



ANC TODAY

VOICE OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

21–27 November 2025



Conversations with the
President

The green shoots of an economic recovery

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

IN the week that we prepare to host the first summit of the G20 on African soil, we are able to showcase a country and an economy on the rise.

A number of key economic indicators and developments in the past week point to the green shoots of an emerging economic recovery.

Unemployment is down. Data from Statistics South Africa show that the official unemployment rate fell to 31.9% between July and September this year, down from 33.2% recorded in the previous quarter. Nearly 250,000 more people were in employment in the third quarter. Of these, around 130,000 were added in the construction sector.

The Medium Term Budget Policy Statement delivered last week points to a sustained turnaround in government finances. We are on track to achieve a third consecutive primary budget surplus. This means that, excluding interest payments on our debt, we are collecting more in revenue than we are spending. This is a sign of prudent financial management, giving us space to steadily reduce our debt to sustainable levels.

Also last week, our sovereign credit rating was upgraded by S&P. This is the first such upgrade from the agency in nearly two decades. An improved rating generally leads to lower borrowing costs, which allows for more funds to be invested in the economy and in meet-

ing social needs. Among the factors S&P cited for the positive outlook were Eskom's improved performance, strong tax collection and the broad structural reform momentum having '*picked up pace.*'

When we established Operation Vulindlela in 2020 as a government coordinating mechanism to implement transformative reforms and boost economic growth, the initial focus was on the network sectors as well as immigration reform.

We are seeing steady progress in the logistics sector, notably with respect to improved performance at our ports. Measures to allow private sector companies to operate on the national freight rail network are also at an advanced stage.

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The most noteworthy improvements have been witnessed in the energy sector, with Eskom now on the road to recovery, massive investment in renewable energy generation, and vastly improved electricity supply.

In support of South Africa's ratings upgrade, S&P cited the recently launched Phase II of Operation Vulindlela, which is focusing on changes in local government, digital transformation, visa regimes, spatial inequality and others.

Modelling from the University of Stellenbosch's Bureau of Economic Research (BER) has estimated that the potential impact of the Operation Vulindlela reforms could lift South Africa's long-term growth rate by as much as 3.5% when fully implemented. In citing this modelling, the analyst JP Landman writes that *"the reforms are a journey, but they have started working. Step by step, South Africa is opening its economy, modernising infrastructure and rebuilding credibility"*.



Despite considerable headwinds that have including a global pandemic, a debilitating energy crisis and more recently, a difficult global trade environment, we have stayed the course on economic recovery and are now seeing this pay off.

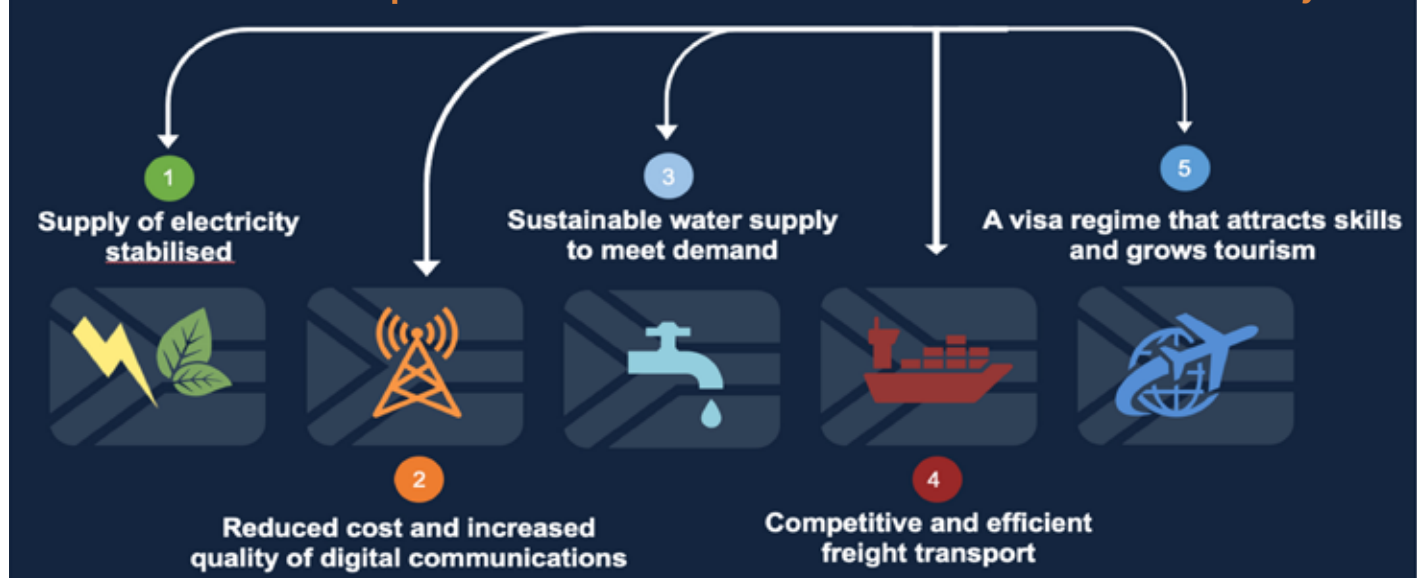
Following a ruinous period of economic stagnation and capture of the state, we have been able to achieve sustained progress in a relatively short period of time. This is in no small part owing to the strength of the partnerships forged between

government, business, labour and civil society.

These far-reaching economic changes have a direct and material impact on the lives of every South African, on their ability to lead dignified lives, to access public services, to secure employment, and to provide for their families.

We are determined to sustain the momentum of this economic recovery, so that we can drive inclusive growth, create jobs and improve the lives of our citizens. ■

Five Desired Outcomes of Operation Vulindlela as Part of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan



Robala ka Khotsho Ntate Moruti!

EULOGY BY THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA AND THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, PAUL MASHATILE ON THE OCCASION OF THE FUNERAL SERVICE OF THE LATE COMRADE MORUTI MAPHATSOE, SOWETO, DLAMINI MULTIPURPOSE CENTRE, 15 NOVEMBER 2025

I wish to start by expressing my deepest condolences to the Maphatsoe family. As the African National Congress, we dip our banner in respect and honour for the man who lies here today. A father, a son and a leader to many. We also thank you for allowing Moruti Maphatsoe the space to serve the African National Congress and to serve the people of South Africa. He has left an indelible mark in the lives of many activists, and his wisdom and leadership will always be cherished.



