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Conversations with the **President**



BLACK EMPOWERMENT IS VITAL TO INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

THIS year marks the **70th anniversary of the Freedom Charter**. We are reminded of its aspiration that the people shall share in the country's wealth.

Our Constitution reflects the promise we made to one another and to future generations to redress the injustices of our past and realise the full potential of our country.

For this reason, we reaffirm that broad-based black economic empowerment is not just a policy choice but a constitutional imperative.

In recent months, the world has entered what many now term

a “poly-crisis” where global conflict, economic stagnation, mistrust in institutions and environmental degradation are challenging even the most resilient of nations.

These are conditions affecting many countries and South Africa is no exception. It is now imperative that we use the lessons that we have learned over the past three decades to make our empowerment policies more meaningful.

Now is not the time to abandon the measures that we have put in place to drive transformation. To the contrary, it is the time to move forward with greater purpose and raise our ambition.

Since 1994 we have built a robust legislative framework to advance the transformation of our economy, anchored in the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act and the Employment Equity Act.

The progress we have made is undeniable. We have seen real changes in ownership patterns, including more businesses owned by women. We have seen changes in management control, enterprise development and skills development. According to Statistics SA, between 2006 and 2023, black African households experienced real income growth of 46%, coloured households of 29% and Indian households of 19%.

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT

Despite this progress, the average income of white households is still nearly five times higher than that of black African households. This is the gulf we must close through deliberate and sustained efforts to expand opportunity.

Transformation is not a favour. It is a necessity. The inequality of our past continues to shape the lives of millions of black South Africans. And yet many who continue to benefit from the legacy of exclusion continue to decry black economic empowerment and are even challenging it in our courts.

We must dispense with the false notion that we must make a choice between growth and transformation. Economic growth without transformation entrenches exclusion, and transformation without growth is unsustainable.

We also need to challenge the notion that broad-based black economic empowerment is a cost to the economy. It is actually an investment in the economy.

Our task is to ensure that we pursue both growth and transformation in concert, with more vigour and with greater effect.

That is why we continue to strengthen initiatives like the Black Industrialists Programme, which is building successful, competitive, black-owned enterprises in manufacturing and other sectors.

That is why we are establishing the Transformation Fund to



support a new wave of emerging, innovative businesses that can create work opportunities for our people.

We must open the levers of funding for black-owned businesses. There is a critical need for black-owned businesses to access funding on affordable terms. While much of this funding should come from the development finance institutions, it is the private banks that have the resources to make the greatest impact. They need to review their lending practices to unleash the potential of black business.

Through mechanisms like the Public Procurement Act, we must ensure that businesses owned by women, young people and persons with disabilities enjoy expanding opportunities. We must ensure that transformation reaches into every sector, whether it is mining, construction, energy, IT or agriculture.

The private sector should use their supply chains far more deliberately to empower many more black-owned businesses, not just to improve their BBBEE scorecard, but to grow and diversify their supplier base.

As we develop our infrastructure, grow new industries like green hydrogen and electric vehicles, and drive localisation and reindustrialisation, we will continue to ensure that transformation is our guiding principle.

The transformation we seek is not about ticking boxes. It is about building a resilient, just economy for generations to come.

I call on all South Africans, and in particular the private sector, to recommit to economic transformation.

Let us move forward with greater urgency, unity and ambition, to build a South Africa where all can truly share in the country's wealth. ■



ANNOUNCEMENT BY PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA ON THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE

TODAY, I wish to address you about the National Dialogue, an initiative that has been in discussion by a number of leaders in our country and many other people for some time now.

This initiative has been gathering great support and enthusiasm since it was proposed last year. It has been endorsed by a wide range of formations across society.

Over the last few months, we have been engaged in discussions with various entities on the purpose and the form of the National Dialogue.

In the wake of these consultations, there is broad agreement that given the challenges our country is facing at the moment,

we should convene the National Dialogue.

The idea of holding a dialogue is not a new concept in our country. In many ways having dialogues is part of our DNA as a nation.

At every important moment in the history of our country, we have come together as a nation to confront our challenges and forge a path into the future in dialogue with one another.

Through dialogue we were able to deal with the challenges that the apartheid system caused in our country and achieved peace and overcame violence. We established a democracy and ended apartheid.

Following the negotiations pro-

cess, we used dialogue to start building a united nation where once there had only been conflict and division.

We achieved all this because we came together in dialogue to discuss our difficulties, our concerns, our hopes and our aspirations as a people.

For more than 30 years, we have worked together to realise the promise of our democratic Constitution.

We have made great strides as a nation, expanding freedom, deepening democracy and building a better life for millions.

Yet we face persistent challenges. Poverty, unemployment and inequality are deep wounds that

prevent us from reaching our full potential as a nation and as a country.

Millions of people are under-employed and unemployed. Many of those who work earn wages that cannot sustain them or their families.

Crime, gender-based violence and corruption are prevalent across our society.

We are therefore called upon at this moment to direct all our efforts to build a thriving, inclusive economy that creates jobs and opportunities.

We are called upon to build safer communities and to create a better future for our children.

We are also called upon to give all sectors of our society – men and women, young and old, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI community, and urban and rural people – a voice to determine how we address the problems of today and build the South Africa we want for future generations.

That is why we have agreed to convene an inclusive National Dialogue.

The dialogue will be a people-led, society-wide process to reflect on the state of our country in order for us to reimagine our future.

The National Dialogue is a chance for all South Africans, from all walks of life, to come together and help shape the next chapter of our democracy.

Through the National Dialogue, we seek a shared vision of what it means to be a South African and develop a new national ethos and common value system.



It is an opportunity to forge a new social compact for the development of our country, a compact that will unite all South Africans, with clear responsibilities for different stakeholders, government, business, labour, civil society, men and women, communities and citizens.

It is anticipated that the National Dialogue will drive progress towards our Vision 2030 and lay the foundation for the next phase of South Africa's National Development Plan.

The National Dialogue itself is not an event. Rather, it will be a participatory process that unfolds in phases, from local consultations and sectoral engagements to provincial and national gatherings.

In my capacity as the Head of State, I will be calling a National Convention on Friday, the 15th of August 2025.

This National Convention will represent the diversity of the South African nation. The first National Convention will set the agenda for the National Dialogue.

It will be a representative gathering, bringing together govern-

ment, political parties, civil society, business, labour, traditional leaders, religious leaders, cultural workers, sports organisations, women, youth and community voices, among others.

Through their various political, social and other formations, in their workplaces, in places of worship, communities, villages and sites of learning, South Africans will in the months following the National Convention be encouraged to be in dialogue to define our nation's path into the future.

The views, concerns and proposals that will emerge from this conversation will be brought together at a second National Convention, that is planned to be held in the beginning of next year.

This second National Convention will reinforce our shared values and adopt a common vision and programme of action for our country into the future.

We expect that the National Convention will finalise a compact that outlines the roles and responsibilities of all South Africans.

To guide and champion the National Dialogue, I am appointing

an Eminent Persons Group.

These are leading figures in our society, reflecting the great diversity of our nation, with a proven commitment to the advancement of social cohesion and nation-building.

The members of the Eminent Persons Group are:

- Dr Brigalia Bam, former Independent Electoral Commission Chairperson,
- Mr Robbie Brozin, entrepreneur and business person,
- Judge Edwin Cameron, former Constitutional Court judge,
- Mr Manne Dipico, former Northern Cape Premier,
- Dr Desiree Ellis, Banyana Banyana coach and football legend,
- Ms Ela Gandhi, peace activist and stalwart,
- Prof Nomboniso Gasa, researcher and rural activist,
- Mr Bobby Godsell, business leader,
- Dr John Kani, award-winning actor,
- Mr Siya Kolisi, Springbok captain and world champion,
- Ms Mia le Roux, Miss South Africa 2024,
- His Grace Bishop Barnabas Lekganyane, leader of the Zion Christian Church,
- His Grace Bishop Engenas Lekganyane, leader of the St Engenas Zion Christian Church,
- The Most Reverend Thabo Makgoba, Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town,
- Prof Tinyiko Maluleke, Chairperson of the National Planning Commission,
- Dr Barbara Masekela, poet, educator and stalwart,
- Ms Lindiwe Mazibuko, former Member of Parliament,
- Mr Roelf Meyer, former Minister and constitutional negotiator,
- Ms Gcina Mhlope, storyteller, writer and actor,
- Ms Nompandolo Mkhathshwa, student activist and former Member of Parliament,
- Ms Kgothatso Montjane, Grand Slam tennis champion,
- Prof Harry Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu, former activist and educationist,
- Mr Bheki Ntshalintshali, unionist and former COSATU General Secretary,
- Hosi Phyllia Nwamitwa, traditional leader,
- Kgosi Thabo Seatlholo, chairperson of the National House of Traditional and Khoi-San Leaders,
- Dr Gloria Serobe, business leader,
- Dr Imtiaz Sooliman, founder of the Gift of the Givers,
- Prof Derrick Swartz, academic,
- Ms Lorato Trok, author and early literacy expert,
- Mr Sibusiso Vilane, mountaineer and adventurer,
- Mr Siyabulela Xuza, award-winning rocket scientist.

UBaba uShembe uNyazi LweZulu has also been invited to join the Eminent Persons Group, but, as he is travelling, has not yet been able to confirm his availability.

I am grateful to each of these South African patriots who have made themselves available to act as the guarantors of an inclusive, constructive and credible process.

An Inter-Ministerial Committee has been established under the chairpersonship of the Deputy President to coordinate government's contribution to the National Dialogue.

We will be establishing a Steering Committee, comprised of representatives of various sectors of society, to set strategic priorities and coordinate implementation of the National Dialogue process.

The Secretariat, which is responsible for day-to-day management of National Dialogue activities, will be housed at NEDLAC, the National Economic Development and Labour Council.

As a nation, we are embarking on a new path of partnership and united action.

We are drawing on our traditions of dialogue and debate. We are determined to define a shared vision of a nation which belongs to all South Africans united in their diversity. ■



Clean Cities and towns campaign: A call to all citizens to unite and commit to cleaning our cities and towns every Friday, regardless of our location

■ By **DEPUTY PRESIDENT PAUL MASHATILE**



ON 06 June 2025, we gathered at the Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication, named after one of the most revered leaders who fought against apartheid, to sound a call to all citizens to unite and commit to cleaning our cities and towns on Fridays.

Significantly, it was in this square that, 70 years ago, South Africans from all walks of life gathered to adopt the Freedom Charter, a declaration that continues as a pillar of South Africa's Constitution, influencing the political and social climate of the country, and a practical guide to achieving a non-racial, non-sexist, united and prosperous South Africa.

This visit to Kliptown was a part of ensuring that the Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication and its adjacent areas benefit from essential service delivery initiatives. We were therefore honoured to have representatives of the Charlotte Maxeke Institute, in line with our vision to turn the home of Mama Maxeke into a vibrant heritage site that tells the inspiring story of our remarkable heroine, who bestowed upon us the gift of freedom. We are committed as



Government working with other stakeholders to protect and preserve this and all other heritage sites.

The United Nations has since designated it as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, indicating that the site has “*outstanding universal value*” and has been incorporated into the World Heritage List, given its prominence. This designation recognises the site's significance to all humanity, irrespective of national boundaries, and underscores the necessity of international collaboration in its preservation and protection.

Heritage sites are often deeply intertwined with their surrounding natural environments, and pollution can degrade these sites, impacting their preservation and the well-being of local communities.

Therefore, protecting and cleaning up historical sites is important for keeping national identity alive, learning about history and honouring our forebears.

It was for this reason that we launched the Clean Cities and Towns Campaign and Movement as part of our service delivery efforts.



The campaign aligns with the Presidential Climate Commission's report on South Africa's progress towards achieving its climate change targets. The Commission's July 2024 Report in particular emphasises the need to address the country's challenges within the Just Transition Framework, highlighting the importance of national unity in addressing climate change.

On his visit to the City of Johannesburg in March 2025, President Cyril Ramaphosa also emphasised the need for urgent interventions to improve service delivery and rejuvenate inner-city areas. He then announced the Presidential Johannesburg Working Group, focusing on governance, water and sanitation, electrification as well as beautifying public spaces and the city.

While the Clean Cities and Towns Campaign will certainly be rolled out across the country, it was appropriate to respond to the issue of public spaces and beautifying the city by launching the campaign in Johannesburg.

It is important to highlight that this initiative is not here to replace existing cleaning initiatives, but aims to build on previous campaigns and activations that the Government has launched to mo-

bilise society towards addressing environmental degradation.

We will conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of the initiative, not just in Johannesburg but also across our various cities and towns. We will establish a working relationship with teams in these cities and towns to gather information on the campaign to determine its effectiveness and its longevity.

The responsibility to clean our communities rests not only with the government, but also on the citizens, businesses and other key stakeholders in our communities. Clean cities and towns enable local economies and businesses to thrive. Together with SALGA and other stakeholders,

we aim to support communities in accessing the required resources for cleaning cities and creating environmentally friendly communities.

Through the **Clean Cities and Towns Campaign**, we are committed to sustainability efforts – waste reduction and resource protection. We aim to create a future where clean air, water, and streets are not just aspirations but are a reality created through daily choices and behaviours.

I believe that through implementing simple practices like recycling, reducing energy consumption, using sustainable transportation, planting trees, and participating in community clean-up activities, we can contribute to cleaner and healthier cities.

We urge collaboration on this noble endeavour, for all to serve as change agents who set an example, and inspire others to emulate our actions. Young people should take a lead in driving this campaign and promoting environmental awareness and creating a sustainable future. by improve the heritage sites in their communities.

In conclusion, let us be determined to keep our cities and towns clean. ***"Bontle ke Botho!!"***



AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS WELCOMES THE ANNOUNCEMENT BY PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA ON THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE

■ By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**

THE African National Congress (ANC) welcomes the announcement by President Cyril Ramaphosa on the convening of a National Dialogue, including the National Convention to be held on 15 August 2025 and the appointment of a broad-based Eminent Persons Group. This initiative marks an important national effort to forge unity, rebuild trust, and renew the country's collective commitment to social and economic transformation through inclusive dialogue.

