Republic*

**W**E, the African movements of solidarity with the Saharawi people gathered in the African Virtual Conference to commemorate the 45th Anniversary of the Saharawi Republic on Wednesday 24 February 2021, with the participation of African dignitaries, political parties, trade unions, civil society and academics from 45 countries.

We, the participants to this Virtual Conference, express our steadfast and unwavering support to the legitimate struggle of the people of the Saharawi Republic for freedom and independence. We call on all Pan-Africanists, who love freedom and peace, to stand by the people of this last colony; for Africa will never be free as long as one of our nations is occupied and brutalised.

We urge all African countries, political parties, trade unions, civil society, NGOs, Academia, youth and women organisations and the Media to give more visibility and shed light on the heroic resistance of the African people of the Saharawi people. We cannot, as the current generation of Africans, allow that our brothers and sisters in Western Sahara are left behind or abandoned in this struggle for freedom.



We call on the African Union to assume its responsibility in imposing the respect for its Constitutive Act and compel Morocco to end its illegal occupation of parts of the territory of the Saharawi Republic. Morocco's continued violation of the principles of the AU Constitutive Act should not be tolerated.

We recall the African Union 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration

of May 2013 which reaffirmed the call to ***“end expeditiously the unlawful occupation of the Chergos Archipelago, the Comorian Island of Mayotte and also reaffirm the right of self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, with a view to enable these countries and peoples to effectively exercise sovereignty over their respective territories.”***



The Virtual Conference supported the decision of the 34th AU Summit of Heads of States and Government held on 6 February 2021 to have the issue of Western Sahara as a standing item on its agenda.

We call on the United Nations to honour its promise to the people of Western Sahara 60 years ago, and organise the long-awaited referendum on self-determination so that the Saharawi people can decide their future.

We call on the European Union to put an end to the violation of the European Court of Justice's ruling on its illegal exploitation of the natural resources in Western Sahara. The EU exploitation of Saharawi resources is a direct contribution to the illegal occupation and human rights violations in the territory. The EU should be part of the solution to the conflict and not part of the problem.

Western Sahara is now a war

zone since the 13th November 2020, because of the Moroccan violation of the ceasefire and the attack against Saharawi civilians in Guerguarat region.

The participants to the Virtual Conference call on the Red Cross International Commission and the AU Commission on Human and Peoples Rights to immediately intervene in order to protect the Saharawi civilians from Moroccan systematic and increasing human rights violations in the occupied territories of the Saharawi Republic.

The conference also called for the unconditional release of all political prisoners and freedom fighters and for an immediate end to the violence against children and women.

Finally, we commit to continue to support the Saharawi people in their legitimate struggle for freedom and independence, and encourage all African initiatives and actions in that sense.

In this context, we support the mobilisation to organise in December 2021, an All African Gathering for Solidarity with the people of Saharawi Republic. This should include an International Concert where African artists can perform in support of this humane struggle in line with the African Union Theme of 2021 as the African Year of ***"Arts, Culture and Heritage: a Lever for Building the Africa we want"***.

**As African governments, political parties, civil society, youth and women's movements, trade unions, academics, media, activists and all African citizens, we must unite and build a powerful movement of solidarity for the freedom of the Saharawi people!**

***A luta continua!  
A vitória é certa!  
Amandla!***

***Asante Sane, Shukram***



**Saharawi women proudly displaying their country's flag**



# Q&A

■ By Leo Ndabambi

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT: Thulani Ndlovu

### 1. Please remind us briefly about who Cde Thulani Ndlovu is?

I'm a father and loving husband, a loyal and disciplined activist of my community. I'm driven by the need to improve the living conditions of the African. Through my passion for sports, I fulfill my calling to contribute to social cohesion and nation building. I take particular interest in young people as a strata in-transit, because their development makes my activism complete; hence my involvement in COSAS, Alex Student Forum, ANC Youth League and many other youth organs, including sport administration institutions.



*Comrade Thulani Ndlovu*

### 2. What do you think leaders of society should learn from our leaders of years gone by, especially likes of Mam Charlotte Maxeke on her 150th, and the centenary of John L. Dube on their respective anniversaries, taking into account that 2021 has been declared the "Year of Unity, Renewal and Reconstruction in the Year of Charlotte Maxeke"?