We gather here today with profound sadness to bid farewell to Moruti Maphatsoe, a pillar and guide who through the most tumultuous times held us steady. Comrade Maphatsoe provided us with much courage, guidance and support during the apartheid period which was indeed one of the darkest times in our country's existence.

Compatriots and Combatants of uMkhonto weSizwe, we gather today not only to bid farewell to a remarkable leader, but to celebrate a life defined by extraordinary sacrifice, and an unwavering commitment to the noble vision of a free, non-racial, and democratic South Africa.

Comrade Moruti Maphatsoe

was not only a spiritual pillar of strength within our ranks but also a committed cadre of uMkhonto we Sizwe, the people's army, that was fearlessly committed to the freedom and dignity of our people. He was a stalwart whose every action affirmed the core principles of the African National Congress – his organisation and the Freedom Charter.

As we pay tribute to his deep legacy and that of his generation, we are also reminded of our solemn responsibility, to safeguard the hard-won democratic gains achieved under the leadership of the African National Congress. Their dedication to the struggle for freedom was not about freedom for one race, but was a struggle that aimed to liberate all

the oppressed of South Africa, a struggle for a life of freedom and dignity for all people. Today, we enjoy the freedom and democracy that they fought for during treacherous times of uncertainty and injustices.

Indeed, the most profound way to honour a struggle veteran like Moruti Maphatsoe is to directly confront the contemporary challenges that threaten the very democratic project for which he risked everything.

We must continue with his tenacity and that of his generation to confront high unemployment, poverty, and extreme inequality, alongside issues like corruption, high crime rates, and poor infrastructure.

His life and that of his generation must not be romanticised as a remnant of the past but rather utilised as a moral compass as we build the country of our dreams.

As we strive to build this nation, we must be deliberate in combating crime and corruption. I am specifically mentioning corruption because corruption is the most powerful adversary to development.

Corruption weakens democratic institutions, inhibits economic growth, and exacerbates political instability. It diverts critical resources from healthcare, education, and infrastructure, resulting in deepening poverty. Therefore, to honour Comrade Moruti Maphatsoe we must have zero tolerance for corruption.

The fight against corruption is not only a priority for the ANC, but also for the government. We are implementing a multi-pronged strategy led by the government to fight corruption through legislative reform, institutional strengthening, and policy implementation. This includes the National Anti-Corruption Strategy, the Anti-Corruption Task Team, the Special Investigation Unit, and the National Prosecuting Authority, which expedites high-priority investigations and prosecutions.

In this context, it is necessary to restore a capable state, particularly because Comrade Maphatsoe knew that the battle was about providing a better life for everyone. Weakened state entities leads to service delivery failures and undermining or transformation agenda. As a result, renewal necessitates the appointment



of competent, ethical cadres to government and SOE positions, rather than politically connected loyalists.

We must be unrelenting in our commitment to building a capable and development state with a thriving economy.

To achieve this, we are investing in freight rail and ports to improve efficiency, which is critical for South Africa's export-driven sectors such as mining and agriculture. Through **Operation Vulindlela**, we are addressing other binding constraints:

- **On Water Security:** the focusing is on institutional transformation by establishing Catchment Management Agencies and increasing investment to ensure sustainable water access. Water is Life!
- **On Digital Infrastructure:** we are implementing a Digital Transformation Roadmap, including a Digital Identity System, to modernise public services and payment systems.
- Regarding **Spatial Integration and Housing**, we are releasing public land for affordable housing and tackling the

legacy of spatial inequality to help people live closer to economic opportunities.

As it relates to resolving the energy crisis and providing reliable infrastructure essential for economic growth, we have done a lot and have reduced load shedding. Of course, we are aware that especially in the townships, power cuts still occur, because of load reduction, we are working hard to ensure that even that is done away with.

The Freedom Charter, which served as a bedrock for Comrade Maphatsoe and his generation, said that ***“the people shall share in the country’s wealth.”*** The ongoing structural inequality in South Africa is undoubtedly the greatest affront to their sacrifice.

Hence, we have recently taken a decision that economic inclusion remains our number priority. We have rekindled our focus on radical economic transformation by creating tangible opportunities for the marginalised majority, particularly the youth, among whom the unemployment rates remain tragically high.

Our tasks also include a focus on service delivery as a moral imperative. This we must do because our veteran and his generation fought for basic dignity, and it is the right thing to do for the people of South Africa.

This requires that we address the issues faced by incompetent municipalities, guaranteeing consistent access to water and electricity, enhancing the quality of education, and reforming the healthcare system. Neglecting to provide these essential services

constitutes a violation of the fundamental promise established during the struggle.

Moruti Maphatsoe knew the power of a united front against apartheid.

Therefore, in his honour, renewal would call for us to return to the core values of being non-racial and non-sexist, rejecting the politics of patronage and narrow self-interest, and promoting ideological clarity over material gain.

One of the immediate tasks in honouring our beloved veteran, is that we re-connect with the people and understand their needs.

Therefore, to honour Comrade Moruti, as leaders, we must move beyond boardroom politics and relaunch ourselves as active instruments of change in the communities providing quality services, closing the chasm of mistrust that has emerged between the Government, the movement and the electorate.

As the final salute is given, let us not only reflect on the depth of the sacrifice made by our struggle hero Moruti Maphatsoe, but let us also embrace the responsibility his life places upon us. His journey through the darkest days of the struggle – a journey marked by discipline, principle, and unity – must now serve as our compass.

Today, as we confront the challenges of social and economic inequality, the greatest way we can honour this hero is by promoting accelerated economic development, improving social outcomes, and decreasing crime rates. We must stimulate the economy by augmenting demand and labour supply, while simultaneously en-

hancing living conditions for the impoverished via improved access to services and opportunities.

In the party that Comrade Moruti loved, we must banish factionalism, embrace selfless service, and ensure that the legacy of this cadre is cemented not just in memory, but in the tangible delivery of the democratic, prosperous, and just society. We must do this with right and much dedication. As a leader of society, the ANC must lead in the process of renewal and social transformation.

As I draw to a close, let me take this moment to reflect on the upcoming G20 Summit that South Africa will be hosting in the next few weeks. It must be said that this is not a small feat, and that it reflects who we are as a country, and that we represent not only ourselves, but the continent as a whole.