This year marks the 70th Anniversary of the Freedom Charter, adopted in 1955 at the Congress of the People in Kliptown. The Freedom Charter remains the cornerstone of the ANC's vision for a united, democratic, and just society. Its powerful declaration that ***"South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white"*** continues to inspire our pursuit of equality, dignity, and shared prosperity. It is fitting that, in this milestone year, our nation recommits to the Charter's democratic spirit by launching a people-led National Dialogue.

The ANC has always placed dialogue at the centre of our struggle for liberation and nation-building.

From our engagements in exile to the negotiations that brought an end to apartheid, it is through dialogue that we have overcome division and built consensus. We therefore welcome the inclusive character of this dialogue process and the calibre of individuals appointed to guide it. The participation of all sectors of society will ensure that the Dialogue reflects the hopes, frustrations, and aspirations of the South African people.

The ANC calls on its members, alliance partners, mass democratic

formations, and all South Africans to actively participate in this National Dialogue. It is through open, principled engagement that we will define a renewed national vision and construct a new social compact anchored in shared responsibility.

As we mark seven decades of the Freedom Charter, we recommit ourselves to its vision and values, and to working with all South Africans to build a future founded on freedom, dignity, and unity in diversity. ■



COSATU STATEMENT ON THE Public Procurement Act

THE Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) is confident that the Public Procurement Act will withstand any constitutional court challenges, including those recently announced by the Western Cape Provincial Government and the City of Cape Town. We are not convinced by their arguments and believe they are putting cart on top of the horse in this instance. We believe their concerns could best be addressed by engaging Treasury on the Regulations. The danger of their court action is to allow the wild west that is public procurement to continue.

COSATU supports the Public Procurement Act, in particular its objectives to boost emerging SMMEs, historically disadvantaged communities and local businesses. We believe the Act drafted by government led by the African National Congress will be a critical weapon in the war against state capture and corruption that has become a cancer across the state, especially in State-Owned Enterprises and municipalities.

Workers have paid a horrific price with the explosion of state capture and corruption that has become the norm in many parts of the state. At its heart are the porous procurement systems across organs of state. Key targets as highlighted in gory details by the Zondo Commission have been major SOEs, in particular Eskom, Transnet, Metro Rail as well as countless municipalities and departments.

It defies logic that in the 21st cen-

tury where communications have become digitised, that many municipalities opt for manual written quotes. Many state entities have shown a dogmatic resistance to any sense of oversight and transparency, let alone universal systems. The reason being that corruption thrives best under chaos and darkness. Moves towards transparency and accountability are a direct threat to that.

The Western Cape Provincial Government and the City of Cape Town claim an absence of public participation in the drafting of the Act as a basis for their court challenge. Yet this Act went through extensive engagements and redrafting during 3 years of deliberations with labour, business and members of the public at Nedlac and later both Houses of Parliament. The nation's leading procurement specialists from various universities as well as international experts were brought into this process as part of enriching the Act. Whilst COSATU has often butted heads with Treasury, we appreciate how open and inclusive they were in the drafting of this important Act. Parliament's Finance Committees both went the extra mile in providing space for public participation and actively included proposals from COSATU and other stakeholders.

The Province and City further allege that the Act amounts to an undue interference in provincial and local government's ability to procure. Again, concerns with regards to agility can be dealt with through Regulations. Different organs of state will still determine their procurement. All that will be expected

is for the state to use a single online and transparent public procurement system, as is already done with public service institutions, including provincial departments. Equally they will be expected to, where possible, support emerging SMMEs, historically disadvantaged communities and local businesses. This is fundamental if we are to nurture and sustain local businesses and jobs which are under dire threat from cheap imports, and to give space for SMMEs to emerge and grow.

Why the City is rushing to court claiming that the Act will be a hindrance to service delivery and emergency procurement is bizarre as the Act, much to COSATU's disappointment, actually provides for significant exemptions and where regulations and circulars are issued by national and provincial treasuries, these will not be binding upon municipalities or their entities. How the City and Province jump to claims that they will be straight jacketed is a mystery.

The ability of Treasury's Chief Procurement Office to oversee, and where state institutions fall foul of the law, to act and hold them accountable is crucial if the state is to turn the tide against endemic public procurement corruption, save scarce public resources, support emerging SMMEs and protect badly needed local jobs. The Province and the City make the mistake of assuming that whilst they have strong systems in place, this is replicated across other provinces and municipalities. It is not, and in fact it is a horror story and hence the need for a drastic overhaul for the entry point for state capture and corruption. ■



THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE

■ By **GEORGE MAGOMA**

WHEN the nation is in distress its citizens will rise in unison as a collective effort to rescue it from corrosiveness, the morass that affects its development and its psyche. As President Cyril Ramaphosa had indicated in his address to the nation of 10 June 2025, dialogue is a potent weapon that unites the nation behind the common purpose of development and prosperity as we explore solutions to the daunting challenges facing society.

As the nation's DNA, dialogue can be traced to the power of negotiations dating back to liberation struggle pre-1994 as a pillar of the struggle which gave rise to the negotiated settlement. The National Dialogue should be understood in context, using our country's difficult past, as a compass that guides as we explore solutions to the problems facing our country, a test to the resilience of our democracy, our Constitution, its institutions, the will of the people,

the sovereignty of the state, the relation between the state and people, civil society, social cohesion and the common agenda of development.

In the moment such as ours, our massive challenges where everything seems not to be working, societal morale at its lowest ebb throwing hands in the air and dipping our heads into the sand of despair is not helpful but an abdication to the patriotic duty to defend the democratic state and to drive its development.

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"At every important moment in the history of our country, we have come together as a nation to confront our challenges and forge a path into the future in dialogue with one another. Through dialogue we were able to deal with the challenges that the apartheid system caused in our country and achieved peace and overcame violence. We established democracy and ended apartheid. Following

the negotiations process, we use dialogue to start building a united nation where once there had only been conflict and division."

President Cyril Ramaphosa

This powerful statement is a confirmation of the power of dialogue as a solution to the challenges besieging the country. Dialogue is not a new phenomenon nor unique to South Africa. It can be traced from many decades. In our context it can be traced to the Harare Declaration which promoted negotiations as an instrument to the achievement of democracy, the Confederation for the Democratic South Africa, the Groote Schuur Minute, the Pretoria Minute and other dialogues towards to a democratic South Africa.

In the moment where everything sounds elusive, economic growth, development, democracy, unity and peace a far distant amidst a matrix of racial tensions, corruption, porous borders, racism, political killings, inequality, poverty,

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unemployment, crime, collapsing infrastructure, budget deficit, a lethargic economy and dysfunctional local government, dialogue continues to be relevant as our democracy matures and evolves in a totally new and different setting.

It is a period of resetting requiring a new a paradigm, thinking and approach that mobilizes and unites the country behind the common goal of development.

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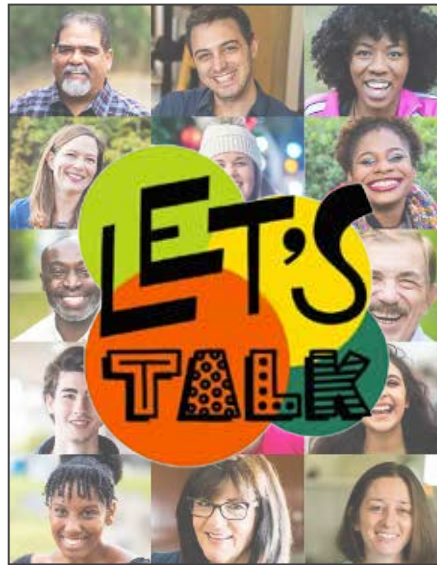
"A basic tenet of a healthy democracy is open dialogue and transparency."

Peter Fenn

The National Dialogue is gaining momentum. This is process of uniting the nation to collectively confront the challenges. Dialogue is a process of transparency, a candid admission of the difficult path the country is walking. Equally, it is a transparent process where the state, and in our context as an organisation, embarks on a frank appraisal of the healthy state of the nation and the ability of the ANC to lead the nation in moments of extreme and dire need.

As Fenn posited, dialogue is intrinsically linked to democracy. This connects the state and the people, transforming the vote into expression and activism, giving a broader meaning to the injunction of *"The People Shall Govern,"* giving legitimacy to the state as a voice and representative of the people, a voice that gives effect to the basic participatory precept of our democratic system.

This is enhances social contract and beneficial in many ways. It strengthens our democracy, tests its maturity and the purpose of democracy beyond voting. From varying perspectives and situations, many scholars have erudite-



ly written extensively using various models on the benefits of dialogue. Dialogue is a binary process of exchanging ideas and sharing confirmation offering new approaches to current challenges benchmarked against best practices, the unavoidable historical realities of our complex situation, and hurdles that inhibit development.

Our current challenges need dialogue as an elixir to our ills. For these problems to be surmounted collaboration is an antidote. Dialogue offers and fosters a deeper understanding of the manifestation of these problems, their effect on development and the nation. It bridges divides, fosters unity and inclusion in decision-making. It ensconces patriotism, common citizenship, accountability and transparency, offering an insight on future development, our growth trajectory and prospects for prosperity.

This collaborative model gives rise to a number benefits, embeds a sense of collective accountability on the successes and failures of the state, strengthens and deepens our democracy and promotes social cohesion. It gives a comprehensive understanding of complex issues, provides creativity towards effective choices.

Since 1994 progressive laws have been passed to reverse the legacy of apartheid, to push back the frontiers of inequality, to eradicate racism as we drove the strategic objective of a non-racial, non-sexist democratic state. The country is polarized along racial lines and diverse interests, party political interests and populism rising above national interest and acts detrimental to the will of the people.

There is a fight and polarisation. There is an agenda to arrest the transformation agenda and the quest for a National Democratic Society. The nation is divided, each one fighting for a better place in the democratic society with hopes of a better life, a contribution to economic participation, self-reliance and sustainability as opposed to welfarism and consumerism.

Dialogue has a wide range of benefits which include but not limited to:

- Enhanced Understanding;
- Fostered Collaboration and Creativity;
- Improved Decision-Making'
- Building Trust and Relationships; and
- Increased Productivity and Efficiency.

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"For when any number of men have, by the consent of every individual, made a community, they have thereby made that community one body, with a power to act as one body, which is only by the will and determination of the majority."

John Locke

Using the social contract theory, social cohesion is a necessary mechanism for collective action within a society. The unavoidable question is, what are the beneficial elements and effects of this theory for the ANC? In responding to

this, let's examine the 17th, 17th and 18th centuries theories of John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Thomas Hobbes. They expand social contract meaning for the establishment the basis for a just and legitimate government. According to Rousseau *"a true social contract would lead to a government that reflects the people's collective will and protects for their fundamental liberties."*

Aligned to the social contract benefits social contract pivots around the following pillars:

- The General Will
- The Sovereign
- Legitimate Authority
- Direct Democracy
- Freedom and Equality.

These social contract pillars are the basic tenets of our constitutional democracy that guide our approach to the National Dialogue, a beacon to the path towards our common agenda, and a solution to the country's challenges. Our Constitution is obsolete in the absence of this resolve and the involvement of society in the future path of the country.

In this way the people can lay claim to the democratic state, possessing the power to defend democracy and to advance their freedom, giving a meaningful expression to the dictum *"No government can claim justly lay authority unless it based upon the will of the people."* In this way power vests in the people, promotes participatory democracy, instils patriotism, rekindle society's confidence in the ANC, boots the credible and image of the ANC and its ability to lead, and to reclaim the list ground after its gradient following the loss of electoral support.

Sovereignty of the state transcends traditional suffrage, elevating and broadening it to 21st

century meaning, germane to the South Africa's challenges, the aim of National Dialogue, social contract and the role of the ANC in shaping and driving the national agenda and solutions to the problems plaguing the country. Social contract connects the people and the state. It is a necessary mechanism for collective action within a society, gives purpose to the National Dialogue as a panacea to the country's challenges.

The National Dialogue unites different role players and stakeholders, businesses, faith-based organisations, civil society, labour and society under one roof and determination to contribute to the well-being of the country. This involves building an ethical, capable developmental state.

As we did in navigating the complex dynamics of CODESA and the Government of National Unity (GNU), social cohesion and unity, common purpose, the future of the country and the needs of the people transcend everything.

There is no need for grandstanding and petty politicking. The voice and aspirations of the people assume precedence and prominence.

The ANC has to use and replicate the 2024 Election Manifesto Review community and stakeholder consultative process for a broader mandate, to understand the views of society to enrich its wisdom towards the National Convention. This will enhance the agenda of the National Convention as the country marches towards the National Dialogue.

The National Dialogue will shape the country's vision, culminating in a national compact guiding government policy, constitutional reforms and legislative review. As the bedrock of the country's constitution, and the year of the Constitutional Review, this presents an opportunity to assess and review the Freedom Charter and the efficacy of the Constitution to propel development in the year of the 70th anniversary of the Freedom Charter, including the assessment of the 31 years of democracy, and impediments thereto.

In the end the country will set a path to achieve economic development, improve trust, strengthen social cohesion, promote diversity and social stability, democratic participation and necessary interventions to address inequality for an inclusive society and prosperity. ■



Balancing Cultural Rights and Human Rights within the South African Context: **An Afrocentric Perspective and the NSP Framework**

■ By **BATHABILE DLAMINI**

SOUTH Africa's Constitution, adopted in 1996, stands as a beacon of progress, explicitly emphasizing the protection of human rights, dignity, equality, and freedom. It recognizes the importance of respecting cultural diversity (Section 31) but also clearly stipulates that these rights are not absolute and must be balanced against other rights and societal interests. This constitutional foundation provides a framework for addressing the complex interplay between cultural practices and human rights – especially when practices threaten the wellbeing and dignity of vulnerable groups such as children, women, and marginalized communities.

Cultural practices are deeply embedded in community identities and traditions. However, when practices like virginity testing, early initiation rituals, or forced marriages infringe upon fundamental human rights – such as bodily integrity, non-discrimination, and protection from harm – they must be critically examined and reformed. The challenge is to foster an Afrocentric interpretation of the Bill of Rights that respects indigenous values and cultural sovereignty while aligning with universal human rights principles. This involves engag-



ing communities in dialogue, respecting their cultural expressions, and promoting reforms that uphold dignity and equality.