Leaders of today and the future must insist on conducting politics within the principles and value systems of the ANC. Mme Maxeke and Former President Dube left us with valuable lessons for politics of principle and conviction. Unity is significantly important in driving development. A divided people cannot develop as they steer in different directions, which is why it is important for leaders of society to be consistent in thriving to create and

maintain unity for accelerated development. These are special lessons to take from these valued men and women who led the liberation struggles in various decades and phases of our glorious movement from its very inception.

Mme Maxeke and Former President Dube characterise true patriotism, spirit of solidarity and pure resistance to the systematic oppression of an African. They stood up and assumed a revolutionary duty of fighting to elevate the position of an African through their contributions to the formation and the life of the then SANNC and the Women's struggle respectively. These are two similar figures who've immensely contributed to the fight against injustice directed against Af-

ricans and women. Most importantly, we should sustain their spirit of selflessness and commitment to the struggle to liberate fellow South Africans of native descent.

### 3. What can you tell us specifically about Mme Florence Mophosho as a revolutionary?

Amongst many fighters for the liberation of African women, she holds sentimental political value for me as an Alex activist because I walk in her footsteps as a current leader of Greater Alexandra Zone. Considering her spirit of defiance as inspired by various defiance campaigns of the decade of the 1950's and her forming part of the bus boycott campaigns in 1957, the anti pass laws defiance campaign of 9 August 1956 and mass mobilisation for civil disobedience against structural repression by the apartheid regime. From her I'm inspired by her organising and mobilisation abilities which aided her to lead these massive defiance campaigns which subsequently made outstanding contributions to the international political arena. Her contributions to the 1969 ANC Morogoro Conference marked a victory for the voices of inclusiveness within structures of the ANC. Mme Mophosho got elected into the 1975 NEC of the ANC after their successful debates for women to be given key political responsibilities within the ranks of the ANC. She integrated the struggle for women's rights with the national liberation struggle. Her rise to the ANC NEC and to the apex of the Women's

organisation inspired generations of ANC activists irrespective of gender; most importantly it renewed the confidence of women in the ANC.

**4. How can we overcome the second pandemic of GBVF and LGBTQI+ especially from an early age?**

There needs to be dialogue in society, a type of conversation that must promote tolerance amongst humanity. A society that lacks tolerance cannot unite. Through sports and recreation we can promote tolerance in order to achieve social cohesion. The domestic tensions in households can be directly linked to poverty and unemployment. Part of the solution to reduce tensions amongst families is to create employment opportunities, educate and rehabilitate families from post traumatic experiences and recurring traumatic living conditions presented by poverty. Social development department needs to be seen to be playing its part in the facilitation of safe homes for children and women.

GBVF and LGBTQI+ needs to be addressed as a holistic crisis encapsulating various other social ills, some of which emanate from historical injustices particularly against the African communities. There needs to be deliberate educational efforts taken by the government to educate society about issues pertaining to sexuality in order to alleviate stigmatic perception which also victimise and violate the rights of the gender minorities.

**5. As a former COSAS leader, what would you say to all learners about the importance of adhering to COVID-19 regulations from ECD level up to Grade 12?**

We need to instill the the thinking and understanding that a pandemic such as Covid requires us all to play our part as it has shown that we're all in harm's way, young and old.

Child Development centers and schools must explore both the African indigenous and western remedies to educate learners about preventing COVID-19. These include steaming and other means to regulate the body temperature. However, pupils should still be encouraged to use masks and sanitise to maximise hygiene levels. The facilities need regular cleaning and sanitation by competent professionals.

**6. Any thoughts about the vaccines that have arrived this month?**

We're excited about the roll out plan and appreciate the current priority list as outlined by the Minister of Health. I can't wait for my turn. I also strongly encourage South Africans to do the same.

We believe that once our people are educated sufficiently about the benefits of the vaccine they certainly will follow accordingly.

**7. What is your motto?**

**"Believe in yourself like it's a religion"**

*continued from page 13*

## **A Tribute to My Dear Friend, Colleague, Comrade and Heroine**

Despite Theresa's fine attributes and good standing not only as a community leader but also her devoted service and loyalty to Johannesburg City Council and structures of the ANC, Theresa was constantly overlooked when a vacancy as Chairperson of a committee or senior officer in any of the structure of council occurred, her true value was ignored and was of little or no importance to officials or leadership in these institutions. It saddened and disappointed me that her worthy talent, knowledge and expertise that could've been an asset and pride to the organisation or council, was not seen to be of value and counted for nothing.