South Africa's G20 Presidency is being held under the theme **"Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability"**, a theme that seeks to harness global will and capabilities to confront the enormous challenges the world is facing.

Although we are not where we all want to be as a country, we do have the potential to build the country of our dreams.

As the ANC-led Government, we commit to persist in our efforts to improve our nation, firmly believing that the spirit of Comrade Moruti Maphatsoe will serve as our guide and source of strength.

May Comrade Moruti Maphatsoe's revolutionary soul rest in eternal peace. Robala ka khotsho Ntate Moruti! You have fought a good fight!

Your crown awaits you! ■



ANC STATEMENT ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE MEETING OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

■ By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**

THE African National Congress convened an ordinary meeting of its National Executive Committee (NEC) from 14 to 16 November 2025 at the Ekurhuleni Civic Centre. This gathering of the NEC took place during the **Diabetes Awareness Month**. The ANC celebrates progress made in achieving disability inclusion and further calls for more to be done in areas of education, health, transport, employment, skills training, and ensuring that persons with disabilities are not left behind. The NEC reiterated that in our efforts to empower persons with disabilities, we must ensure that **“Nothing about them, without them”** becomes a lived reality.

The NEC reflected honestly, critically and with revolutionary discipline on the state of our movement, our country and the global balance of forces confronting the National Democratic Revolution.

The NEC re-affirmed a fundamental truth of our epoch: A united, vibrant and renewal-driven ANC is good for South Africa, good for the African continent, and good for the progressive world. Our movement remains the primary custodian of the democratic transition, the spear and shield of the people, and the strategic centre of transformation.



On the Economy

The NEC welcomed the positive signs emerging in the economy, and noted the improvement in South Africa’s sovereign outlook announced by Standards and Poor, as well as the strengthening of the Rand. These developments are a product of the sustained work of the ANC-led government to advance recovery in the wake of State Capture and the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The recovery of the state-owned enterprises is a key outcome of the ANC’s Energy Action Plan and Operation Vulindlela, through which the infrastructure of our developmental state is being rebuilt brick by brick.

Ending load shedding was correctly identified as the foremost priority of the movement following the 2022 National Conference. The installation of more than sixteen gigawatts of new renewable energy generation capacity, representing investment well-above two hundred billion rand, has placed the country on a different path.

The people of South Africa, particularly the working class and the poor, are already benefiting from the restoration of commuter rail corridors that had fallen into disrepair and vandalism. Millions once again board trains that carry them to work, to school and to economic opportunities, affirming that public transport is a right,

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not a privilege reserved for those who can afford it.

The green shoots are evident. We see employment figures improving, borrowing costs falling, the country being removed from grey listing, and investor confidence rising. These are achievements of an ANC-led government, anchored in the struggle for economic freedom and justice.

On the Madlanga Commission and Parliamentary Ad Hoc Committee

The NEC meeting deliberated on the Madlanga Commission and the Parliamentary Ad Hoc Committee as they proceed; both established to investigate the public statements made by Lieutenant General Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi on 6 June 2025. The ANC will continue to reflect on these processes, but will not provide running commentary on the work of either the Commission or the Parliamentary Ad Hoc Committee.

The NEC re-iterated its earlier stance that the ANC fully supports the proceedings of both processes, and that the organisation will await the conclusion of these processes which will certainly help combat crime in the country. The NEC emphasised that matters related to the arrest of people must not be delayed, in order to intervene in addressing the rule of law in our country where the police and all law enforcement agencies have gathered evidence sufficient to prosecute.

The NEC resolved that government must urgently consider and process key reforms that must be implemented as the commission unfolds, which includes the demilitarising of the South African Police Service. There must



equally be mandatory forensic lifestyle audits for all senior police and prosecutorial leadership, consistent with our policy.

To address the safety of whistle-blowers, the ANC calls upon government to fast-track the tabling of a dedicated Whistle-blower Protection Bill in Parliament. The ANC believes that, working together with other political parties in Parliament, and given that there is broad agreement among the majority of parties, we must fast-track the implementation of this bill to protect whistle-blowers as a key element in our crime fighting efforts.

The NEC expressed deep appreciation to our deployees serving on the Parliamentary Ad Hoc Committee tasked with probing these matters. Their work is central to uncovering the full extent of the attempted subversion of law enforcement agencies and safeguarding the constitutional architecture of the democratic state. The ANC also reaffirmed its full confidence in, and support for, the Special Investigating Unit, the Hawks, Crime Intelligence reforms, and the evolving Investigating Directorate Against Corruption, whose mandates form a

critical part of restoring professional, ethical, and depoliticised law enforcement.

Law enforcement by these institutions must be beyond reproach, they must be above politics and their integrity in the face of all the challenges that we have must be beyond reproach. They must prosecute without fear or favour, and they must do so diligently and undermine any intention of rogue-ness in the system.

We believe the Madlanga Commission will assist in accelerating government efforts to strengthen the institutions of the state. Without the Commission, we would not have learned about some of the individuals implicated in theft and extortion.

The NEC has re-affirmed its previous decisions on the importance of vetting of candidates for public office and that any ANC member credibly implicated in the testimony must be considered ineligible for the 2026 candidate lists. Whilst this might be painful from an individual point of view where verdicts may not have been tested in court, but it is essential for the credibility of the ANC and of government.

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The NEC resolved that the Integrity Commission must actively track the Madlanga and Ad-hoc Committee testimonies and make recommendations in line with its mandate and terms of reference. This must be communicated effectively to demonstrate the ANC's commitment to the project of renewal.

On the GNU

The NEC reflected extensively on the Government of National Unity (GNU), reaffirming that it remains a necessary instrument for safeguarding South Africa's constitutional order, ensuring political stability, and preventing those with anti-democratic impulses from derailing the democratic project. However, the NEC was equally clear that stability must never come at the expense of transformation. The GNU is not a marketplace where the rights, dignity and aspirations of the majority can be traded, diluted or negotiated away. It is a contested site of struggle in which the strategic leadership of the ANC is critical.

As part of resetting the GNU, the ANC will continuously assess the commitment of all parties to the Statement of Intent as a reflection of commitments made by participating parties to making the Government of National Unity a success in the interest of the people of South Africa.

On the National Dialogue

The NEC reaffirmed that the National Dialogue is one of the most important democratic instruments of our time; an instrument designed to reconnect political leadership with the real, daily experiences of communities. In an era where trust in institutions

is fragile across the world, the Dialogue stands as South Africa's collective commitment to rebuild that trust from the ground up. It is a conscious return to the Freedom Charter principle that the people shall govern, not through periodic elections alone, but through ongoing, structured engagement that shapes policy, governance priorities and social compacts.