The South African legal system provides mechanisms to protect individuals from harmful traditional practices. Laws like the Children's Act prohibit practices that threaten the wellbeing of children, including early marriage and harmful initiation rituals. The government's stance against virginity testing of minors, as highlighted by the Chairperson of the Commission for the Promotion & Protection of the Rights of Cultur-

al, Religious & Linguistic Communities, aligns with these protections, emphasizing that such practices violate children's rights and bodily integrity.

Addressing the high levels of gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa requires a comprehensive, multi-sectoral response. The National Strategic Plan (NSP) on GBV, with its six pillars: Prevention and Building Social Cohesion; Protection and Support for Victims and Survivors; Justice and Accountability; Response and Coordination; Research, Data Collection, and

Information Management; and Advocacy and Social Change – serves as a strategic blueprint to guide these efforts.

These pillars complement an Afrocentric approach by emphasizing community engagement, cultural sensitivity, and the importance of traditional leaders and community influencers in fostering social change. For example, Pillars 1 and 6 focus on prevention and advocacy, providing avenues to challenge harmful cultural practices like virginity testing and early marriage through culturally sensitive education campaigns. Engaging traditional leaders and elders in these dialogues ensures that reforms are rooted in community consensus and respect, making them more sustainable and culturally appropriate.

Legal reforms and enforcement, supported by Pillars 3 and 4, are crucial for criminalizing harmful practices and ensuring perpetrators are held accountable. This aligns with constitutional protections and demonstrates that cultural practices cannot override fundamental rights. Simultaneously, Pillars 2 and 4 emphasize the importance of holistic victim support and coordinated responses, ensuring that victims of harmful practices and GBV receive adequate protection, counseling, and legal assistance.

Research and data collection, as highlighted in Pillar 5, are vital for understanding the prevalence and impact of harmful practices, informing culturally relevant policies, and tracking progress. These evidence-based strategies enable the development of targeted interventions that respect indigenous identities while promoting gender equality and human dignity.



Practical steps forward include community-led interventions that promote gender equality, reform harmful norms, and reinterpret traditions in ways that uphold human rights. Education campaigns involving traditional leaders can reframe cultural practices, emphasizing that traditions should evolve to protect and enhance respect, dignity, and safety. Legal measures must be strengthened to criminalize practices that violate rights, with enforcement at local levels ensuring community buy-in.

In conclusion, addressing the apparent clash between cultur-

al practices and human rights in South Africa requires a nuanced, Afrocentric approach that respects indigenous identities and values, while firmly safeguarding constitutional rights. The NSP on GBVF provides a strategic framework to operationalize this vision, emphasizing prevention, community engagement, accountability, and social change.

By integrating these strategies, South Africa can foster a society where cultural traditions evolve in harmony with human rights ugliness to a degree ensuring dignity, safety, and equality for all its citizens. ■



Walking in the shadows of strength: A DEDICATION TO YOUNG WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

■ By **EUNICE MGCINA**

AS we celebrate Youth Month, I want to give this thought to the young women of South Africa. They are a generation that stands tall in the face of hardships but too often walks alone in the shadows of violence, anxiety, and fear.

There are more links between people around the world than ever before. Tech has made a lot of things possible. We can use our phones to find jobs, get in touch with other people, and even start a business. But with

this progress comes a new kind of risk. We were truly shocked by Ms. Olorato Mongale's death, which has made us stop and think: how can such pointless violence happen in a time when safety should be closer at hand?

It breaks my heart as a mother to know that young women are not safe anywhere, not on the streets, not online, and not even in places we used to think were safe. Meeting new people on social media used to be a sign of growth and connection, but now it could be dangerous. Don't be

too trusting. I tell our young women to be careful. Be careful. Keep your information safe. Cut down on the private information you post online.

Plus, ride-hailing services were also made to make things easier. But these days, sad stories of kidnapping and attack have tainted them. If you have to go this way, let people know where you are. Tell the people you love about your trips. Tell someone where you're going. Even though we are walking through the "*valley of the shadow of death*," we

are also walking together and for each other.

To fight the terrible problem of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF), the government is still working on big plans. But we must also start making changes in our own homes, communities, and in the ways we support, protect, and give power to young women.

And even with all the trouble and pain, there is hope.

In South Africa, young women are becoming more and more seen as leaders and decision-makers, not just as players. The upcoming G20 engagement gives young South African women another chance to speak out, change the conversation, and affect what happens around the world. This is more than just a sign; it means something. We want the views of young women to be heard and taken into account in the places where decisions are made.

The government should be praised for taking steps on purpose to include and support young women. We are happy about Cde. Nompandolo Mkhathshwa, who will be one amongst those who will lead charge on preparing for the National Dialogue that is coming up, August 2025 as announced by his Excellency Hon. Ramaphosa. We are proud of Cde. Karabo Mohale, who was just sworn in as a member of ICASA. She is a young woman who stands for the strength and greatness of our future.

As older generation of young women, we smile with pride. These steps show us that the things we gave up were not in vain. The baton is being passed on, and we're sure it's in good

hands. May these women keep other women who are still rising in the dark?

Let's get up. We should be proud of being women and women who stand together. Our cause should not be split by a meeting, a conference, or a political disagreement. We must work together for the sake of the future of this

country.

You are seen, you are heard, and you are valued, all the young women reading this. You are the spark that will help us move forward.

Amandla!

Yes, young women, yes! ■

I Dream A World

I dream a world where man
 No other man will scorn,
 Where love will bless the earth
 And peace its paths adorn
 I dream a world where all
 Will know sweet freedom's way,
 Where greed no longer saps the soul
 Nor avarice blights our day.
 A world I dream where black or white,
 Whatever race you be,
 Will share the bounties of the earth
 And every man is free,
 Where wretchedness will hang its head
 And joy, like a pearl,
 Attends the needs of all mankind-
 Of such I dream, my world!

The Presidential Youth Employment Initiative Continues to make a meaningful Impact

■ By **NONCEBA MHLAULI**

WE reflect on the progress made through the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention (PYEI) in the fourth quarter of the 2024/2025 financial year, covering the period from January to March 2025 and we mark the fifth year since the launch of the PYEI in 2020, we are pleased to report that the programme continues to make meaningful strides in unlocking sustainable earning opportunities for young people across South Africa. Our latest quarterly report confirms that over 4.78 million young people are now registered on the National Pathway Management Network, with more than 1.67 million earning opportunities secured to date.

This reflects the strength of the PYEI's approach in aggregating demand, coordinating partners, and enabling pathways that enhance young people's economic participation.

In Q4 alone, 76,569 earning opportunities were accessed by young people, including:

- 60,444 opportunities through SA Youth, and
- 16,125 through the Employment Services of South Africa (ESSA).

We also saw continued progress through our partnerships:

- The Youth Employment Service (YES) facilitated 15,137 workplace experience placements in the private sector.

- The Department of Higher Education and Training placed an additional 5,504 TVET graduates into workplace opportunities.
- The National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) and the Department of Small Business Development supported more than 43,000 young entrepreneurs with financial and non-financial enterprise development opportunities.
- Phase 3 of the Revitalised National Youth Service saw 2,048 youth recruited, bringing the total number of participants across all phases to 84,426.

We are particularly proud of the continued momentum of the Jobs

As we enter the fifth year of the PYEI, we continue to make great strides towards unlocking earning opportunities for young people.

The PYEI has three overarching targets that capture how the intervention seeks to support young people on their journey to sustainable earning. This includes reaching the most vulnerable young people and providing them with targeted support that helps them build their profile and earning potential.

TARGET (2020 – 2025)	ACTUAL (2020 – to date)	
At least 5 million young people are engaged in the National Pathway Management Network and access services to help them grow their employability and pursue opportunities.	Over 4.78 million young people are registered and accessing opportunities in the National Pathway Management Network.	
Young people supported to access 1.5 million temporary earning opportunities including work-based placements, work-integrated learning opportunities, and paid service opportunities.	Young people have been supported to access over 1.67 million temporary earning opportunities including work-based placements, work-integrated learning opportunities, and paid-service opportunities.	
500 000 young people engaged in sustainable earning opportunities through workforce development programmes.	Work-in-progress. Evaluations and tracing studies have commenced.	

Achievements and highlights from Quarter 4

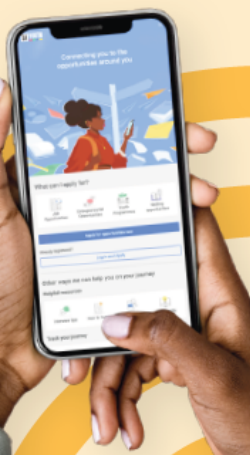
(JAN – MAR 2025)

Young people secured over 76 569 earning opportunities through the NPMN.

In the final quarter of the new financial year, **60 444 earning opportunities** were secured by young people through the SA Youth platform. A further **16 125 earning and learning opportunities** were secured on ESSA.



employment & labour
Department:
Employment and Labour
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Expanding workplace experience opportunities for 15 175 young people.

In the final quarter of the financial year, the Youth Employment Service (YES), a private sector led initiative, placed **15 137** young people in workplace experience opportunities in various sectors of the economy. In addition, the Department of Higher Education and Training placed **5 504** young TVET learners and graduates into workplace experience opportunities.



higher education & training
Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Boost Outcomes Fund, which uses an innovative pay-for-performance model to incentivise the placement of young people into sustained, quality jobs, has made steady progress in its pilot phase.

By the end of March 2025:

- Over 5,400 young people had been enrolled reaching 65% of the programme's enrolment target.
- More than 3,000 had been placed into quality jobs, and
- Over R70 million had been disbursed to 11 implementing partners, including R30 million in this quarter alone.

These jobs are not just tempo-

rary placements. They are quality jobs, defined by duration, income level, and growth potential. We are already seeing shifts in employer practices as a result of better accommodate excluded young people.

This report also highlights the launch of the Township Ecosystem Mapping Platform, a new tool developed under the Local Ecosystem Enablement pillar, aimed at improving coordination and access for township-based entrepreneurs.

We remain committed to building a connected, demand-led ecosystem that not only creates opportunities but also drives sys-

tems change in the labour market. As always, the success of this initiative is due to the ongoing collaboration between government, private sector, development partners, and the young people themselves.

We will continue sharing our progress through these quarterly reports. As always, detailed data and insights are available on the PYEI dashboard at www.stateoftheneration.gov.za.

We also invite our youth to register on SAYouth.Mobi which is a zero rated site where they will access information about the PYEI as well as all youth empowerment related matters. ■

BEE: A necessary but flawed pathway to economic justice

■ By JEREMY CRONIN

THE long-simmering debate around black economic empowerment (BEE) has acquired new intensity in the past weeks. In principle, this is to be welcomed. But much of the debate goes back and forth between simple ayes and nays, “to BEE or not to BEE” in Tony Leon’s typically entertaining but ultimately banal recent intervention published on News24.

For some, Leon probably included, BEE is virtually synonymous with political corruption and “state capture”. The acronym BEE becomes a portmanteau term to embrace all deliberate attempts at addressing the persisting and enormously skewed social and economic realities in our society – affirmative action, employment equity targets, and much more, all get labelled

BEE and accused implausibly of being the prime cause for anaemic growth and crisis levels of unemployment.

At the other end of the spectrum, there is a tendency to reduce the massive and necessary transformation effort still required in our country to a narrow version of BEE. Serious transformation supposedly becomes, if not equivalent to, then at least significantly dependent upon the enrichment of an emergent black capitalist stratum.



How did we get here? You won’t find any reference to BEE in the 1955 Freedom Charter, for instance. The nearest it comes is the perfectly correct call for the abolition of all racial restrictions on the right to trade and entry to professions. As for economic ownership, the Charter effectively calls for public ownership of mines, banks and monopoly industries, and not a 30% black equity stake. In the ANC’s 1994 Reconstruction and Development Programme there is a solitary reference to BEE, snuck in on page 93 of a 147-page document.

Looking beyond the ANC

If we want to understand the origins of what came to be known as BEE, we need therefore to look beyond just the ANC and its recent convolutions.

In the late-1980s and early 90s, incumbent corporate capital in South Africa was faced with a double dilemma.

Unlike its international competitors, now pursuing globalisation into low-wage markets, South African corporates were bottled up within the country by international sanctions and the apartheid regime’s defensive measures, particularly strict exchange controls.

The major South African corporates were forced to conglomerate, investing inwardly and at diminished profitability for themselves – but greatly enhancing the leverage of the progressive trade union movement (which, paradoxically, became stronger then than now three decades after the end of apartheid).

Changing political order

The second dilemma for incumbent corporate South Africa was the imminent and uncertain prospect of a changed political order. They were determined to play an active role in shaping that future order. Big corporates like Anglo American had form in this regard. They had successfully weathered the 1948 National Party electoral victory by striking deals with emerging Afrikaner capital.

In his Mbeki biography, Mark Gevisser recounts, for instance, how Michael Spicer, head of Anglo's policy department in the late 80s, *"was charged with looking at the General Mining deal that Anglo had transacted some 40 years earlier with Afrikaner business ... Could this provide a model?"*

The answer was yes. In the early 1990s, Anglo sold African Life and several industrial assets, packaged as Johnnic, to black beneficiaries. Platinum interests, the more lucrative assets at the time, were not part of the deal. It was a case of two birds with one stone.

Early variant of state capture

Cultivating business ties with ANC personalities through the leveraged sale of non-core assets helped to impact the ANC and soon-to-be government policy – an early variant of state capture.

Notably, from around 1996, business-inspired government policy enabled the likes of Anglo, as Spicer later recalled, *"to restructure away from a conglomerate approach... into a more focused structure that would be competitive in global markets"*. Decoded, this meant business-inspired, post-1994 government policy changes opened the way



for a flood of disinvestment out of post-apartheid South Africa, with resultant deindustrialisation, massive job losses, and weakened trade unions.

Afrikaner business had also been quick to get off the mark. Nthato Motlana, spurned in the Anglo deal, was reportedly told by Org Marais (then National Party Minister of Tourism): *"Forget the English. Come and do business with the Afrikaners – ours is Metlife."*

This latter deal gave rise to New Africa Investments Ltd.(NAIL) which drew into its fold prominent black political figures, including Cyril Ramaphosa.

This was BEE before the acronym and its complex codification in the following decades.

While individuals associated with the ANC and broader liberation movement were beneficiaries, the agenda was, at least initially, driven by incumbent capital. It was seen as economic insurance, a means to ensure influence upon and a hot-line to an impending new political reality. In short, it was a way of accommodating a new elite to avert a more fundamental transformation.