Theresa was respected and admired by all at every level of the workplace and by the communities she lived and interacted with. She always tried to encourage and up-lift, them, to make their 'world' a better place. She was known for what she stood for, which was:

identify and focus on what is important, keep your sense of humour, and remember, it's not always about you, it's about helping others; have no regrets and have a dear friend.

These five simple principles define the way Theresa lived her life and I am proud that I was one of her friends.

In the pain and sadness of her family, extended family, relatives and friends that mourn her passing, we take comfort and solace in the knowledge that Our Lord has chosen and plucked his most beautiful blooms to be with him in his Kingdom where there'll be no more sorrow, pain and anguish.

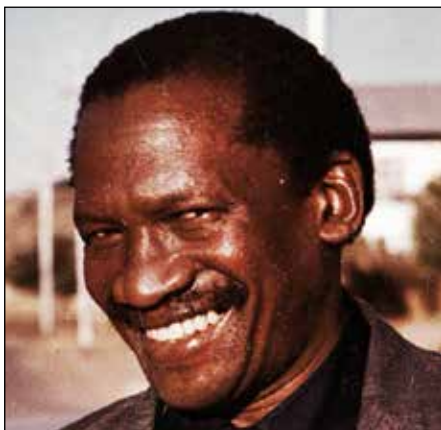
MALIBONGWE. HAMBA KAHLE, Theresa My Friend and comrade

***Eternal Rest Grant unto her O Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in everlasting Peace. Amen.***

27 February – 5 March 2021

Sources: South African History Online ([www.sahistory.org](http://www.sahistory.org))

■ **27 February 1978**  
**Robert Sobukwe, PAC**  
**founder and president**  
**passed on**



Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe (54), founder and first president of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) passed away in the Kimberley General Hospital in the early morning of February 27, 1978. Sobukwe died of lung complications after having been hospitalised in 1977. His medical doctors requested that he should be granted freedom of movement on humanitarian grounds, as he was banned to Galeshewe Township, Kimberley, but it was turned down by the authorities. The day is celebrated by PAC members as Sobukwe day.

■ **27 February 1980**  
**First democratic elections**  
**held in Zimbabwe**

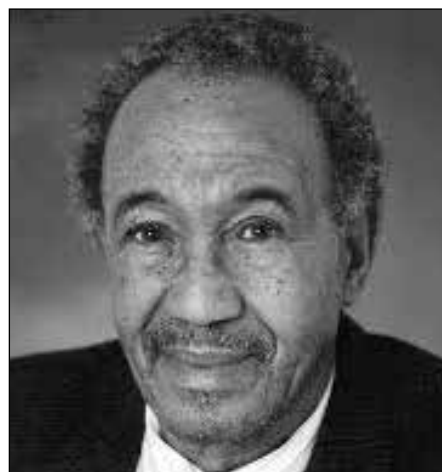
After a freedom struggle fought between members of various liberation organisations and the illegal Rhodesian government, the Lancaster Agreement was signed, leading to the country's first democratic and non-racial elections. These elections were won by the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), and Robert Gabriel Mug-

abe (1924-2019) became its first prime minister.

■ **28 February 1980**  
**Trade unionist and cricket**  
**administrator, Butshingi**  
**died**

Makhwenkwe Harrison Butshingi died in Orlando West, Soweto on this day. Butshingi was born in the Transkei in 1906, and moved to the Transvaal in 1925 to become an insurance company agent. During the 1940s and into the 1950s, he became involved in the Transvaal worker's unions. Butshingi was President of the South African Cricket Board from 1956-1970, and a community leader in various capacities.

■ **1 March 1914**  
**Archie Gumede born**



Archibald Archie Gumede was born on 1 March 1914 in Pietermaritzburg. He studied at the South African Native College (now University of Fort Hare), but dropped out after two years. He returned to Natal and joined the African National Congress (ANC) in 1949 and became secretary of the Natal

branch. Gumede was very active in the Natal ANC, leading the delegation to the Congress of the People in Kliptown in 1955 and in the campaigns against the extension of pass laws to women. Gumede established his own law practice in Natal in 1970 after being admitted to the bar. He became chairman of the Release Mandela Committee (RMC) in 1979. He was founding member of the United Democratic Front (UDF), was elected as UDF president in 1983, and tirelessly campaigned for liberation, despite harassment. In 1994 Gumede became a member of the National Assembly of South Africa. He died in June 1998 at the age of 84.