The National Dialogue is therefore not an elite gathering, a boardroom negotiation, or a media spectacle. It is a platform rooted in lived reality; in the stokvel, in the union meeting, the taxi rank, the spaza shop, the church, the classroom and the community hall. It brings into one arena the voices of workers, civic formations, traditional leaders, small businesses, progressive faith communities, young people, women, people with disabilities, and all those who have historically been spoken about rather than spoken with. Through ward-based dialogues, izimbizo and structured community assemblies, the ANC will mobilise its branches, leagues and alliance partners to ensure that the Dia-

logue becomes the heartbeat of a new era of citizen participation, real, ongoing and measurable.

Central to this renewed approach is the role of young people. The NEC emphasised that young people must not be engaged as a demographic category or a political audience, but as equal architects of the next phase of freedom.

On the G20

The NEC welcomed the growing stature of South Africa on the global arena, reflected most powerfully in our country's preparations to host the G20 Summit.

This honour is not accidental. It arises from decades of principled diplomacy, a stable democratic order, and the proven capability of a nation that has successfully hosted global events; from the FIFA World Cup, Rugby World Cup and the Netball World Cup, BRICS Summits and major UN gatherings. Each of these moments has re-affirmed that South Africa is not only a destination for world leaders, but also a trusted convener of global consensus.



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Hosting the G20 carries substantial economic benefits for our country and the continent. In the immediate term, it will stimulate tourism, hospitality, aviation and business services, generating thousands of jobs and injecting millions of rand into the local economy. Infrastructure upgrades, city revitalisation, and improvements in transport logistics; driven by the demands of the summit; will remain long after the delegates have departed.

More importantly, the long-term advantages are even greater. As chair and host of the G20, South Africa will shape global economic discussions on investment flows, industrialisation, climate change, debt relief and trade reforms in ways that directly benefit the African continent. This is an opportunity to advance an African growth agenda; to push for fairer global financial governance, to expand market access for African goods, to strengthen continental manufacturing value chains, and to secure greater development finance for energy, transport, water, and digital infrastructure.

Our Presidency of the G20 is a significant moment to bridge the developmental divide between the Global North and the Global South, to champion equity, sustainability, and shared prosperity. In this G20 moment, South Africa carries not only its national mandate but the hopes of a continent that seeks a more just and balanced global order.

Hosting the G20 is therefore both an honour and a strategic opportunity; to elevate Africa's priorities, deepen South-South cooperation, and demonstrate once again that Africa is not merely participating in global affairs; it is shaping them.

On the Integrity Commission

The NEC reiterated, with absolute clarity, that the Integrity Commission remains central to restoring and safeguarding public confidence in the African National Congress. As a movement that draws its legitimacy from the trust of the people, we recognise that ethical leadership is not optional; it is foundational to who we are and what we represent.

To deepen this commitment, a joint workshop between the NEC and the Integrity Commission will be convened. Its purpose is to strengthen coordination and ensure that the Commission's work is fully integrated into the life of the organisation. This engagement is not a procedural exercise; it is a deliberate step to embed the highest standards of accountability at every level of leadership.

On the Electoral Committee

The NEC approved the rules and guidelines for the 2026 candidate selection process and mandated the Electoral Committee to communicate these to all members and supporters of the ANC, as well as to the public. This communication took place yesterday. The NEC reviewed these rules and guidelines in its quest for the rebuilding, strengthening and renewal of the ANC.

On Provincial and Regional Conferences

The NEC received a detailed organisational report on the state of readiness and progress for provincial and regional conferences. The NEC reaffirmed that all due Provincial and Regional Conferences must be concluded by March 2026. This decision is

a strategic imperative to ensure that the ANC enters the 2026 Local Government Elections with constitutionally mandated leadership structures. This timeline is central to the renewal agenda, allowing the movement to shift its full organisational strength towards building a disciplined and election-ready machinery.

In Limpopo and Mpumalanga, all Regional Conferences have been successfully concluded, enabling the provinces to proceed firmly towards their Provincial Conferences. Gauteng is currently convening Regional Conferences across Johannesburg, Tshwane, and Sedibeng, and the Provincial Conference will sit once these are concluded. The Eastern Cape is moving through its remaining Regional Conferences.

The North West is proceeding with BBGMs and finalising regional conference preparations, with completion also scheduled before December 2025. No province or region will be permitted to sit beyond the March 2026 deadline.

On the Limpopo Task Team Report

The NEC received the Limpopo Task Team report and noted the work of the Task Team as a useful guide in healing raptures amongst ANC members and within structures as a result of conferences. The NEC adopted recommendations of the Task Team to strengthen the conference processes and guidelines moving forward. The NEC further referred those who were involved in undermining organisational processes to be subjected to disciplinary action.

The task team has fulfilled its

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mandate, and we have congratulated the team led by Comrade Noxolo Kiviet. The SG has briefed the structures in Limpopo on the decisions of the National Working Committee on the matter.

We now look forward to all ANC members in Limpopo being seized with the work of renewal, building unity, and effective and efficient structures of the organisation.

On the National General Council

In the coming month, the African National Congress will convene its 5th National General Council from the 8th to the 11th of December 2025 at the Birchwood Hotel and Conference Centre, a gathering that will stand as one of the most consequential moments for our movement in the current political epoch.

It will serve as a strategic platform to rebuild trust with our people by reaffirming our historic mission; to be the most effective and reliable instrument for the transformation of society. It is at this council that the ANC must confront, with honesty and revolutionary clarity, the structural challenges facing our communities; from unemployment and crime to service delivery failures; and provide decisive interventions anchored in the Freedom Charter, the Constitution, and our modern renewal agenda.

The NEC received and endorsed the report on preparations for the National General Council, confirming that delegate allocation is based on membership in good standing as of the cut-off date of 30 September 2025. The total expectation delegation is 1 600 of which majority of them are from the branches.



More importantly, the NGC must ignite a national sense of possibility; demonstrating to South Africans that the ANC remains the leader of society, capable of renewing itself, confronting national challenges head-on, and defending the hard-won gains of our freedom.

MKLWV National Conference

The NEC noted that the uMkhonto weSizwe Liberation War Veterans National Conference will take place January 2026 in Johannesburg.