Vulnerabilities and dependencies

Since most beneficiaries were without capital themselves, the deals were based on debt by way of highly leveraged share-holdings with repayments to be putatively made from dividend earnings. This created vulnerabilities and dependencies. It also resulted in internal ANC skirmishes between groups backed by different parts of the established corporate world.

Among the more dramatic of these surfaced publicly in April 2001 when Steve Tshwete, then minister of safety and security, accused Ramaphosa, Matthews Phosa and Tokyo Sexwale of plotting to oust President Thabo Mbeki. The real crime was that all three had achieved business success with backers independent of the Mbeki circle's business connections.

None of this is to deny the important advances in terms of redress and transformation that were achieved in the first two decades after 1994, including massive low cost housing construction, household access to electricity, and a significant and welcome expansion of black profession-

al strata especially in the public sector. But it is unclear how much of this can be attributed to BEE as such.

Growing inequality

By 2010, it was estimated that at least R500 billion had been “invested” in allocating shareholding to black groups. This compared to the less than R150 billion invested by the state in housing and land reform. By 2015, intra-African inequality was growing at a faster pace than overall income inequality. The GINI coefficient for intra-African inequality stood at 0.56, close to South Africa’s world record general income inequality which was then 0.59.

Worse was still to come. If the likes of Anglo were the early major players on the BEE front, a host of others were also soon active. Many of these might best be described as lumpen capitalists – Brett Kebble, Glenn Agliotti, Gavin Watson, Adriano Mazzotti, the Gupta brothers, and many more.

New targets for primitive accumulation under the helpful cover of “doing BEE” were identified. Key were the former publicly-owned utilities that had once been funded out of the fiscus and had been so important for South Africa’s industrialisation and for Afrikaner economic empowerment.

Those that had not now been privatised (Iskor, Sasol), were turned into state-owned enterprises – Eskom, Transnet, Prasa, the Post Office were all supposedly meant to fund their own way without “bail-outs” from the fiscus. Artisanal training, and in-house engineering capacity (in the 1950s South Africa was a world leader in railway engi-

neering) were run down as “non-core” businesses. It was into this space that the Gupta-Zuma axis (among others) inserted itself as “BEE” rent-seeking intermediaries between state-owned enterprises and the now externalised suppliers of goods and services.

Corrective measures

Important corrective measures have been introduced. The 2003 Broad-Based Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act, for instance, was a deliberate attempt to shift some of the BEE focus from too narrow an emphasis on black ownership to include also management control, skills development, enterprise and supplier development, and socio-economic development initiatives.

Another move in this direction was the introduction in 2016 of Equity Equivalent Investment Programmes for inward-investing, foreign owned multinationals. This allows them to meet transformation obligations without selling equity, by investing instead in skills training, infrastructure projects in under-served areas, and developing black-owned small and medium enterprises. Of course, the substantive impact of these and other measures needs to be constantly monitored, evaluated and debated.

The past must not be an excuse for present failures

A deeply oppressive past still weighs heavily on our present. That past must never be used to excuse present failures. But, equally, those failures must not blind us to the reality that centuries of colonial and apartheid oppression are still at play in the racialised and class advantages of inter-generational wealth passed down into the present.

And that wealth is not innocent. It is stained with a history of enslavement, of land and livestock dispossession, of hyper-exploited migrant labour on farms and mines, and earlier state-capture corruption (anyone familiar with Cecil Rhodes’s activities will know he makes the Guptas look like amateurs).

Lower-case black economic empowerment, the real thing and not its capitalised chimaera, will not arrive on auto-pilot thanks to market-driven growth that supposedly lifts all boats. It requires dedicated and determined interventions. This is what makes the present debate on BEE so important. ■

Jeremy Cronin is a former SACP deputy general secretary, ANC NEC member, and deputy minister. This article was first published in News24, 12 June 2025.



BEE at a Crossroads

Who Benefits from Its Destruction?

■ By **FAIEZ JACOBS**

THE recent critique by Professor William Gumede that over R1 trillion has been “*transferred*” under Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) to fewer than 100 politically connected individuals is a sobering wake-up call. It is a critique we cannot afford to ignore. But neither can we afford to allow this critique to be weaponised by those who have always opposed transformation, to delegitimise the very idea of economic justice in post-apartheid South Africa.

Let me be clear: BEE, as it has been implemented in too many cases, has failed to meet the aspirations of the majority. Gumede is right to point to the recycling of beneficiaries, the political gate-keeping, and the elite capture of empowerment deals. But he is wrong dangerously wrong if his insight is used to argue for scrapping BEE altogether.

We must ask ourselves: who benefits when BEE is destroyed instead of reformed? Certainly not the millions of unemployed black youth in townships and rural villages. Not the historically disadvantaged communities who still lack access to capital, land, and markets. And not the African, Indian and Coloured women who remain structurally excluded from the mainstream economy.

The idea that “*BEE is the biggest*

scam in post-apartheid SA” dangerously distracts from the real structural crisis: the continued racial and gendered concentration of wealth. Here are the facts: 8 of the top 10 richest South Africans remain white men. Over 70% of agricultural land remains under white ownership. Access to venture capital, export markets, and finance remains racially skewed.

It is ironic that the same voices calling BEE “*racist*” rarely propose solutions to white economic over-representation.

The only ones who benefit from the collapse of BEE are those who were never in favour of transformation in the first place – the economic oligarchs

who would be thrilled to return to a status quo of white dominance wrapped in the language of meritocracy.

Despite limitations, BEE is not a failure:

- Over **6 million black South Africans** now hold direct or indirect ownership in companies through **broad-based share schemes** (e.g. MTN Zakhele, SASOL Inzalo, Phuthuma Nathi at Multi-Choice).
- **Black ownership on the JSE** has grown from less than 1% in 1994 to an estimated **25–30%** today (direct + indirect via funds and B-BBEE schemes).
- Over **50,000 black-owned**





SMEs have been supported via enterprise and supplier development obligations.

- BEE has enabled the creation of **black industrialists**, catalysed **youth training schemes**, and **expanded procurement access**.

The BEE scorecard includes ownership, skills development, employment equity, socio-economic development, and procurement. It is a multi-dimensional framework, not simply elite enrichment. However now that we know better, we must do better.

Acknowledge the Failures But Don't Abandon the Mission

As a former Member of Parliament and lifelong activist for social and economic justice, I have seen first-hand how some BEE deals were little more than rent-seeking schemes. Politically connected figures often acted as fronts for white capital, offer-

ing legitimacy without empowerment. These are not just moral failings they are strategic betrayals of the people.

But the answer is not abandonment. It is reform, accountability, and reorientation toward true broad-based empowerment. We must ask: What models have worked? What does inclusive, community-rooted BEE look like? And how do we ensure that BEE no longer becomes a revolving door for the same elite, but instead a ladder for the many?

What Broad-Based Empowerment Really Looks Like

The idea of broad-based empowerment is not hypothetical. I have checked, it actually exists though often drowned out by the noise of scandal. Let us spotlight real, replicable models that show us what is possible:

1. Sasol Inzalo Trust (2011) –

R26 Billion Empowerment for the Public

One of the largest and most ambitious empowerment transactions in South African history. Over 200,000 South Africans from nurses to pensioners acquired shares in Sasol via the Inzalo Trust. This was not an elite project, but a mass participation vehicle offering dividends, ownership, and dignity.

Yes, the deal had flaws (especially when Sasol's share price dropped), but the intent and structure were inclusive. We must learn from and build on this.

2. Absa Employee and CSI Trust (2023) – A New Vision for BEE

In 2023, Absa created a model that should become the new gold standard. It allocated 7% of its ownership to: 3% for over 35,000 employees; 4% to a Community Trust focused on healthcare, education, and township upliftment. This is real empowerment linking

productivity with ownership, and profit with community reinvestment.

3. PepsiCo/SimbPioneer Foods (2020) – Worker Trust

PepsiCo's merger with Pioneer Foods resulted in a R1.66 billion worker trust benefiting over 12,000 employees 90% of whom are black. It wasn't politically brokered. It was structurally designed to include workers at scale.

4. Heineken's "Bokamoso" Trust (2021)

When Heineken acquired Distell, it was required by the Competition Tribunal to create a broad-based employee share scheme. "Bokamoso" gave 6% equity to workers a model where empowerment was made a regulatory condition of doing business in South Africa.

These are not isolated cases. They are models for the future evidence that BEE can work, and work for the people. Why can the JSE Top 100 Listed Companies not follow this and give shares to their workers, their customers and communities they serve?

B-BBEE That Serves the Nation, Not the Network

For BEE to be legitimate, it must:

- Stop recycling elites: No individual or consortium should benefit from more than one major BEE deal.
- Impose sunset clauses: Empowerment credentials must expire after a certain period.
- Create a National BEE Beneficiary Registry: All deals and beneficiaries must be publicly disclosed and tracked.
- Mandate community participation: At least 30% of all future equity deals must be



routed through community trusts, worker funds, and township co-operatives.

- Align with the District Development Model: BEE must build local economies not extract value from them.

We must turn BEE into a mechanism for building black productive capacity, not just redistributing shares. That means more funding for black industrialists, township-based manufacturing, rural cooperatives, and tech-enabled youth entrepreneurship.

A Call to Action: Reclaim Empowerment from the Few, for the Many

To comrades, policymakers, business leaders, and community activists: we are at a crossroads. Either we allow the failures of the past to paralyse us or we reclaim the transformative promise of BEE and remake it to serve all who were historically disadvantaged: Black Africans, Coloured South Africans, Indian South Africans, women, youth, people with disabilities, and the rural poor.

I call on the ANC to:

- Codify a new generation of community-based empowerment deals.
- Reject individual-based enrichment without public impact.
- Strengthen the oversight

powers of the B-BBEE Commission.

- Incentivise cooperatives, worker-ownership, and community reinvestment.

We must restore the moral authority of economic redress by placing THE PEOPLE not political patrons at the centre of empowerment.

Conclusion: Build, Don't Burn

Professor Gumede has done us a service by exposing what went wrong. But let us not allow this moment to be hijacked by reactionaries who wish to dismantle BEE altogether. Let us not abandon the house of transformation because the roof leaked.

Instead, let us rebuild it, repair it, and expand it, so that it shelters all South Africans who have for too long lived on the margins.

We don't need to scrap BEE. We need to liberate it from the few and make it finally work for the many.

That is the real empowerment and economic justice we must fight and struggle for. ■

Faiez Jacobs is a Former MP, Public Policy Strategist and Advocate for Economic Justice.



Of Rose-Tinted Memories and Selective Outrage:

A RESPONSE TO BONANG MOHALE

■ By **AARON HOBONGWANA**

IN recent months, some among our business and academic elite have taken to confidently declaring the “failure” of South Africa’s Black government, as if democracy itself has run its course. Among them is Bonang Mohale, a respected businessman and public intellectual, who has argued that the post-apartheid state has failed and, worse, that the Afrikaner-led apartheid regime performed better. Such a comparison is not only ahistorical – it is politically dangerous and morally suspect.

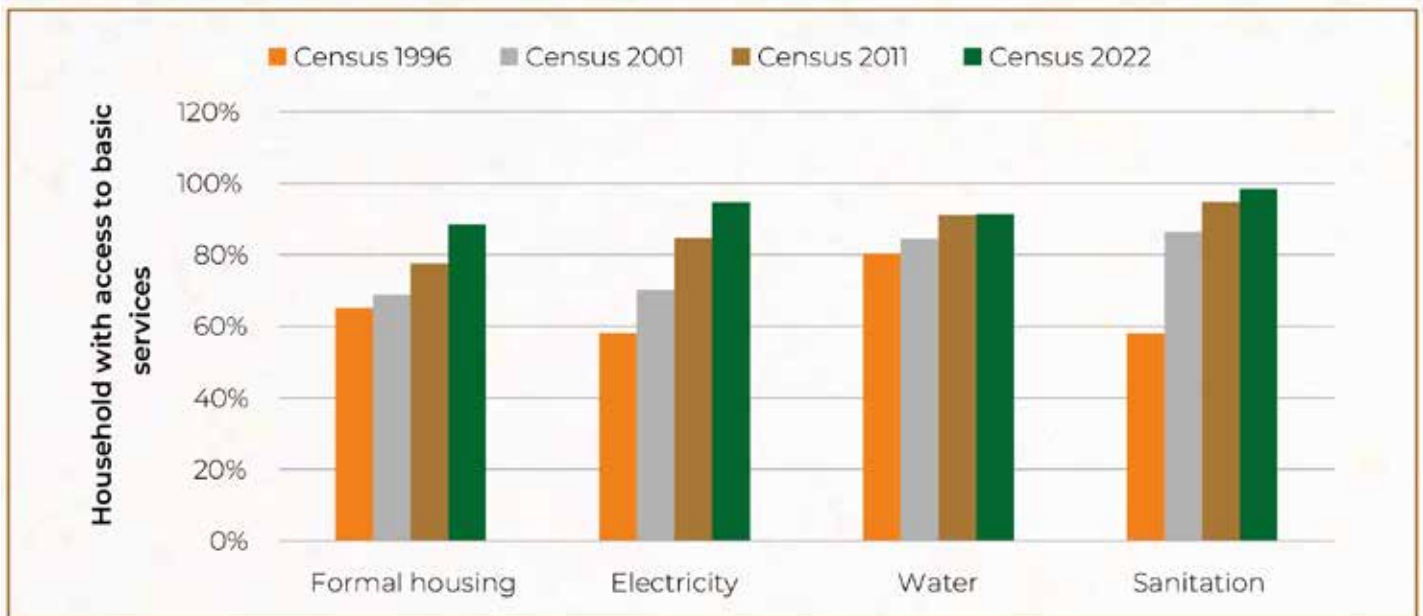
To invoke the “successes” of the apartheid government while dismissing the gains of democracy is to distort history and dishonour

the struggles of generations. It is to forget that apartheid’s “successes” were borne of a system that deliberately excluded, dispossessed, and oppressed the majority of this country’s people. The apartheid regime was efficient only in one thing: the institutionalised theft of land, labour, and dignity from Black South Africans.