■ **2 March 1918**  
**UNISA officially opened,**  
**replacing University of the**  
**Cape of Good Hope**

South Africa's biggest University, the University of South Africa (Unisa) was officially opened on 2 March 1918. It had been known as the University of the Cape of Good Hope since it was established in 1873. Today, Unisa is one of the mega universities of the world, with over 300 000 students in 130 countries. In 2000, the University merged with Technikon SA and also incorporated the distance education component of Vista University.

■ **2 March 1987**  
**Ladysmith Black Mambazo**  
**wins first Grammy**

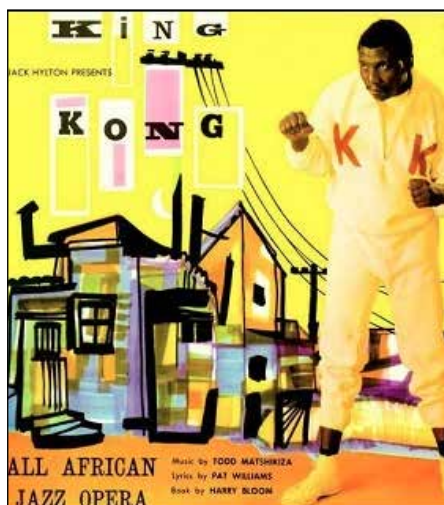
Ladysmith Black Mambazo, with founder and lead vocalist Joseph Tshabalala, became the first South African group to win a Grammy





award. The group won the award for the best traditional folk album. The album *'Shaka Zulu'* was produced by music icon Paul Simon.

### ■ 3 March 1968 King Kong composer Todd Matshikiza passed on



South African artist, composer and writer, Todd Tozama Matshikiza, died at the age of 47 in Lusaka, Zambia after a sudden illness. He composed the music and wrote some of the lyrics for the popular all-Black musical *King Kong*, portraying the life and death of heavyweight boxer Ezekiel Dlamini. He also wrote for Drum magazine.

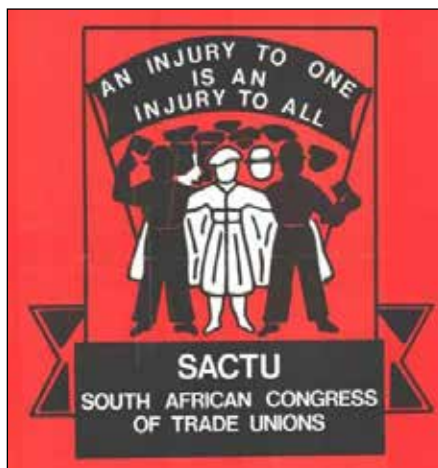
### ■ 3 March 1971 Beatles unbanned

The SABC lifted its ban on the Beatles music on this day.

### ■ 4 March 1890 Architect Gerard Moerdijk born

Gerard Leendert Pieter Moerdijk, of Dutch descent, was born in the Waterberg district, Transvaal (now Limpopo Province). He was one of the first Afrikaans architects and pioneered new designs for churches, adapting them to South African requirements and using local materials. He designed approximately ninety churches, numerous houses, halls and public buildings, and the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria.

### ■ 5 March 1955 Birth of SACTU



The South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) was formed at an inaugural congress held in Johannesburg on 4 and 5 March 1955. It became the leading non-racial trade union co-ordinating body, and ally of the African National Congress (ANC)-led Congress Alliance. It recognized the link between political and economic struggles, organising against racist and exploitative labour practices and the first national living wage campaign in 1957. SACTU also organised night schools and factory cells for workers. When the banning of organisations of 1960 happened after Sharpsville, its activities went into decline, with many of its leaders forced into ex-

ile or victims of bannings and imprisonment. SACTU reorganised in exile, mobilizing support against apartheid amongst working class and trade union organisations and giving support to the emerging trade union organisation inside the country, to the process of trade union unity which eventually led to the formation of COSATU in 1985.