On the ANCYL 27th National Congress

The NEC further noted that ANC Youth League will convene its National Congress in Limpopo from the 14th–17th December 2025 in Polokwane, Limpopo Province. The Officials have been mandated by the NEC to work closely with the Youth League in preparation of this early Congress as a decision emanating from their National General Council held in September.

On the Filling of National Working Committee Vacancies

The National Executive Committee received a report on the va-

cancies created within the National Working Committee (NWC), a constitutional structure tasked with the day to day management and leadership of the movement between sittings of the NEC. These vacancies followed the passing of our beloved Comrade Tina Joemat-Peterson, whose life embodied tireless service to the people, and the request by Comrade Peggy Nkonyeni to be released from NWC duties due to deteriorating health. The ANC honours their contributions with deep appreciation and revolutionary respect.

The NEC accordingly filled the two vacancies in accordance with Rule 12.3 of the ANC Constitution and welcomed Comrade Thoko Didiza and Comrade Khusela Sangoni as additional members of the National Working Committee. Their proven discipline, organisational grounding and loyalty to the movement and the people of South Africa strengthen the collective capacity of our movement to provide coherent leadership in a rapidly shifting balance of forces. The ANC has full confidence in the Comrades and extend our revolutionary congratulations to Comrades Didiza and Sangoni.

In conclusion

We call on all South Africans to unite behind the shared mission of building a country grounded in equality dignity and shared prosperity.

The ANC recommits itself to leading this next phase with humility, integrity and revolutionary discipline. As we approach the 114th Anniversary of the ANC and the 2026 Local Government Elections, the movement does so with renewed determination and clarity of purpose. ■

COSATU presents its submission on the Revised and Proposed Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement to Parliament

THE Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) presented its submission on the **Revised and Proposed Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS)** to Parliament's Standing and Select Committees: Finance. Whilst appreciating the turnaround in many key areas under the African National Congress-led government, in particular Eskom, Transnet, Metro Rail and the South African Revenue Service (SARS), we remain deeply concerned that the MTBPS' proposed adjustments are not bold enough to take the economy from the 1% growth it has been stuck at since 2008 nor to give hope to 12 million unemployed.

Fiscal Framework and Monetary Policy

The Federation welcomes recent positive achievements, including South Africa's exiting from the Financial Action Task Force' grey listing, the creation of 248 000 new jobs over Quarter 3 and the projected increase in growth over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) to 1.8%. We are however concerned that Treasury remains excessively focused on reducing expenditure, debt and deficits as well as achieving a narrow surplus at the expense of badly needed economic growth and job creation.



We note the proposed reduction in the inflation target from 4.5% to 3%. Inflation is the enemy of workers whose meagre wages cannot afford rising costs of living. We are however deeply concerned that this will see the Reserve Bank deny badly needed repo rate relief to millions of highly indebted working and middle class families and an economy badly in need of stimulus.

More must be done to address the root causes of domestic inflation, namely the ever-volatile international oil price, and its resulting impact upon our fuel price regime as well as Eskom's unsustainable dependence upon increasingly unaffordable above inflation electricity price hikes. These are matters that government must do far more to tackle to reduce inflation. Squeezing workers further is unacceptable.

Expenditure, Public and Municipal Services, SOEs

We welcome the additional allocation of R15 billion to cover further investments in Transnet Freight Rail as well as R590 million for health to cover the shortfall in funding from the United States' Agency for International Aid, R4 billion for school repairs, R2 billion for electricity transmission investments, R2 billion for water infrastructure in Polokwane as well as over the MTEF; R21 billion for public healthcare, R20 billion for schooling including early childhood education.

We are deeply distressed by below inflation adjustments for law enforcement and cuts for Home Affairs over the MTEF. This is something that these frontline public services cannot afford in the face of entrenched levels of crime. We are disappointed that once again government has shamefully failed to adjust the Social Relief of Distress Grant for inflation, in fact it has only once been increased since it was introduced in 2020.

At a time when unemployment remains painfully high at 42.4%, we had hoped that government would seize the moment to drastically increase the Presidential Employment Stimulus to at least R35 billion to provide a pathway to employment for millions of

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unemployed. We had similarly hoped government would move from commitments to action to provide relief to struggling businesses and economic sectors, through tax relief, industrial subsidies and by fixing the chaotically inefficient Unemployment Insurance Fund's Temporary Employment Relief Scheme. Embattled workers and businesses need solidarity in action.

As we head towards the 2026 Budget Speech, a new mass industrial and SMME financing package with a target of mobilising at least R200 billion annually from the fiscus, developmental finance institutions and the private sector is an absolute necessity. We cannot continue along a path of business as usual and be surprised when growth remains low and unemployment high.

Whilst applauding the tireless efforts of the workers at Eskom to defeat loadshedding, more support is required to ensure all consumers pay their bills to enable electricity to once again become affordable. In the meantime, immediate relief is needed for industrial and other companies threatened with closure as a result of these tariff hikes.

We are encouraged by the turnaround of Transnet and Metro Rail but remain deeply worried by the lack of progress to stabilise and rebuild other State-Owned Enterprises, in particular the South African Broadcasting Corporation, the Post Office and Postbank.

Whilst welcoming proposed interventions to rebuild water and electricity services in various municipalities in Mpumalanga, a much more aggressive set of interventions is desperately

needed to stabilise and rebuild increasingly dysfunctional local government. Decisive consequences are needed for those who continue to fail to pay municipal employees and pension funds, to provide basic services and maintain infrastructure.

We are encouraged by progress in identifying a potential 9 000 ghost employees. It is critical that these audits be extended to public sector entities, state-owned enterprises and municipalities and that those who have stolen from the state are made to pay the price. These savings must be utilised to hire doctors, nurses, teachers, police and other badly needed frontline staff.

It is critical that government move with speed to finalise the rollout of the Public Procurement Act. This will be a key tool in the war against state capture and corruption and a boost for locally produced goods.

Revenue

We welcome the increased allocation of R31 billion to the fiscus from Gold and Foreign Exchange Reserves. Further engagements are needed on continued support for the fiscus from these reserves in a manner that is strategic and

sustainable.

COSATU applauds the work done by the employees of SARS with revenue collection improving by 9.3% to the value of R19.7 billion. Further resources must be allocated to SARS with a clear target to raise tax compliance to 75% over the MTEF. Further tax increases upon the working and middle classes must be abandoned and instead tax loopholes exploited by the wealthy as well as the dangerous rise in tax avoidance by illegal imports and illicit goods must be tackled.