As scholars such as Sampie Terreblanche (2002), Mahmood Mamdani (1996), and more recently, Duma Gqubule and Tshepo Madlingozi have argued, the apartheid economy was structured around racial capitalism – a system in which the economic privileges of the few depended directly on the exploitation of the

Black majority. Infrastructure was not “developed”; it was racially distributed. Economic growth did not benefit all; it entrenched white supremacy. To look back on this with admiration is to wear rose-tinted glasses soaked in the blood of our people.

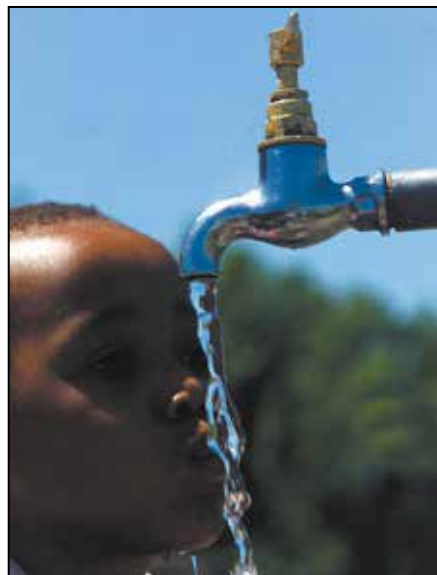
Thirty years into democracy, we have inherited not a blank slate but the wreckage of this system. The deeply entrenched structural inequalities – of land, education, health care, spatial development, and ownership – were not undone in 1994. Nor could they be. The negotiated settlement was never a revolution; it was a compromise. And yet, from that painful compromise, a progressive

Population with access to **basic services**

constitutional order was born. A state rooted in dignity, equality, and freedom was painstakingly built.

The democratic government, led by the ANC, extended basic services – electricity, water, sanitation – to millions who had never known them. It rolled out one of the world’s largest social grant systems. It built houses, clinics, and schools. It created the conditions for millions to access higher education. These gains were not perfect, and in some cases not sustainable – but they were real.

To ignore this, as Mohale does, is to indulge in what Ngūgĩ wa Thiong’o once called the “myopia of privilege” – the tendency of the comfortable to confuse their frustrations with a system for a collapse of the entire project. Yes, post-apartheid South Africa has been marred by poor governance, corruption, and the erosion of public trust. These must be confronted honestly and urgently. But let us not allow justified anger to mutate into unhistorical narratives that benefit the very forces that have long resisted transformation.



Let me be clear: my irritation with this seemingly fashionable take on our history – often peddled by those who should know better – must never be misconstrued as an absolution of our movement’s clear and undeniable inabilities, and what many may even consider inaptness. The ANC, as the governing party and leader of society, must not only accept fair criticism but must also demonstrate that it is learning from it. Self-correction is a revolutionary act. If we are to reclaim credibility, we must listen, reflect, and act in ways that rebuild the public

trust we have squandered.

Mohale also makes the mistake – perhaps deliberate – of pretending there has been consensus in post-apartheid South Africa. There hasn’t. From the beginning, the democratic state has been caught between the will of the people and the entrenched interests of capital. Elite pacts, policy compromises, and global market pressures have constantly constrained the pace and depth of transformation.

It is no accident that land reform has been sluggish, or that economic power remains largely in the hands of a minority. It is no accident that attempts to reform mining, banking, and the agricultural sectors have been met with fierce resistance. In many of these spheres, the loudest critics of state “failure” have also been the quiet saboteurs of transformation.

Bonang Mohale, as one of the country’s most prominent beneficiaries of post-1994 corporate transformation, cannot speak as if from outside this context. The

rise of a narrow Black managerial class – celebrated as “empowerment” – did not dismantle white capital. It merely created new layers of insulation. When this elite now turns on the very state that enabled its rise, we must ask: is this critique born of patriotism or betrayal?

What is especially dangerous is the demagogic tone now creeping into elite commentary. Intellectuals and professionals, speaking from boardrooms and lecture halls, are increasingly abandoning nuance for applause. They speak not with the discipline of movement building, but with the frustration of the disconnected. Their words often mirror those of reactionary forces – dressed in the language of justice, but ultimately legitimising disillusionment and delegitimising democracy.

Frantz Fanon once warned that “each generation must, out of



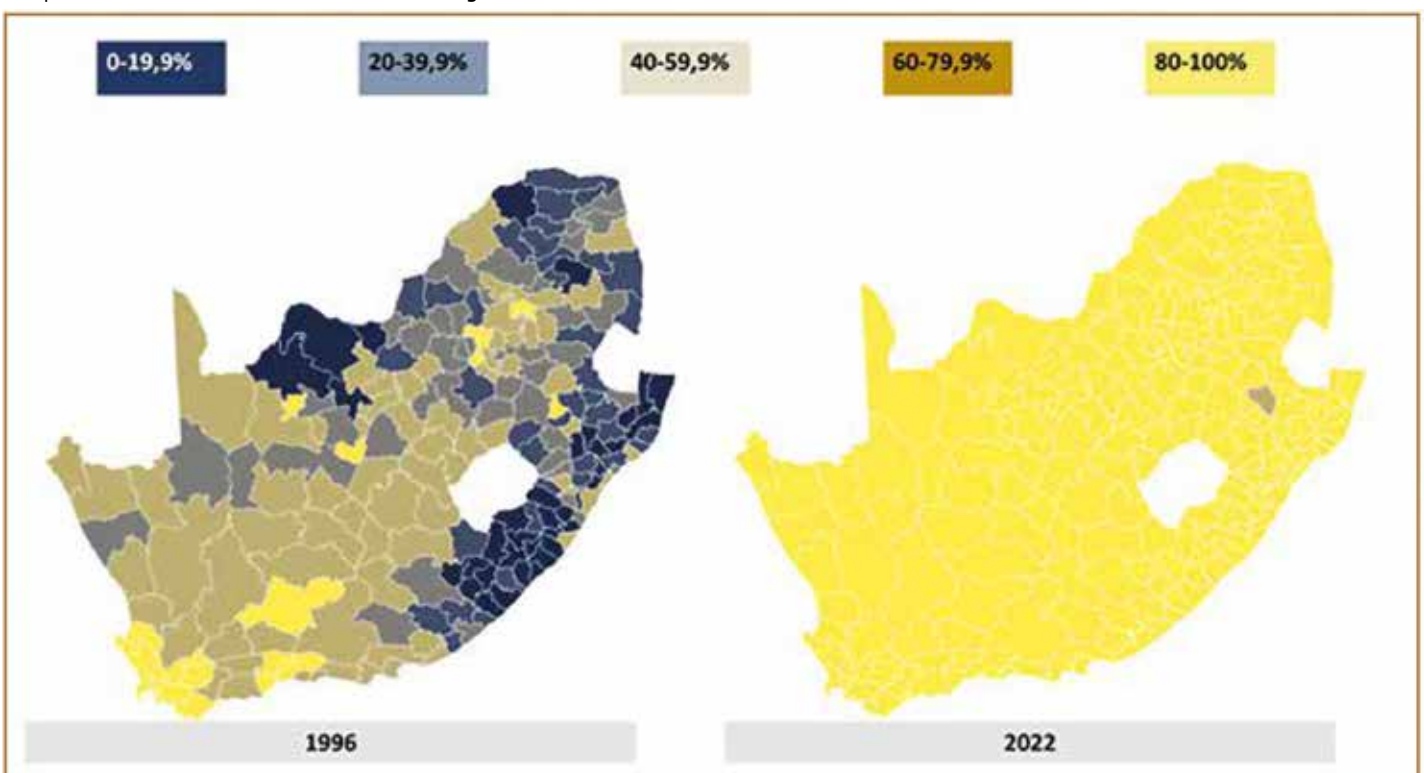
relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfil it, or betray it.” For this generation, the mission remains clear: to deepen and defend democracy, to transform the economy, and to renew the state in service of the people. But we cannot fulfil this mission if we allow cynicism to triumph over commitment. Nor can we tolerate a rewriting of history that casts apartheid as competent and democracy as a mistake.

We in the ANC must take seriously the crisis of confidence facing our movement. Renewal is not a slogan – it is an urgent political and ethical imperative. But renewal must be grounded in truth, not myth. In history, not fantasy. In an honest reckoning with our failures, yes – but also in the defence of the democratic gains for which so many gave their lives.

Let us remember: our task is not to entertain nostalgia for an oppressive past, but to build a just future. We cannot afford to lose our way because those with microphones have lost their memory. The democratic project may be battered, but it is not broken. And as long as we believe in its promise, we must resist those who would bury it with careless words and comfortable distortions.

History will judge us not by the anger of our critique, but by the integrity of our actions. ■

Population with access to **electricity**.



FROM WESTERN CAPE TO NORTH WEST IN SEVEN DAYS

Pemmy Majodina's Delivery Machine Continues To Gather Momentum

■ By **CORNELIUS MONAMA**

MINISTER of Water and Sanitation, Pemmy Majodina, continues to ensure delivery of water and sanitation services across the country. On Friday last week, she unveiled and officially handed over the completed Phase 12 of the Tulbagh Bulk Water Supply Project worth roughly R48 million to Witzenberg Local Municipality in the Western Cape.

The project was funded by the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) through its Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant (RBIG) to the value of about R43 million while the municipality contributed a further R5 million and implemented the project.

The completed work consists of a new 1238.4 Ml dam, pump station and its associated infrastructure. Now that it is completed, this project will benefit a total population of close to 10 000 people in Tulbagh and surrounding areas in the Witzenberg Local Municipality.

The project will also unlock a lot of economic opportunities and housing development for the small town. Witzenberg Municipality is one of the 12 municipalities recognised for the best Blue Drop performance for 2023.

The following day, Comrade Pemmy, undertook an oversight visit to Clanwilliam Dam in the Cederberg Municipality, Western Cape, to as-

sess progress on the raising of the dam wall.

Clanwilliam Dam is one of the department's key catalytic projects which will significantly increase water supply within the Cederberg Municipality. This R5.7 billion project, which is envisaged to be completed in 2028, involves raising the dam by 13 metres. This will almost triple its water yield. The main beneficiaries will be local farmers, households and historically disadvantaged farmers. The project continues to generate substantial economic opportunities for local entrepreneurs.

Today (Friday, 13 June 2025), Comrade Pemmy Majodina is heading to the North West. This time, to hand over the refurbished Boitekong Sewer Pump Station and Outfall Sewer in Boitekong, Rustenburg Local Municipality, North West province.

The water infrastructure project is one of the many fast-tracked projects under Operation Bulela Metsi which was launched by the Ministry of Water and Sanitation and the Premier of North West in July 2023 to accelerate access to water and sanitation services in the province.

An amount of R13,278,098.69 was allocated by the Department of Water and Sanitation in the 2023/24 financial year for the refurbishment of the Sewer Pump Station and Outfall Sewer through the Water Service Infrastructure Grant (WSIG). The project will reduce the frequent number of blockages on the system and also improve the quality of sanitation services in Boitekong, Freedom Park, Meriting and Seraleng.

The day's programme includes a site visit and a community engagement session at Boitekong Community Hall. ■





Tribute to Mandela Kapere

A Torchbearer of Youth, Unity, and Struggle

■ By **ANDILE LUNGISA**

TODAY, we gather our thoughts and our hearts to pay tribute to a giant whose life was a symphony of purpose, principle, and unyielding dedication to the liberation of humanity. Comrade Mandela Kapere was not just a leader, he was a force, a flame that burned brightly in the service of the youth, of Africa, and of justice across the world.

From his earliest days in the SWAPO Youth League, Mandela Kapere showed that he was a child of the revolution, not merely in words, but in action. His voice,

unwavering and clear, spoke for the dreams and demands of a new generation determined to take its place in shaping a free and dignified Namibia.

As Secretary of the Namibia Youth Council, he transformed the institution into a dynamic engine of empowerment. He did not wait for opportunities to be handed to the youth; he fought for them. He carved them from the rock of resistance, from the hard truths of inequality, and from the deep wells of African hope.

In the wider African context, Man-

dela served as Vice President of the Pan African Youth Union for the Southern African Region and Namibia National Students Organisation (NANSO), where his passion and clarity brought together youth movements across borders, across languages, and across divisions. He believed deeply that African unity was not a slogan but a strategy, a necessity for freedom.

A defining moment of his legacy came when he stood with fellow visionaries to craft the African Youth Charter. That document, adopted by all 54 Heads of State

and supported by AU agencies, is not only a legal framework, it is a covenant. A covenant between Africa's past and its future. A promise that youth are not just beneficiaries of tomorrow, but leaders of today. Mandela Kapere's fingerprints are etched into that living document, and through it, his voice will continue to echo in legislative halls and grassroots movements alike.

On the global stage, he led Namibian delegations to the World Festival of Youth and Students, proudly under the banner of the World Federation of Democratic Youth – a global, anti-imperialist movement. In those gatherings, he reminded us all that solidarity is not symbolic. It is action. It is choosing a side.

Mandela Kapere chose his side boldly and unapologetically.

He stood with Zimbabwe when unjust sanctions tried to choke its sovereignty.

He stood with Palestine, where freedom still knocks at the gates of occupation.

He stood with Cuba, a beacon of



dignity despite decades of blockade.

He stood with Venezuela, targeted for daring to dream independently.

He stood with Western Sahara, whose people still yearn for their rightful liberation.

Comrade Kapere's politics were never performative. They were lived. He taught us that being African means being part of a

global family and that our fight for justice cannot end at our borders.

In mourning his passing, we do not only grieve what we have lost, we also reaffirm what he taught us. That to be young is not only a biological fact, but a revolutionary posture. That to be African is to be a soldier for justice. That to be a leader is to serve.

Mandela Kapere was the embodiment of all these truths. His legacy challenges us to rise, to organize, to speak truth to power, and to never abandon the ideals of liberation, not only for ourselves, but for all oppressed people.

Rest in power, Comrade Kapere. Your struggle lives on. Your voice marches with us. Your name is written in the heart of the African youth.

Aluta continua.

Victory is certain. ■



Andile Lungisa is an ANC NEC Member, former President Pan African Youth Union and ANC YL Deputy President.

General Andre Lincoln: The seed and soil beneath the bloom

■ By **PROFESSOR BRIAN WILLIAMS**



WE often walk into a garden, struck by the vivid bloom of flowers. We are magically drawn to their colour, their poise, and their proud defiance of gravity. Rarely, though, do we pause to ask what lies beneath. We tend to overlook the seeds once buried, the richness of soil, the quiet sustenance of sun and water... the vigilant gardener's hand. So too, we often admire the lives of those who shine, those revolutionary figures whose strength and resolve seem forged in open battle.