### ■ 5 March 1943 Artist Mmakgabo Sebidi is born



South African artist Mmakgabo Helen Sebidi was born in Marapyane (Skilpadfontein) in the Hammanskraal area. She developed a life-long love for the designs of traditional arts and craft. As a young girl she accompanied her grandmother who was a traditional wall and floor painter. She studied with John Mohl while also studying and teaching pottery and clay sculpture at the Katlehong Art Centre in Germiston and in Alexandra. She sold many of her paintings at the art fair, Artists under the Sun, in Joubert Park. Sebidi was a figurative painter working in oils until she began to experiment with abstraction and collage. She described this change in her work: *"First I kept on drawing figures in the studio, feet, hands, portraits; and I kept all this rubbish from the whole year piling up on the carpet. At the*

end of the year I said to myself, 'I want to see if I can grow these up'. I took myself away from other people – I said 'Now break all this in pieces and see what comes out.' In 1985 she took up a teaching position at the Katlehong Art Centre near Germiston. Between 1986 and 1988 she worked for the Johannesburg Art Foundation while teaching at the Alexandra Art Centre. She also participated in numerous art projects with community organisations such as the Funda Art Centre, and the Thupele Art Workshop. In 1998 she was awarded a Fulbright scholarship to travel to the USA and exhibited her work at the Worldwide Economic Contemporary Artists Funds exhibition. Helen Sebidi, as she is known professionally, has become a recognized artist in South Africa and internationally. Her work is exhibited regularly in major galleries across the country and abroad and her work routinely included in standard reference books on South African art.

### ■ 5 March 1975 WHO publishes indictment of Apartheid



The system of Apartheid was not only detrimental to the cultural, economic and emotional wellbeing of those on whom it was imposed, but also on the physical wellbeing of those who bore the brunt of it. This was shown by a study done by the World Health Organization in 1975. The report published on the 5th of March 1975 showed that



Apartheid as a system through impoverishing its subjects exposed many to physical ailments and deficiencies that could be avoided at minimal cost. This degradation was so extreme that there was a marked difference between the life expectancy of White South Africans and Black South Africans. Further, the infant mortality rate of Black South Africans outstripped the mortality rate of White South Africans. This was one of the many contradictions of the Apartheid system that eventually led to its fall.

### ■ 5 March 1997 Munitoria building burns down

The Munitoria building, a municipal building in Pretoria burned down in 1997. The fire spread though the building very quickly and was already out of control by the time fire fighters arrived. It took four days and 252 fire fighters to put out the fire completely and was the biggest fire the country had ever seen at the time. In the end, nothing could be salvaged, with damage estimated at R 353, 4 million and thousands of public records destroyed. The building was 44 years old, non-compliant with the South African national building regulations, SANS 10400 and a known fire hazard. There were no casualties as the fire started after hours. The building was demolished in 2013.

## INTERNATIONAL DAYS

27 February – 5 March 2021

Source: <https://www.un.org>

### ■ 27 February International Digital Learning Day



World Digital Learning Day was first celebrated in 2011, at a time when digital or e-learning were just being introduced, and ICT tools reserved for a few. Ten years later, and in the midst of a global pandemic which forced lockdowns on schools and universities, digital learning has become critical. Technology has changed learning, but it is also exacerbating inequalities within countries and across the world. Although South Africa has been talking about making e-learning more accessible, through initiatives such as a laptop/tablet per learner, connecting schools to the internet, the introduction of ICT as a school subject, the digital divide remains stark, including training for teachers to understand e-teaching and learning. World Digital Learning Day is a reminder of the road still ahead of us.

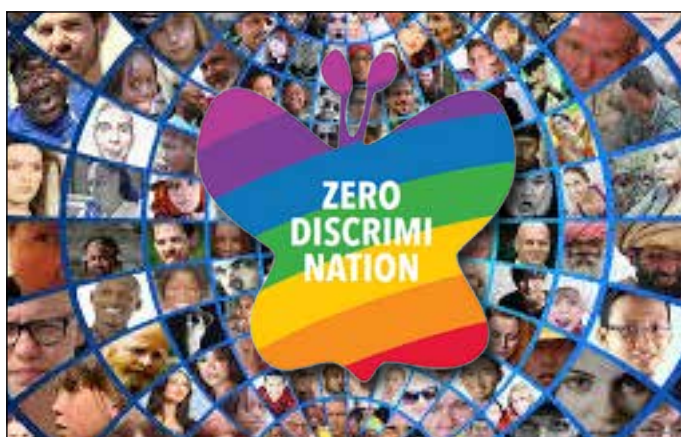


### ■ 28 February World Rare Disease Day



Rare Disease Day takes place on the last day of February each year. The main objective of Rare Disease Day is to raise awareness amongst the general public and decision-makers about rare diseases and their impact on patients' and family lives. Close to 1 and 20 people live with a rare disease, but it often goes undiagnosed or misdiagnosed.