There are positive achievements in the MTBPS, including progressive victories that COSATU has fought for. We are however aggrieved that we are not moving with sufficient speed, nor allocating the substantial resources required to enable the state to provide the quality public and municipal services that the working class and economy depend upon, nor that a weak economy needs to reach the 3% growth rate necessary to slash unemployment, poverty and inequality.

COSATU will continue to engage with government to adopt a much more bold and aggressive approach as we prepare for the 2026/27 Budget in February. ■



G20 SOCIAL SUMMIT DECLARATION 2025

WE, the delegates of the **G20 Social Summit**, gathered for the first time on African soil, under the Presidency of the Republic of South Africa. United in advancing the theme **“Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability”**, the G20 Social Summit convened at a time when the global architecture is confronted by deepening inequality, rising conflict and instability, climate fragility, debt vulnerability, financial distress, contestation for critical minerals, and rapid green, blue, circular and digital transitions.

Drawing from Africa’s tradition of inclusive dialogue, consensus-building, and community-driven development, and following a year-long national outreach programme under the South African Presidency including more than 230 community dialogues under the banner of a **“People’s G20”**, this historic Social Summit represented the collective voice and agency of international organisations, engagement groups, civil society networks, communities, and social partners in shaping a people-centred contribution to the G20 Leaders’ Track.

The Social Summit amplified diverse voices, strengthened social cohesion, and forged collective, consensus-based solutions **where every voice matters**, including those of workers, youth, children, women, persons with disabilities, immigrants, indigenous communities, traditional and



faith leaders, academia, queer communities supporting economic prosperity for all.

Guided by the philosophy of Ubuntu, *“I am because we are”*, We, the delegates, reflect our collective commitment to inclusive development, ethical governance, sustainable transitions, and global solidarity herein.

Digital Inclusion & Equitable Transformation

Digital inclusion and equitable transformation demands a foundation where every individual can connect affordably, access digital resources confidently, and participate safely in the opportunities of a modern economy. Achieving this requires expanding environmentally conscious infrastructure, bridging geographic and linguistic divides, and embedding digital literacy throughout education systems so that no community is left behind. At the same time, a

human-centred digital ecosystem that is grounded in dignity, autonomy, cultural identity, and ethical governance is essential to prevent technology from entrenching historic inequities. Rights-based frameworks, community stewardship of data, and participatory structures that elevate youth and indigenous voices strengthen both trust and relevance. Wholistic legislation, accountable governance, and responsible platform design must work together to safeguard all people online, ensuring that digital environments empower rather than expose them. When individuals are connected, skilled, and protected, societies can innovate, transact, learn, and engage fully, we urge the G20 member states to advance a digital future where every community shares in the benefits of transformation.

We call for **affordable, equitable access to digital ecosystems**, that is alongside universal and

relevant digital literacy ensuring that everyone can participate safely and confidently in the digital world. This requires expanding access to People-First infrastructure, especially in vulnerable groups and embedding digital skills across all levels of education, including teacher training. Together, these actions **create resilient, inclusive systems** that empower meaningful engagement and opportunity for all.

We urge for the **implementation of human-centred, rights-based AI and data governance** frameworks that safeguard cultural integrity, protect diverse knowledge systems, and ensure **equitable representation** of Global South perspectives. Ethical and culturally grounded governance models must prioritise human rights, dignity, and autonomy, creating digital systems that reflect and respect the people they serve.

We call for robust **digital safety and cybersecurity** measures that protect those disproportionately targeted by online harassment and gender-based digital violence, while eliminating systemic bias in AI to create fair, inclusive, and secure digital environments for all. This requires **multistakeholder governance mechanisms** with active youth participation, including a Digital Observatory on Children, aligned with international standards to safeguard the rights and needs of children and vulnerable groups.

Trade, Resilience, and Inclusive Value Chains

The rise of protectionism and increased volatility in global markets threaten the stability of multilateral trade, placing additional pressure on economies that



are least equipped to absorb such disruptions. We affirm that diversification of products, markets, and supply sources strengthens resilience; however, **resilience alone is insufficient to ensure that trade works for all**. We underscore the importance of **transparent, predictable, and responsive trade governance systems** that enable swift adaptation to shocks and structural changes.

The G20 has a critical role in restoring confidence in global trade and ensuring that the benefits of production networks and supply chains are shared equitably. We reaffirm that trade is most transformative when it is **inclusive, anchored in a rules-based global trading system** that allows indigenous communities, women, persons with disabilities, youth, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and informal cross-border traders to participate meaningfully and benefit fully. Strengthened collaboration with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on anti-dumping enforcement and fair-trade practices.

We call for strengthened support to the WTO to safeguard the integrity of the rules-based multilateral and regional trading system and respond effectively to the evolving policy environment. There is

a need for a **pro-development global trade architecture that prioritises cooperation among G20 members** to help developing economies build resilient and diversified economies capable of withstanding external shocks such as pandemics, climate change, protectionism, and commodity price fluctuations. A strengthened and development-oriented WTO is essential to accelerating development and industrialisation in the Global South economies.

We encourage the G20 to **expand investment and capacity-building initiatives that empower informal traders to enter formal markets**. G20 initiatives must advance women- and youth-led SMEs by improving access to blended finance, capacity-building, and market facilitation. Micro-entrepreneurs and locally produced goods and services should be incentivised to strengthen regional value chains. We call for scaled-up investment in trade-related infrastructure, including maritime ports, inland waterways, cross-border facilities, rail, road, and air logistics systems to enhance industrialisation and promote sustainable and inclusive value chains.

Inclusive Climate Justice, a Just Transition and Energy Democracy

The world remains off track from the Paris Agreement, with warming projected toward 2.5°C. As the G20 accounts for 77% of global emissions, its leadership is indispensable in meeting 2030 targets. The climate crisis demands urgent, transformative action grounded in justice, equity, and shared responsibility.

We affirm a **people-centred Just Transition** as essential to a fair,

ambitious, and development-oriented global climate response. This approach moves the world beyond mitigation-only, prescriptive, and siloed sectoral models toward a holistic and integrated framework that recognises diverse national circumstances and capacities. We underscore that all nations hold an **inalienable Right to Development** and must be enabled to pursue equitable pathways toward our shared climate and sustainable development objectives.