But greatness is not an accident of will. It is an unfolding, a slow blooming shaped by hidden roots and nourishment. Such is the story of General Andre Lincoln and his early life when he was silently seeded to become a revolutionary.

This revolutionary seedling, Andre, found fertile ground at Saint Luke's Catholic Church in Factice-

ton, close to his home in Kensington. It was there, in the youth gatherings, that the idea of justice as a moral imperative took root. We were both youngsters shaped by the Catholic Church's call for justice and peace and the insistence that faith must confront oppression, and that silence in the face of injustice is complicity. I ended up being detained twice and charged in terms of the Internal Security Act. Many of us were willing to offer our lives, so that oppression may die and justice would live.

Andre stated that I inducted him into the African National Congress (ANC) at the *"ripe old age of 14 years old"*, and later he journeyed into Umkhonto we Sizwe, "MK" within the intelligence division. Caryn Dolley in her book, *"Man Alone,"* refers to Andre as a *"child soldier."* I am not comfortable with this description. It is factually flawed, inaccurate and has negative implications for a range of people and the ANC.

In the heat of battles against injustice, Andre met the love of his life. Denise, a woman whose extraordinary beauty and quiet inner strength, embraced him with layers of protection. During this fervent time of revolutionary struggle, Denise, became both shield and anchor to him and their four children, Celine, Nicole, Danielle, and Ryan.

Denise's heroism is inextricable from Andre's legendary status. She, along with their four children, his parents, Mrs Wilma Lincoln, his late father Reginald and sisters, Mary-Ann, and Charlene, formed the garden bed that surrounded the seed. The Lincoln family gently nurtured the soil so he could rise, steadfast and defiant. Denise and families of revolutionaries will confirm that it is no small thing to love a revolutionary.

It is extremely hard to carry the weight of choices, revolutionaries make, but which their families carry.

TRIBUTE



General Andre Lincoln with President Cyril Ramaphosa

Andre's career, forged in the crucible of apartheid and tempered in the birth of democracy, was not one of convenience. It was a calling beyond mountains, valleys, rivers, and seas. Whether infiltrating organized crime syndicates or challenging corruption from within the very institutions meant to protect the people, he stood firm, not out of pride, but out of principle. Andre worked under dangerous and deadly conditions and the bloodied knives of askari betrayal went into his soul. People who should have been his comrades and protected him, failed to do so.

Yet, he was recognised by former President Nelson Mandela as a person with integrity who could be trusted to become the head the Presidential Investigation Task Unit (PITU). But he was constantly undermined by powerful rogue elements within the ANC. He was falsely accused and criminally charged and then acquitted after almost seven years of living hell for Denise and the family. She had to hold the fort during those traumatic years of his life when he was deemed to be unemployable. He was blocked whenever he tried to obtain employment. Several comrades, in acts of solidarity helped here and there

and this was appreciated. Those violent and tragic pressures and the traumas, contributed to deep wounds which unbalanced him in his personal life. Emotional vulnerabilities crept in during those times of personal anguish. I was there to provide help to Andre whenever he needed my help. I also know that Andre wanted to reconcile with his comrade, Arthur Fraser but did not have a chance to do so.

Andre and I had an unbroken relationship. He publicly referred to me as his mentor, friend, brother and comrade and I constantly tried to hush him. To speak of General Andre Lincoln merely as a high-ranking officer or the man who helped dismantle organized crime in South Africa would be to see only the flower, not the patient and enabling soil. Therefore, let us honour the foundations of his legendary journey.

As we reflect on the life and legacy of General Andre Lincoln, let us not focus only on the visible bloom. Let us remember the seed that was planted at Saint Luke's parish. Let us honour the soil, his family, his Catholicism, his Kensington community, and the ANC, as an organisation that birthed him. Heroes are not born in the

moment they rise. They are nurtured in those early years, when challenges are great and values are forged in small, persistent acts of belief.

As a permanent "MK" veteran and once proud member of the ANC, he told me that despite his anger at the betrayal by powerful individuals from within the ANC, he hoped that there would be restorative justice for his family who suffered in those early days.

And so, just as a flower narrates the story of the soil that sustained it, so too does General Andre Lincoln's life tell the story of a deeper, often invisible seed, a belief in justice, in community, and in the transformative power of peace and love.

Let us rebuild our communities and country.

Let the soul of our comrade and brother, General Andre Lincoln rest in eternal peace and may perpetual light forever shine upon him. ■

Professor Brian Williams is a Mediator and Peace educator, International Award-winning poet (8 published books).

TRIBUTE TO COMRADE DR. TSHENUWANI SIMON FARISANI

■ By **SECHABA NKOANA**



COMRADE Tshenuwani Simon Farisani was born into a farming family that thrived on fertile land in Songozwi (near Louis Trichardt), Limpopo. However, under apartheid's brutal land policies, his family was forcibly uprooted and moved to the arid village of Madodonga. Much of their livestock was confiscated due to discriminatory laws restricting black land ownership. This experience of violent dispossession shaped his early awareness of systemic injustice. He only began formal schooling at age 12, after a German missionary saw him working in the fields and advocated for his education. He excelled academically, quickly advancing through school and completing his matric with distinction.

He studied theology at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Maphumulo, Natal, where his commitment to liberation theology intensified. His radical critique of apartheid theology led to

his expulsion from the seminary. Undeterred, he continued with his studies via correspondence with UNISA where he completed his degree and was ordained in 1975. In 1976, Farisani became the first black dean of Beuster Mission, established by white Lutheran missionaries.

Cde Farisani believed that the essential duty of cadreship and leadership was to agitate for the political consciousness of the people, to mobilise, and continuously organise people as a conscious force to seize and maintain political power. As a cadre, he lived within the framework of multi-faceted relationships. Cde Farisani was an embodiment of the ANC-led Alliance and the mass democratic struggle. To this extent the late Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh said "be true to the Party and loyal to the people, fulfil any tasks, overcome any difficulty and defeat an enemy".

Cde Farisani believed and advo-

cated for the Liberation Theology that generally, focused on liberating humanity from various forms of oppression, including social, political, economic, and spiritual injustices. He also advocated for an academic discipline and a form of committed activism which focused on empowering people of African descent to overcome systemic racism, through rethinking the frameworks of organised religion, primarily Christianity.

Cde Farisani strongly believed that changing the structures of society was fundamentally a matter of politics. It required a political strategy based on a clear social and political analysis. The Church has to address itself to these strategies and to the analysis upon which they are based. It is into this political situation that the Church has to bring the gospel and not as an alternative solution to our problems as if the gospel provided us with a non-political solution to political problems. There is no specifically

Christian solution. There will be a Christian way of approaching the political solutions, a Christian spirit and motivation and attitude. But there is no way of bypassing politics and political strategies.

Rejecting what was considered the 'liberal rhetoric of reconciliation', Cde Farisani and all the Christians who believed in the liberation theology called for direct participation in the struggle for liberation. As mentioned above, this included participating in acts of civil disobedience against the apartheid state. This was in contrast to the views of many white South Africans and church leaders who believed that they could be agents of reconciliation without actively engaging in the liberation struggle.

Cde Farisani also believed that no reconciliation was possible in South Africa without justice. What this meant in practice was that no reconciliation, no forgiveness and no negotiations are possible without repentance. The Biblical teaching on reconciliation and forgiveness makes it quite clear that nobody can be forgiven and reconciled with God unless he or she repents of their sins.

It is in this context that The ANC's church roots survive to this day in various shapes and forms, including the opening of meetings with a prayer, the existence of religious department or desk at all levels of ANC structures, the inter-denominational prayers in opening ANC gatherings, the National Anthem of the country and the existence of the Office of National Chaplain in the ANC Constitution.

Cde Farisani has had an indelible impact on our community and was much more than an inspiration-



al iconic freedom fighter and the presiding pastor of the Lutheran Church, he transcended the bitter divides of South Africa's history to become one of the most revered religious leaders in our country. It is very, very difficult for us to think of the democratic South Africa without his crinkly smile, deep voice, and slow, tall walk.

Cde Farisani left behind a legacy as an example, which can and will inspire the new generation of African leaders. He remained throughout his life free from bombast and managed to evade the isolating trappings of public office that so often ensnare politicians. He was always approachable and lived a simple life. The name Tshenuwani Farisani is inextricably bound to the history and political evolution of our country, South Africa. He has truly earned the admiration of the entire country and we must not mourn his death, but instead celebrate his pragmatic political acumen and Pan African vision.

Cde Farisani has given us a life of hard work, diligence and accomplishment. His successes were not attained by sudden flight, but by constant effort and determination. In this he pointed the light for leaders like Assimi Goïta (Mali), Ibrahim Traore (Burkina

na Faso) and Abdourahamane Tchiani (Republic of Niger) to stand against terrorism, injustice and foreign manipulative mechanism in Africa. Cde Farisani remains a model for the wider Africa and his soul should be seen as a strength to provide those of us who are remaining behind the strong heart and mind set to bail African out of the precipice.

Cde Farisani was the champion of the struggles of the poorest of the poor, the marginalized and the downtrodden. Cde Farisani defied death threats from the looters of the VBS Mutual Bank and courageously stood on the side of more than 500 VBS bank's clients who were left destitute by the collapse of the bank. These are the elderly citizens and street vendors who sold their goods in the streets of Thohoyandou, pensioners who now lie in limbo because they can't access any money for their own healthcare. Up until his death, Cde Farisani supported the VBS victims who lost their money in the collapse of VBS Mutual Bank, and called on all who benefited illegally to repay the bank's clients and face the full might of the law.

Cde Farisani was a *"man of peace and reconciliation"* and someone who actively promoted understanding, healing, and harmony between people, groups, or nations. These involved mediating disputes, fostering dialogue, and working towards a more just and peaceful world. All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: (2 Corinthians 5:18). ■

Sechaba Nkoana IS the Provincial Secretary of the ANC Veterans League in Limpopo Province.

“Building bridges and organizing across borders”: FES South Africa outgoing country directors sad to leave

■ Excerpt from the joint speech by **UTA DIRKSEN** and **SEBASTIAN SPERLING**, the outgoing directors of the FES South Africa, on the occasion of **100 years of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung** at the Lindiwe Mabuza Space, Johannesburg

AFTER imagining a better tomorrow and centering economic justice, we need to organize for it.

To organize for the struggle outlined by Uta, the trade unions are central. Globally and in South Africa, their power declines, as the power of big tech over workers increases, as informalization continues and as we continue to fail to properly value care work. We have to keep building stronger, more inclusive unions capable of organizing workers in this increasingly precarious world of work.

Secondly, for organizing any democratic, progressive project, we need political parties. We progressives are experts at pointing out the flaws of our parties. That's important and it is easy. Boy, have I been frustrated with my own political party, the Social Democratic Party of Germany!

Yet unlike a single-issue NGO, a political party is the place where we have to accept some degree of diverging views to build power around the important common cause. We worked in Uruguay before, where the recently victorious Frente Amplio teaches us



how important it is for the left to organize unity: diversity in ideology but unity around a common progressive manifesto. Only if we accept that in no healthy democracy can there ever be a party that we agree with 100% or even 90%, will we be able to organize a successful progressive political project.

Have I been frustrated with the ANC, and do I understand comrades who gave up on the ANC

and are pursuing their activism elsewhere? Oh absolutely. But in all these past years, from our first meeting in your office at Luthuli House, Fébé, to all those encounters with branch members at ANC conferences, January 8th or other rallies, my respect for the ANC has only grown. Not only for its historic role and achievements. But for the mass democratic movement that the ANC still is, for the space there is within to openly acknowledge

its flaws, and for the many comrades who, against all odds and internal resistance, are organizing to address those flaws, to fight corruption and renew that political project.

Thirdly, beyond unions and parties, it is equally important to overcome the territorialism that also characterizes South African civil society. We have opened this venue [Lindiwe Mabuza Space] deliberately as a space where this can happen.

And we need to reach out also beyond our own political comfort zone. We need to step out of our digital echo-chambers that feed of polarization and indignation and we need to cultivate the ability to listen and to accept other perspectives, to respectfully disagree on important issues while allowing for the possibility of some common ground even with the fiercest of political opponents. Not only because we might need to build and sustain coalitions to govern. But because this is the basis of any peaceful, democratic society.

In that sense, I have enjoyed the many controversial political discussions with the other German political foundations here in South Africa, and it's good to see many represented here. Thank you, colleagues, also for the good cooperation on the issues that concern us all as democratic foundations.

To us political foundations, and this is my last point, the organizing around a common political cause does not stop at national borders.

To Uta and I, this is what justifies FES sending German colleagues around the world.

We see it as our role to build bridges and organize across borders.

At the surface, in recent years Germany and South Africa often seemed to be on opposing ends of debates around Covid vaccines, Ukraine or Gaza, yet precisely in such moments one has to talk with the intention to understand and with the focus not on what divides but on what one can agree on.

We are glad that this has also been the approach of both governments (we actively lobbied for that in Berlin) and we are glad that is also the approach of the German Embassy here, under your leadership, Ambassador Peschke. Thank you for the good cooperation and your support in all those years.

Between South Africa and Germany, the commonalities, common values and interests, are, by far, greater than the differences; and they are just growing as major powers further turn the authoritarian, imperialist way.

Yet of course, governments do

change. Therefore, and because international relations are too important to be left to governments alone, regardless of who governs in a given country, as FES we organize towards progressive internationalism at the levels of parties, unions, activists, where we will always find common interest and common purpose; for practical solidarity; to debunk the lies paddled by the international right like we had to do yesterday; to build global campaigns; to get support for our own domestic struggles and also to move the needle on certain discussions, policy positions and double standards within Europe and Germany and within the German left.

We are glad that in recent years, exchanges between German and South African trade unions have been very much alive, for instance in the automotive sector.

And equally, we are glad to see that SPD and ANC have revived their historic relationship in recent years and have agreed to deepen their cooperation.

Let us keep organizing in that sense, on all levels. ■



A Jerusalem Voice for Justice

an ecumenical witness for equality and a just peace in Palestine/Israel



An SOS for Gaza

Cast your nets again!