### ■ 1 March World Zero Discrimination Day



Discrimination comes in all shapes and sizes, and the day is aimed at raising awareness of the importance of celebrating difference and diversity, and for laws, leadership and institutions to be proactive to combat discrimination. It was first introduced by UNAIDS to raise awareness on the need not to discriminate and stigmatise people living with AIDS, but targets broader discrimination, calling on people to *"make some noise around zero discrimination, to speak up and prevent discrimination from standing in the way of achieving ambitions, goals and dreams."*

### ■ 3 March World Wildlife Day

The UN has declared 3 March as World Wildlife Day. It was on this day in 1973 when the signature of the Convention on International Trade in Endan-

gered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora or CITES took place. On World Wildlife Day, humans celebrate and raise awareness of the world's wild animals and plants. (<https://www.wildlifeday.org>)

### ■ 3 March World Hearing Day



The day raises awareness of hearing loss and ear diseases. Key message by the WHO on this day are that good hearing and communication are important at all stages of life and that hearing loss (and related ear diseases) can be avoided through preventative actions such as: protection against loud sounds; good ear care practices and immunization.

### ■ 4 March World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development



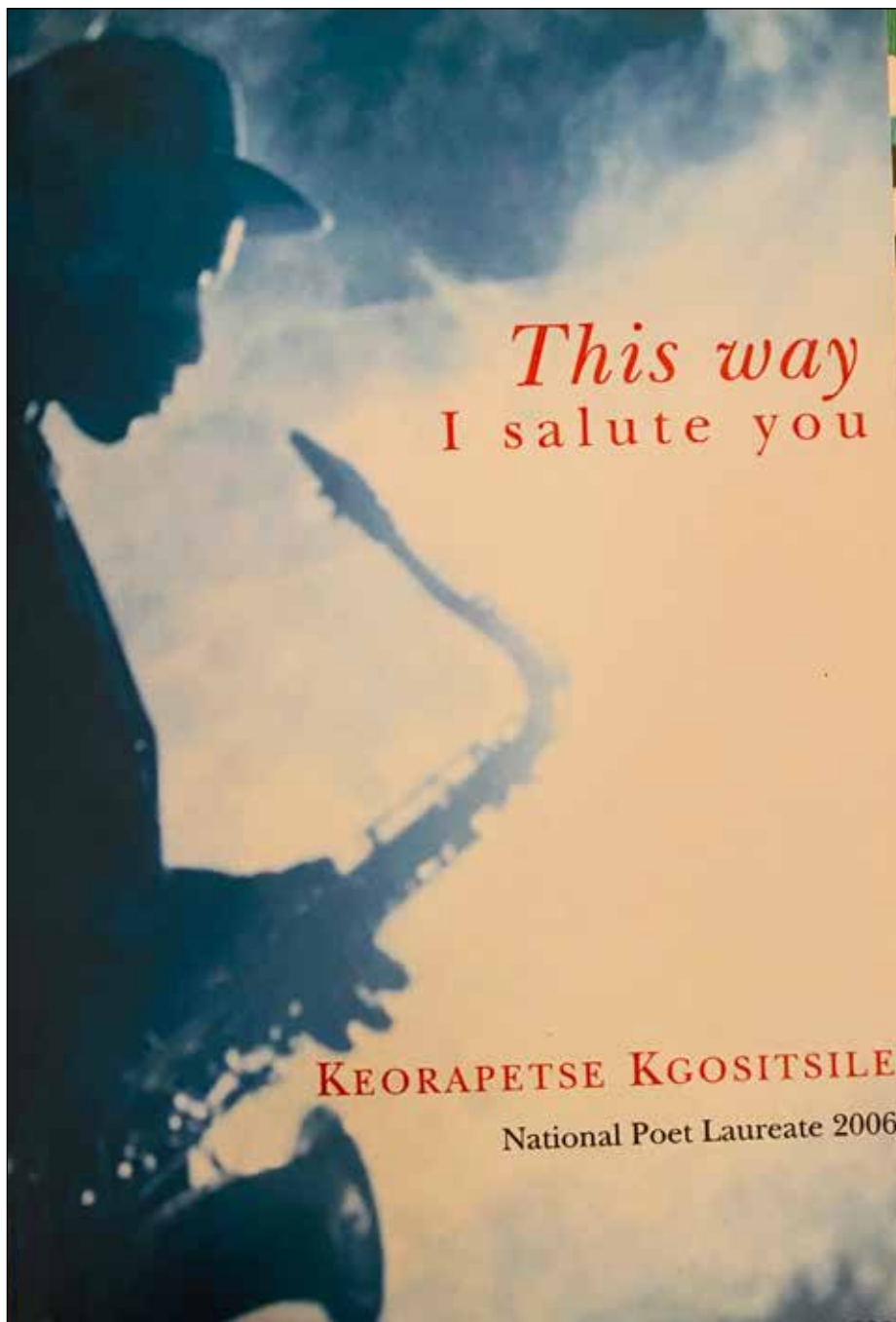
UNESCO proclaimed the 4 March as World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development, to raise awareness of the role of engineering in modern life. Engineering is defined as *"the branch of science and technology concerned with the design, building, and use of engines, machines, and structures."* The day is also used to promote awareness of engineering as a career, and the importance of young people, especially girls and women, studying science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).