We emphasise that the climate crisis must be confronted in a manner grounded firmly in equity, sustainable development, and the principles of common but **differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC)**. For developing nations many of which face carbon-intensive economies, heightened climate vulnerability, and deep socio-economic inequalities the imperative is to balance ambitious climate action with inclusive growth, job creation, and poverty eradication.

At the heart of developing nations' climate response is a people-centred transition Just Transition that places workers, communities, and vulnerable groups at its core. **We assert that a well-managed transition to low-carbon, climate-resilient economies can advance global climate ambitions while driving transformative development**, reducing poverty, unemployment, and inequality, and strengthening long-term competitiveness, resilience, and shared prosperity.

We call for **urgent action to eliminate plastic, chemical, and industrial pollution** that threatens biodiversity, food sovereignty and security, human health, and plan-



etary stability.

We urge reparative justice through a Just Transition Facility that channels non-conditional grants and concessional finance to communities, cooperatives, and small enterprises, driving locally led transitions. Integrating debt relief and cancellation mechanisms into climate finance architecture to expand fiscal space for sustainable development. We advocate for the simplification of Access pathways for rural, women-led, youth-led, children and vulnerable groups to ensure measurable, equitable improvements across the globe.

We recognise the urgent need for **universal access to affordable, clean energy as a human right by 2030**. We argue the transition to harness opportunity from mineral beneficiation and local industrialization for dignified job creation, while offering social protection for workers in fossil-dependent sectors.

A Just and Sustainable Finance and International Financial Architecture

Recognising the outcomes of the recent **G20 Africa High-Level Dialogue on Debt Sustainability, Cost of Capital, and Financing Reforms**, we note that

developing countries continue to face persistent structural distortions in global financial rules and risk assessments that inflate the cost of capital, restrict access to predictable long-term financing, and deepen debt vulnerabilities. Strengthening domestic financial markets is therefore essential to enable developing economies to mobilise local savings, reduce reliance on volatile external flows, and expand inclusive financing instruments.

In advancing the G20's commitment to a more equitable, development-oriented, and responsive international financial architecture, we advocate for **further institutional reforms to global financial rules, norms, and practices**, including credit rating methodologies, IMF frameworks, and Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) allocation to ensure more transparent, equitable, and predictable assessments of risk for low- and middle- income countries. These reforms must aim to reduce distortions that inflate borrowing costs and constrain access to finance by addressing systemic barriers to global finance, consistent with G20 consensus-building processes.

We support **Innovative and Inclusive Financing Mechanisms** that lower transaction costs, including remittances, and expand access to long-term financing for sustainable development. This includes leveraging Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and SDR resources for risk-sharing instruments, strengthening the capital adequacy of MDBs by backing ultra-long-term, 'century loans', promoting digital and regulatory reforms for safe and inclusive investment, and considering strategic vehicles such as the harmonisation of African Sov-

Foreign Wealth Funds to mobilise domestic resources for long-term development priorities in partnership with public, private, and multilateral actors.

We encourage **The Promotion of Sustainable Value Creation and Industrialisation that strengthens local beneficiation, regional value chains** and technology transfer tied to critical mineral sectors. This includes measures that support value-added industrialisation in domestic and regional markets, fosters continental regulatory environments, deepens domestic revenue generation, and regional integration.

We call for **Targeted Financing for Vulnerable Groups** that develops and promotes financing solutions that are inclusive to people in vulnerable situations, including indigenous communities, women, youth, persons with disabilities, migrants, and queer communities. Such measures should enhance equity, accountability, and sustainable socio-economic transformation.

Building momentum for the achievement of the SDGs

We note that only 18% of SDG targets are on track, identifying disparities between regions, with Africa experiencing some of the greatest setbacks despite being least responsible for global crises such as climate change, food insecurity, and systemic inequalities.

We recognise the heightened imperative to advance sustainable development, as articulated in the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations Pact for the Future, and the African Union's Agenda 2063**. We reaffirm that sustainable development can only be achieved through coherent and mutually reinforcing progress



across the **5Ps: People Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership**, supported by innovative governance frameworks capable of managing competing interests, negotiating complex transitions, and fostering public trust. Their alignment is particularly critical in leveraging the diversity of green, blue, and circular economies through the application of an intersectional approach to development efforts.

We emphasise that effective implementation requires **transparent and predictable financing, inclusive governance, and the active participation** of all social groups, particularly those most impacted by conflict, economic shocks, and climate disruptions. Advancing these interconnected agendas demands renewed commitment to solidarity, fairness, and shared responsibility, ensuring that development benefits are equitably distributed and that no one is left behind.

We call for **strengthening ethical governance and strong accountability systems** through mandatory, regular national reporting to the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), supported by structured, transparent and disaggregated data at sub-national, national, regional and global levels, civil society participation, and evidence-based policymaking.

We strongly encourage **closing the SDG financing gap**

through innovative partnerships, including expanding public-private-philanthropic partnerships, strengthening multilateral financing.

Conclusion

We call for urgent and measurable action from G20 Member States, international organisations, financial institutions, private sector partners, and civil society actors to find inclusive and sustainable solutions that measure progress not only by economic growth, but by dignity, equality, opportunities, and the well-being of all people and the environment.

As part of the long-term impact, we present the G20 Social Summit Legacy Projects as enduring commitments that will carry forward the spirit of South Africa's Presidency. These legacy initiatives are intended to institutionalise people-centred participation, elevate community-driven innovation, advance the rights and inclusion of vulnerable groups, strengthen social justice ecosystems, and ensure that the voices gathered throughout this process remain embedded in future global decision-making spaces.

Through this Declaration, we present our shared priorities, commitments, and calls for courageous leadership, renewed solidarity, and a reimagined multilateralism rooted in human dignity.

Women Must Lead Africa's Water Revolution

■ By **PEMMY MAJODINA**

IN the long march towards a just, equitable and dignified society, access to water and sanitation remains one of the sharpest fault lines of inequality on our continent. It is a struggle that unfolds daily in our villages, streets, informal settlements, farms and schools. And as always, it is women who stand at the very frontlines of this battle.

For decades, the African National Congress has taught us that transformation is not an abstract ideal; it is lived in the daily struggles of ordinary people. Nowhere is this clearer than in the ongoing fight for universal, reliable and safe water and sanitation services. The statistics are sobering: only 31% of Africans have access to safely managed sanitation; more than 353 million lack basic drinking water; and millions of women and girls still rise before dawn to fetch water, walking distances that limit opportunity and compromise safety.