To every human being, every person with a conscience, to all lovers of peace,

As Christians in the Holy Land, we are sounding the alarm about the recent unprecedented escalation in the Israeli war on Gaza. After more than a year and a half of death and destruction, the moment we now find ourselves in is terrifying. We are, in essence, sending an SOS: we need your help.

The siege on Gaza was renewed on March 2, 2025, resulting in the longest blockade on the entry of food and other essential aid in the history of the Gaza Strip. A renewed Israeli military offensive was launched on March 18, 2025. On that first day alone, hundreds of people were killed. Since then, tens of people are being killed on an almost daily basis. Now, as we write these lines, the Israeli army is occupying more and more territory in the Strip, leading to more destruction and death.

In the past weeks, the situation has progressively deteriorated: in addition to the close to 55 000 dead and over 120 000 wounded, starvation and famine are being experienced (the UN recently identified 10 000 new cases of malnutrition). Hospitals and other civilian facilities are almost completely shut down. More than two mil-

lion Gazans and the remaining 24 live Israeli hostages are all at risk of their lives at every moment.

Moreover, the escalation is not only due to the ongoing siege and onslaught. The Israeli authorities unveiled a new strategy, pretending that it aims at the distribution of much needed aid. However, this is conditional on yet further displacement of the population. Israeli control will be guaranteed by a US supported agency, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF). Distribution depends on what are being called “*Secure Distribution Sites*”, fully controlled by the Israeli army. On May 16, 2025, the executive director of the GHF, Jake Woods, declared that he refused to “*be part of anything that forcibly dislocates or displaces the Palestinian population*”. On May 25, 2025, he resigned after calling for Israel to allow in aid through all possible channels. The GHF began distribution on May 26, 2025 however the screening processes, the difficulties to reach the distribution points and the continued killings of Gazans making their way to these points raise the likelihood that the GHF is a cover for Israeli military operations. Meanwhile, the Gazans continue to starve.

Many are asking what this escalation means. Firstly, it is presenting Gazans with a horrific choice: submit

to full Israeli control or starve. Furthermore, many are wondering whether this might lead to another attempt to ethnically cleanse the Strip, culminating in pushing the population beyond the borders of the Strip. The end-goal of removing the Palestinians has been repeatedly openly formulated by Israeli politicians, including members of the government, since President Trump first suggested it on February 5, 2025.

The United Nations and many of the international NGOs have recognized that this **“distribution of aid”** is an escalation of the war. They know full well that to participate in such “distribution” would mean being complicit in using food assistance as part of a war strategy, explicitly prohibited by the Geneva Conventions.

The Israeli political and military authorities constantly dispute reports that describe how dire the situation in Gaza is. They dispute the numbers of those killed, dying, wounded and starving. However, these same authorities refuse to allow foreign journalists into Gaza to report on what is going on. Meanwhile, about 180 local Gaza journalists and media workers have been killed during Israeli military operations since October 7, 2023.

While the people of Gaza are the first victims of this cruel war, the rest of us are under another, more invisible psychological and spiritual bombardment—flooded with images and competing narratives, we are left feeling hopeless, paralyzed by despair and unable to help. Exhausted! Therefore, we call out to you. The international community must intervene. Although our voices do not seem to be heard by world leaders, we encourage all who have ears to hear and eyes to see, to take action.

In John’s Gospel (21:1-13), the disciples gathered on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Despondent and exhausted, Peter suggested that they simply go back to their lives as fishermen. And yet, although they toiled through the night, they caught nothing. But then, Jesus appeared on the shore and called to them, **“Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some”** (Jn. 21:6).

We call out to you: please, try again, cast your nets again. We beg you not to give up. Let us be filled with the energy of the resurrection and of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and recommit to fighting for life and freedom for our brothers and sisters in Gaza and everywhere else in Palestine/Israel.

Jerusalem Voice for Justice members include:

His Beatitude Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Michel Sabbah (emeritus)

His Excellency Greek Orthodox Bishop Attallah Hanna

His Grace Lutheran Bishop of the Holy Land Munib Younan (emeritus)

Mr. Yusef Daher

Ms. Sawsan Bitar

Ms. Dina Nasser

Ms. Sandra Khoury

Mr. Sami El-Yousef

Mr. John Munayer

Mr. Samuel Munayer

Mr. Rafi Ghattas

Rev. Frans Bouwen MAfr

Rev. Alessandro Barchi

Rev. Firas Abdrabbo

Rev. David Neuhaus SJ



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

14–20 June 2025

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

14 June 1898

France signs the Niger Convention

The convention was an agreement between France and Britain about the portioning of West Africa. The partitioning mostly defines borders in the West African region today. These decisions determined the borders between former British or French colonies of Nigeria, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, and Benin (formerly Dahomey). Sometimes borders divided relatives and people who had previously belonged to the same ethno-linguistic groups. A person who fell on the French side of Nigeria-Dahomey border, for example, might have learned French as a second language and migrated to the colonial capital Cotonou. Her cousin on the Nigerian side of the border, on the other hand, may have learned English as a second language, and migrated to the Nigerian colonial capital of Lagos.

14 June 1985

Artist Thami Mnye assassinated

On this day, graphic artist, activist and member of Umkhonto we Sizwe, Thamsanqa (Thami) Mnye was shot and killed by the South African government in Gaborone, Botswana where he was in exile. In Gaborone Thami participated in the anti-apartheid cultural organisation, the MEDU Art Ensemble. After killing him,

the apartheid agents confiscated his work and soon after displayed it on national television as evidence of his so-called terrorist activities. His works have not yet been recovered.

14 June 1977

Afrikaans Language Monument

The 'Afrikaanse Taal Monument' (Monument of the Afrikaans language) near Paarl, is handed to the state. The idea of monument to the Afrikaans language was first raised in 1942, a local committee was established to raise funds for it, but it only came

to fruition when taken over by the whites only Afrikaanse Taal en Kultuur Vereeniging (ATKV) in 1963. The Paarl municipality provided the land (83 hectares) for free for this purpose, building started in 1972 and was completed in 1974. The design of the Taal monument represents the diversity of the origins of Afrikaans, as well as the symbolism of a bridge between Europe and Africa. The monument today also symbolises the debate and challenge by black South Africans who spoke the language, pointing towards the influences of indigenous languages and the Malay language to Afrikaans, in



Thabo Mbeki is elected President

Thabo Mbeki became the second President of South Africa and succeeds Nelson Mandela, with Jacob Zuma becoming Deputy President. During his Inaugural speech Mbeki said the following: "As the sun continues to rise to banish the darkness of the long years of colonialism and apartheid, what the new light over our land must show is a nation diligently at work to create a better life for itself."



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

addition to its Dutch origins. After 1994, the monument remained part of South Africa's national monuments.

15 June 1860

First nursing school opened

Florence Nightingale, seen as the founder of the modern nursing profession opened the first school for nursing at St Thomas Hospital in London.

16 June 1976

Students March and Police brutality spur 1976 Uprising

Students marched from Morris Isaacson High in Soweto to protest against the introduction of Afrikaans as a language of instruction in schools. This sparked off violent response from the police, the killing of young student Hector Peterson, and a country-wide student uprising which forever changed events in South Africa. After 1994, following lobbying by youth and student organisations, the day was declared as South African youth, a public holiday and annually commemorating the bravery of the 1976 generation.

16 June 1983

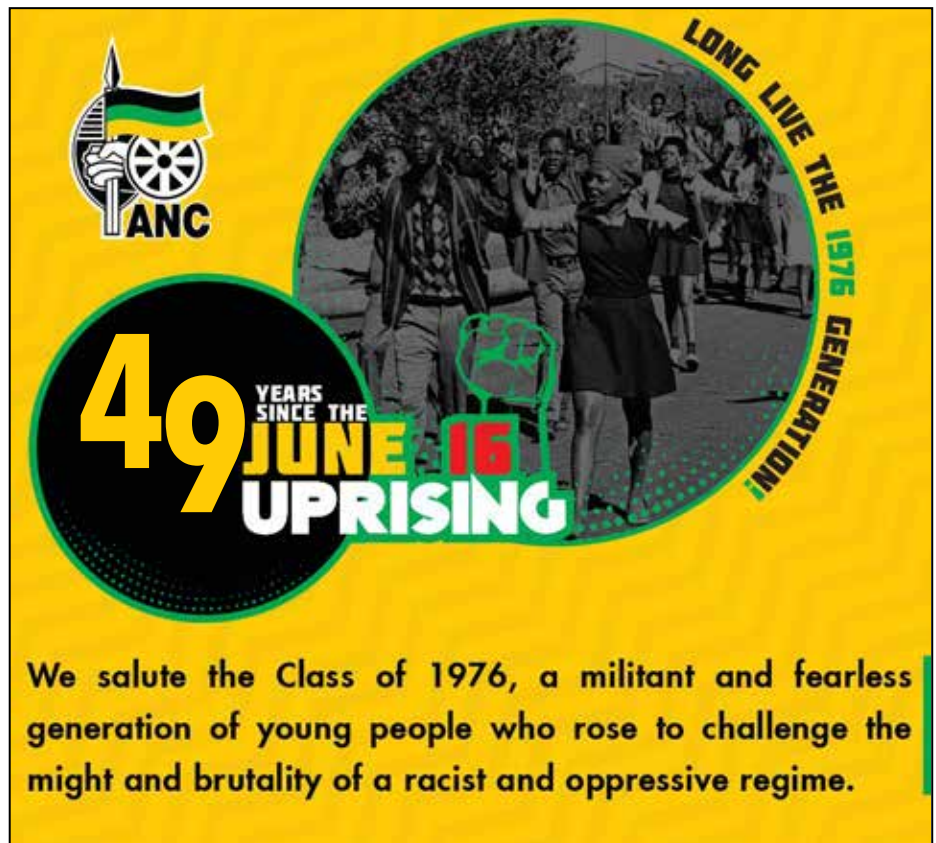
Rev James Calata born

Rev. James Arthur Calata, born in Cradock in 1930, a founder of the ANC Youth League, Secretary General of the ANC, Defiance campaign volunteer passed on. Rev. Calata was also a clergy from the Anglican Church.

17 June 1991

De Klerk's whites-only parliament repeal some Apartheid laws

The whites-only Parliament vote



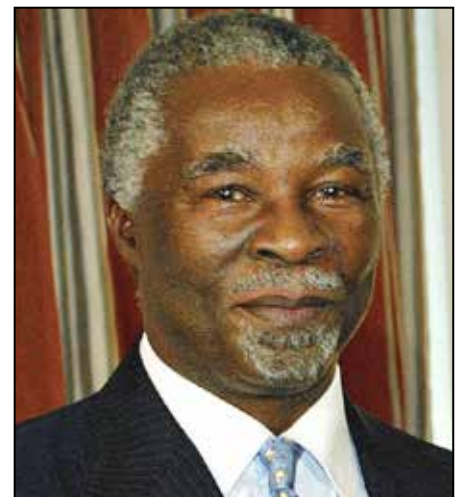
to repeal some of the key laws that formed the foundation of apartheid, namely the Population Register Act of 1950 (that stripped the majority of black South Africans of citizenship, with citizenship supposed to be only in the bantustans); the Group Areas Act and the Land Act (which together with Bantustan acts, preserved 87% of land for whites); and the Separate Amenities Acts, which segregated amenities – from public toilets, benches, beaches, cinemas, shops, sports facilities, transport facilities, hospitals, etc – between whites and non-whites. This was seen as part of the process of removing the legal basis of apartheid.

18 June 1942

Thabo Mbeki born in Idutywa

Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki was born in Idutywa in Transkei on June 18 1942. Both his parents, Ephainette and Govan Mbeki

were ANC and CPSA activists. The young Mbeki joined the ANC Youth League at the age of 14 and became active in student politics. After his schooling at Lovedale Academy was interrupted by a strike in 1959, he completed his studies at home. He later moved to Britain where he completed a Masters degree in economics at Sussex University. During the years of apartheid, he played a major role in turning the international media against the



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system. After South Africa's first democratic election in April 1994, Mbeki became deputy president. Mbeki was elected President of South Africa on 14 June 1999 and was inaugurated as President on 16 June 1999. Mbeki played a major role in the African continent, through his commitment to the African renaissance, his involvement in resolutions of conflicts, the adoption of NEPAD and the launch of the African Union in 2002. Mbeki resigned from the presidency in 2008, just a few months before he was to complete his second term of office. He is the patron of the Thabo Mbeki Foundation and the Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute.

18 June 1995

Angolan national team plane crash

The Angolan national soccer team was involved in a plane crash, which killed the entire team support staff and crew.

18 June 2000

First Ethiopia-Eritrea Peace agreement signed

Ethiopia and Eritrea signed a ceasefire in Algiers, capital of Algeria, ending two years of war with tens of thousands of casualties in both sides. A 25 kilometre neutral zone resulted, introducing a 'No-War-No-Peace' stand-off between the countries. Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in 2018 signed another peace agreement aimed at normalizing relations between the two neighbours.

19 June 1904

Arrival of Chinese labourers in South Africa

A labour shortage at the gold mines on the Rand resulted in

the importation of Chinese labour in 1904. This situation, in part, was the result of the Anglo-Boer War (South African War) of 1899-1902, that had displaced large numbers of the indigenous population. In December 1903, the Chamber of Mines, the Chamber of Commerce and the nominated Legislative Council of South Africa recommended that labourers be imported from China on short-term contracts that terminated with compulsory repatriation. On the 19 June 1904, the first Chinese labourers thus arrived at the Witwatersrand. Between 1904 and 1910 there were almost 64,000 Chinese working on the Witwatersrand gold mines near Johannesburg.

19 June 1913

Native Land Act lays foundation for land dispossession



The first Native Land Act (No. 27 of 1913) was passed, allocating only 7% of arable land to Africans and the more fertile land to whites. A process which started with colonial dispossession under the Dutch and British, and after the racist Union of South Africa of 1910, at a stroke of a pen, millions more South Africans became second class citizens in their country. Africans were prohibited from buying or hiring land in 93% of South Africa. Sol Plaatje wrote, "As a result of the passing of the Natives Land Act groups of natives are to be seen

in the different Provinces seeking for new land. They have crossed over from the Free State into Natal, from Natal into the Transvaal, and from the Transvaal into British Bechuanaland" (**Native Life in South Africa**, p.99). The Act seized the very asset which was central to lives of African people and rendered them destitute. Immediately after the passing of the Land Act, white farmers began issuing notices of eviction to Black people. R.W. Msimang documented some of these notices in his book **Natives Land Act 1913, Specific Cases of Evictions and Hardships** etc.