# This Way I Salute You

by Keorapetse Kgotsisile

(2004, Kwela Books and Snailpress)



**P**OET Keorapetse Kgotsisile (1938-2018) was just the second person to be appointed as the National Poet Laureate in 2006, following in the footsteps of Mazizi Kuneke who was the first to hold this coveted honour. He occupied this position until his passing in 2018, with amongst other Laureate responsibilities to promote poetry, mentor new generations of poets and profile literary events and poetry readings and book launches. Born in Johannesburg where he attended Madibane High school, it is told that he was inspired by writings of the likes of DH Lawrence and Charles Dickens and started writing as a hobby.

The poetry collection in ***This Way I Salute You***, spans forty years of practicing the craft of poetry, and it is a celebration of music and particularly a celebration of the jazz greats, from our own Hugh Masekela and Gloria Bosman, to Afro Cuban drummer, Mango Santamaria as well as tributes to BB King, Johnny Danyi, Nina Simone, David Rubadire, Aime Cesaire and Otis Reddy, and to friendships like the dedication called Song for Ilva MacKay and Mongane.

The collection is quintessential Kgotsisile, a beautiful orchestra

of acerbic, social commentary, capturing the rhythm of life, art and jazz. The collection is also a tribute to the many places he has been in a life well-lived, engaging the music and artists from Mozambique to Montreal, Ethiopia, Cuba, Jamaica and the USA, Mongolia and home.

Like in Cassandra Wilson will sing:  
Perhaps Cassandra  
does not even sing  
Here of course a voice there is  
Possessed by music like the rest of her  
Her whole body is song  
Her whole body has sensed the chaos

I say look at those eyes  
Look at her arms  
Follow her little finger  
And understand perhaps why  
You were born with ears.

Indeed, the many ways in which Keorapetse Kgotsisile through poetry salutes a great heritage of humanity, speaks to our souls.