19 June 1932

Sol T Plaatjie passed on



Solomon Tshekisho Plaatje was a South African writer, linguist, translator and political leader. Plaatje died of pneumonia at the age of 55 while on a trip to Johannesburg. He was a prolific journalist and writer and in 1912 became first secretary-general of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC), which in 1923 became the African National Congress (ANC). Plaatje's contributions to literature include the widely acclaimed book, **Native life in South Africa** documenting the experiences of black farmers forced off the land following the passing of the Land Act in 1913. He also translated Shakespeare's

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Comedy of Errors, Julius Caesar, and Much Ado about Nothing into Setswana.

19 June 1959

Extension of University Education Act

The Extension of University Education Act comes into effect. It segregated university education on racial lines, prevented blacks from attending white universities unless given permission by the minister of education, and also created segregated universities for blacks, coloureds and Indians, which received considerable fewer resources than white universities. *"The separation of these institutions was not only along racial lines but also along ethnic lines. The University of Fort Hare was opened for Xhosa speaking students only, while the University of the North in Turfloop was set up for the Pedi, Sotho and Tswana students. Coloureds had their own University in Bellville, while Indians and Zulus had their universities in Durban-Westville and Ngoye (KZN) respectively. The provision of this Act was met with protest from most lecturers at Fort Hare. Prof Z.K. Matthews, who was a lecturer at Fort Hare, relinquished his position in protest against the Act."*

20 June 1950

Disbanding of Communist Party announced

Sam Kahn, leader of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) and natives' representative in parliament, announced in parliament that the party had disbanded. The announcement was made a few days before the Suppression of Communism Act, No. 44 of 1950 was approved in parliament in June 1950 and came into force on 17 July of that year.

In 1950, the Communist Party had about 2 000 members, of which about three-fourths were Africans. After the disbanding of the CPSA, more than a thousand communists joined the African National Congress (ANC).

20 June 1955

Artist Dumisani Mabaso born



Dumisani Abraham Mabaso, South African artist, was born in Soweto. From childhood until 1974 he received art education at the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in Dube, and also for 2 years studied art at the Mofolo Arts Centre, Soweto. He completed a course at Rorke's Drift after an interruption of nearly 2 years, when he taught at the

YWCA. Mabaso is also a musician and director of a recording studio in Soweto. He exhibited in South Africa and in five group shows in the USA.

20 June 2018

Activist and MEC Joyce Mashamba passed away



ANC, ANCWL and SAPC activist and leader cde Joyce Mashamba passed away. She was one of the longest serving MECs in Limpopo, and at the time of her death was MEC for Agriculture and Rural development. She also held portfolios of education, sports arts and culture, safety and security and social development.



"The future belongs to our youth. As some of us near the end of our political careers, younger people must take over. They must seek and cherish the most basic condition for peace, namely unity in our diversity, & find lasting ways to that goal"

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

14–20 June 2025

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

14 June

World Blood Donor Day



This day is led by the World Health Organisation (WHO), to celebrate people who regularly donate blood and the role that they play in health systems. According to the WHO, very few seconds, someone, somewhere, needs blood; and transfusions of blood and blood products save millions of lives every year. Blood and blood products are essential to care for women with pregnancy and childbirth associated bleeding; children with severe anemia due to malaria and malnutrition; patients with blood and bone marrow disorders, inherited disorders of hemoglobin and immune deficiency conditions; people with traumatic injuries in emergencies, disasters and accidents; and patients undergoing advanced medical and surgical procedures.

14 June

UN World Day Against Elder Abuse

Around 1 in 6 older people experience some form of abuse and rates of abuse may be higher for older people living in institutions than in the community. Elder abuse can lead to serious physical injuries and long-term psychological consequences. It is predicted to increase as many countries are experi-

encing rapidly ageing populations. The global population of people aged 60 years and older will more than double, from 900 million in 2015 to about 2 billion in 2050. South Africa also has more older people, with life expectancy up from 54 years in 2006 to 64 years in 2018. There are now about 4.8 million South Africans over the age of 60 in a population of 57.7 million people (StatsSA, Midyear Population Estimates, 2018). In 2011, more than half of elderly persons lived in extended households, and in the same year, about 19.9% of households were headed by an elderly person. Institutions like the SA Human Rights Commission and NGO's work with the elderly, to protect their rights. Sources: <https://www.un.org/en/events/elderabuse/> and StatsSA

16 June

African Union Day of the African Child



This day was adopted in 2011 by the African Union Heads of State and Government, to focus attention each year on the situation of children in Africa. It coincides with the celebration of the contribution of youth and students to the struggle in South Africa. The AU has an African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children. It has been ratified by 41 countries. The Democratic Republic of Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, Sudan and South Sudan are the only four countries that have not signed the Charter.

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16 June

National South African Youth Day

Youth Day, as it is popularly known, is a day in which South Africans honour the youth that was ambushed and killed by the apartheid regime police in Soweto on 16 June 1976. This year marks the 49th anniversary of this popular student uprising. The youth of 1976 played a role in fighting and overcoming the inequality and oppression caused by apartheid. Following the advent of democracy in 1994, the new democratic government declared 16 June as National Youth Day and June as Youth Month. The 2025 National Youth Day and Youth Month will be commemorated under the theme: **“Skills for the changing world, empowering youth for meaningful economic participation.”** This theme, supported by the tagline “Gear Up for Greatness” seeks to promote education and skills development for the youth, linking them with economic opportunities. The day will also address various challenges faced by young people in the country while taking stock of the progress made in advancing their empowerment.

16 June

International Day of Family Remittances

This day is observed by the United Nations, to draw attention to how migrants (internal and international) contribute to their families. According to the UN, *“the day recognizes the contribution of over 200 million to improve the lives of their 800 million family members back home, and to create a future of hope for their children.”* Half of these flows go

to rural areas, where poverty and hunger are concentrated, and where remittances count the most. South Africa also has its own history of the migrant system, where men and women left home to find jobs in cities and on mines and send money home to their families. Since 1994, more and more people have migrated to the cities, and also send money home to their families in rural areas. Some South Africans – nurses, teachers and other professions – also work outside of the country and send money home. This day celebrates their contribution to their families.

17 June

World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought



Desertification refers to the degradation of land in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas. And when there are long droughts (no rain), this becomes even more of a problem. This is as a result of human activities and weather changes. This day celebrates the work done by communities, governments, civil society and international organisations to prevent desertification. Across Africa, countries are trying to do this through various projects. Projects include educating farmers so that they do not allow their life stock - cattle, goats, sheep – to overgraze; crop rotation to help land recover; and planting more trees. The African Union has a project, called the Great Green Wall, to plant a wall of trees (1km wide and over 8000 km) that stretches from Eritrea and Djibouti in East Africa, to Senegal on the West of Africa, to stop and reverse desertification of the Sahara/Sahel. In South Africa, the very dry semi-arid and desert areas of the Karoo and Namakwa are at risk of desertification, also as the western part of the country gets dryer because of climate change. Former Bantustan areas are also prone to desertification, because so many people were forced to survive on small parts of the country. Government has therefore started projects to rehabilitated land

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and fight land degradation in Sekhukhune district in Limpopo, the Mkhuze catchment area in KwaZulu-Natal and Machubeni catchment management in the Eastern Cape.

18 June

Sustainable Gastronomy Day

Gastronomy refers to the food we eat, where it's grown, processed and how we prepare it. Agriculture and agro-processing play an important role in our life, because we all have to eat. Both have an impact on our health and on the planet. The food we eat and how it is prepared is also influenced by culture, and changes in our lifestyle. In the past, we used to eat less processed food, eating what we grew locally, without much processing. This has changed, introducing new challenges like obesity. Governments and international organisations intervene in two main ways. Firstly, by insisting that foods are labelled for our safety, so we know what is in our food, and if it is harmful. For example, government recently introduced legislation to force producers to find a simpler way of showing how much sugar is in the food that we buy. There are also national and global rules about labeling where food comes from. We have a Buy South Africa campaign, to support local jobs and businesses. Imported food may sometimes be cheaper, but it is better to support local producers, because the food does not have to have so much preservatives to make it last longer. This also means we must support local food gardens in communities and schools. The other issue is about country of origin and protecting it as part of preserving of culture. Not too long ago, we had to fight a legal battle with someone in another continent who wanted to claim Rooibos tea as their own and prevent us from using the name. The African continent has lots of indigenous plants and food, but we must find a way of protecting and promoting these, as part of our heritage.



18 June

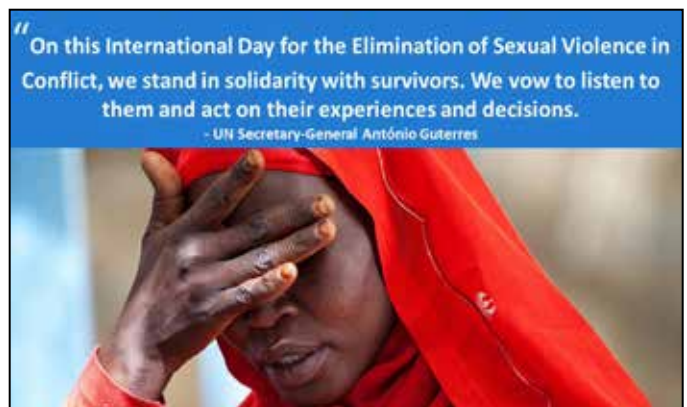
International Day to Counter Hate Speech



Hate speech is on the rise worldwide with the potential to incite violence, undermine social cohesion and tolerance, and cause psychological, emotional, and physical harm to those affected. Hate speech not only affects the specific individuals and groups targeted, but societies at large. The devastating effect of hatred is sadly nothing new. However, its scale and impact are amplified today by new technologies of communication, so much so that hate speech has become one of the most frequent methods for spreading divisive rhetoric and ideologies on a global scale. If left unchecked, hate speech can even harm peace and development, as it lays the ground for conflicts and tensions and wide scale human rights violations.

19 June

International Day of Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict



Conflicts have terrible impacts on all societies, on civilian populations, and particularly on women. Through the ages, women have been seen as part of the 'spoils of war', to be raped as a matter of course. This is usually an exaggerated form of the

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inferior and second-class positions of women. It is therefore not surprising that only 10 years ago, in 2009 after much lobbying by particularly African women, this day was recognized to highlight the plight of women in conflicts. During the Bosnian conflict, the Rwanda Genocide, in the DRC, Darfur, South Sudan, and other conflicts, rape was used as an instrument of terror, leaving survivors with scars that last way beyond the end of the conflicts. The widespread nature of sexual violence in all conflicts, including at times in protests and other popular uprisings, means that the awareness that this day raise remains important.

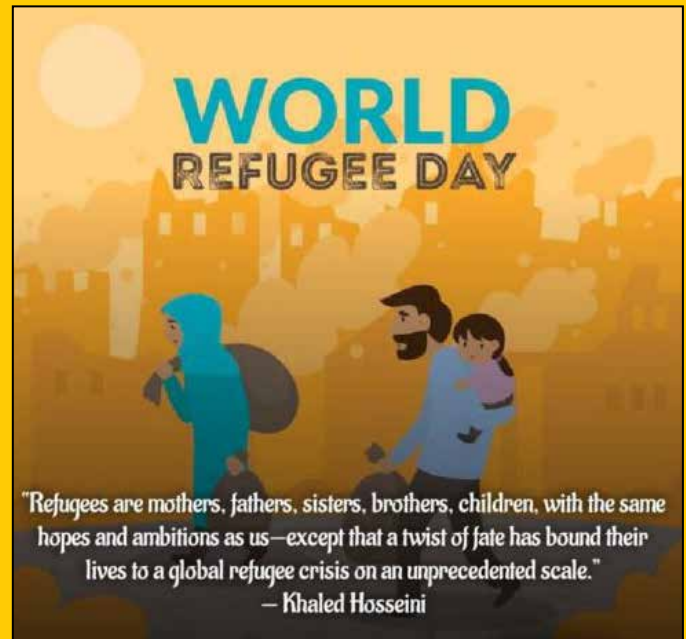
19-25 June African Space Week



In 2013, the African Union adopted the Africa Agenda 2063 as the main compass to guide its strategic focus for the following 50 years. The African scientific community has developed Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024) as the scientific implementation leg of the Agenda 2063. Both STISA-24 and Agenda 2063 underscore the critical role of space in addressing development challenges, and hence identified an African Outer Space programme as one of the flagships. This is also well reflected in the pillars of STISA-2024, and since then the African Union has developed the African Space Policy, the African Space strategy, the Statute for the establishment of an African Space Agency and the choice of the Republic of Egypt to host the African Space Agency. The African Space Week aims to strengthen intra-African and international collaboration in space activities; and to nurture competencies of African space managers, experts, researchers, professionals and students from public and private sectors as well as civil society including youth and women in space domains.

20 June World Refugee Day

Refugees are people who flee their countries be-



cause of war, conflict, famine or political prosecution. The UN High Commission for Refugees reported in 2019, 3 countries contributing 57% of refugees in the world – Syria (6.3m), Afghanistan (2.6m) and South Sudan (2.4m). South Africa provides home to 89,588 refugees in 2019, mainly from Somalia, DRC, Congo, Ethiopia, Burundi and Zimbabwe. The 3 countries that host the most refugees in the world are: Turkey (3.4m), Uganda (1.4m) and Pakistan (1.4m). There are also over 5.7 million Palestinian refugees outside of their motherland since the establishment of the state Israel in 1948. Palestinian refugees now span four generations. This year, World Refugee Day focuses on **solidarity with refugees**. Solidarity means honouring refugees not just with words but with actions. It means listening to them and making space for their stories. The Trump administration's classification of a group of Afrikaners as refugees makes a mockery of the plight of real refugees who flee their countries because of war, conflict and political persecution.

20 June International Tennis Day

International Tennis Day is an annual celebration to raise the profile and catalyze interest in the game of tennis – real tennis, court tennis, *jeu de paume*. Founded in 2014, International Tennis Day is supported by national tennis governing bodies and associations in the world. The aim is to motivate current players and to mobilize new ones who have not played tennis before.