## HIS GENTLE BREATH

*Dedicated to Keorapetse Kgotsisile*

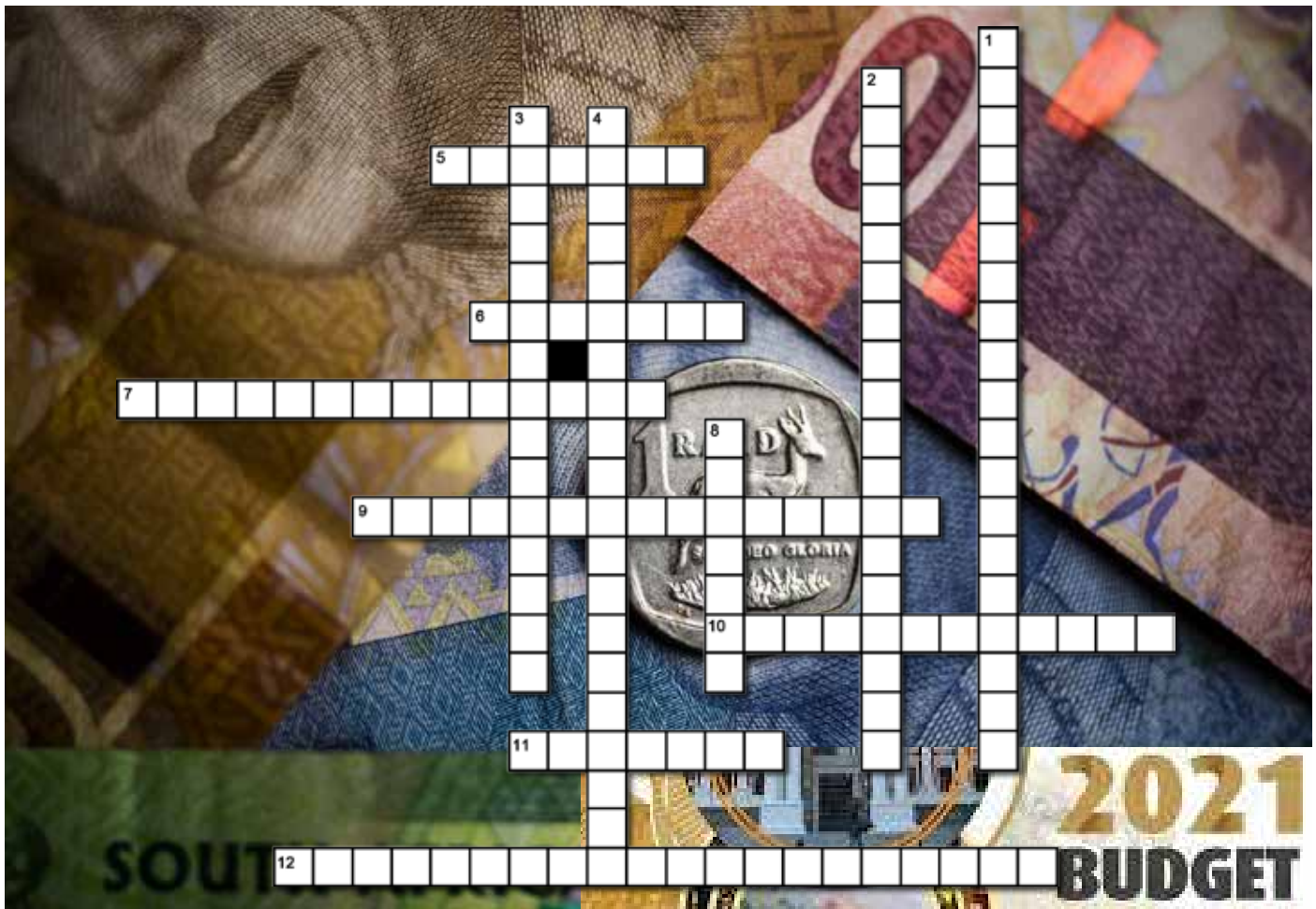
His gentle breath gave shape to the deflated – we stood like inflatable waving figures along the highways – falling, folding, fading, choked by the large boot standing on our necks, but his gentle breath returned our shape, our hope, our belief in a great destiny, till inflated, standing tall.

And now that the river of his breath has run dry, and we face deflation – falling, folding, fading, it is his words, those rays of light that flew on the back of his gentle breaths, that ignites our spirit, returning our bones, our muscle, our greatness such that we will never, never again, lose our shape.

© Athol Williams



## Budget 2021



### ACROSS

5. Sometimes we forget that just beyond the clouds the sun is...
6. Taxes raised on these products.
7. Amount allocated for purchasing of Covid 19 vaccines.
9. Civil society organizations criticized Budget speech as a sugar-coated ...
10. Taxes lowered.
11. Non-interest government spending over the next three years will ... from 29.2% to 26.2 as presentation of GDP.
12. Percentage of division of revenue that goes to local government.

### DOWN

1. Continuing on the path of... during the economic fallout.
2. Budget also announced ... at six busiest ports.
3. The Budget contains a ... to support the economy and public health.
4. Economic growth expected to rebound to this figure in 2021.
8. Another victim the sin tax increase.

### WORD BANK

austerity budget  
decline  
five point five percent  
tobacco

shining  
ten billion rand  
corporate tax  
nine point four percent

fiscal framework  
fiscal consolidation  
alcohol  
One Stop Border Posts