These are not just technical failures. They are betrayals of dignity. They are systemic injustices.

And yet, we must also confront another uncomfortable truth: women who bear the greatest burden of this crisis remain drastically under-represented in water leadership.

Despite managing water in their homes, carrying the weight of

broken systems on their backs, and raising generations under conditions of scarcity, women hold only 17% of senior leadership positions in Africa's water sector.

This is not a gap of competence. It is a gap of opportunity and recognition.

Women are not victims. Women are the vanguard. Across Africa, when women lead in water governance, service outcomes

improve. Communities mobilise better. Accountability deepens. Maintenance improves. Innovation expands. And dignity is restored more rapidly and more sustainably. Women know the terrain.

They know the rhythms of household water use, the realities of sanitation, the emotional toll of scarcity, and the pragmatic solutions needed to make systems work. Their leadership is not symbolic. It is catalytic.



South Africa: is a mirror of progress and warning. Our own democratic journey offers both inspiration and hard lessons. Since 1994, access to improved sanitation and piped water has expanded significantly. This reflects deliberate policy choices, targeted investments, and a people-centred developmental state.

But we must speak frankly: coverage gains have not always translated into reliable, dignified services. Ageing infrastructure, weak maintenance, skills shortages and governance failures continue to undermine progress. Millions still live without reliable supply.

Women in rural and informal communities still bear the daily burden of collecting and managing water under difficult conditions.

The ANC has always insisted that freedom is incomplete when dignity is absent. If pipelines are built but taps run dry, then liberation remains partial.

There are huge revolutionary tasks before us. If Africa is serious about meeting Sustainable Development Goal 6 – universal access to water and sanitation – then it must unleash the full leadership potential of women. Not through token appointments, but through meaningful representation with resources, authority and influence.

That means:

- Rewriting policies and budgets to embed gender-responsive water governance.
- Opening pathways to technical training, executive leadership and community-based authority.
- Breaking the cultural and in-



stitutional barriers that keep women out of decision-making spaces.

- Strengthening mentorship pipelines that empower young women to rise.
- Ensuring women lead in planning, operations, oversight and investment decisions.

This is not merely a gender agenda. It is a developmental imperative.

Across the continent and the Global South, the water and sanitation sector is awakening to the truth that women's leadership is not optional. From utilities led by dynamic female engineers, to river-basin organisations shaped by women peace-builders, to rural water committees steered by mothers and grandmothers, we are already seeing the future we want. But it will not build itself.

This moment calls for renewed courage and the conviction that Africa's daughters must stand not

at the margins, but at the centre of governance and transformation.

To build a water-secure Africa, an Africa where dignity is non-negotiable, we need all hands on deck across the continent and the globe. Governments, researchers, engineers, community activists, development partners, the private sector and civil society must unite behind this cause.

Let us return to the fundamental principle that has anchored our struggle: the people are their own liberators. And today, the women of Africa must be empowered to lead this new terrain of struggle – the struggle for water justice.

The time for rhetoric has passed.

The time for collective, inclusive and women-led action is now. ■

Pemmy Majodina is Minister of Water and Sanitation.

Launch of the Vaal Corporation Water Utility is a turning point: Emfuleni's Water Crisis Demands a New Response

■ By **DAVID MAHLOBO**

LAST Friday, we launched a special purpose vehicle, the Vaal Corporation Water Utility, which marks a decisive and defining moment in our collective journey towards rebuilding and restoring water and sanitation infrastructure in the Emfuleni Local Municipality.

South Africa's democratic era has always understood this profound truth: the struggle for water is a struggle for dignity. It is a struggle for equality, for economic and social justice, and for the developmental path promised by our Constitution. When a community is denied reliable water and sanitation, it is denied the foundation upon which health, opportunity and progress are built.

For far too long, the community of Emfuleni has lived with what no South African should ever endure: collapsing water infrastructure, failing sanitation systems, polluted rivers, and the daily uncertainty of whether clean water will reach their homes. These failures have caused frustration, despair and at times even hopelessness. And yet, through it all, the people of Emfuleni have remained resilient.

This is not the Emfuleni they deserve. It is not the South Africa we are building. The launch of



the Vaal Corporation Water Utility thus represents not only an administrative reform, but also a moral commitment to restore dignity, rebuild trust and create a future that was promised by our 1994 democratic breakthrough.

Our country is among the most water-scarce nations in the world. Climate change, population growth and ageing infrastructure are intensifying our vulnerabilities. While South Africa currently maintains a national balance between supply and demand, this balance is precarious and in some regions it is already fracturing.

We have seen this in Cape Town during the near-Day Zero crisis, in Nelson Mandela Bay, and now in parts of Gauteng where high

demand and infrastructure delays strain the system. Around the world, cities such as Chennai, São Paulo, Jakarta and Mexico City have learned painfully that water insecurity can bring a city to its knees.

Nationally, the picture is sobering: 73% of Water Services Authorities assessed fall into the poor or critical categories. Safe drinking water has declined in several regions and Wastewater treatment failures continue to contaminate rivers – the arteries of our ecosystems, agriculture and communities. Against this backdrop, Emfuleni's challenges are not isolated. They are a warning of what can happen if structural reform does not take root across the country.

In Emfuleni, Non-Revenue Water – water that is lost before it reaches consumers – has spiralled to an alarming 75%. Billing and revenue systems have deteriorated. Municipal debt has grown unsustainably. Sewage spills have polluted the Vaal River system and damaged the social and economic life of the region.

These failures did not emerge overnight. They stem from a deeper institutional weakness: a governance model for water services in many municipalities that has simply become unfit for purpose. Fragmented accountability, underinvestment, financial mismanagement, and legislation that does not easily permit intervention have perpetuated a cycle of decline.

We cannot keep doing more of the same and expect different results. The establishment of this special purpose vehicle is therefore a watershed moment and a turning point both for Emfuleni and for South Africa's broader water sector reforms. This is not a bailout. It is not a quick fix. It is a bold structural reform grounded in the principles of a capable and developmental state. It introduces a professionally run, ring-fenced water services provider; transparent governance and clear lines of responsibility; modern technical and operational systems; effective revenue management and reinvestment; as well as infrastructure rehabilitation guided by engineering expertise, not political expedience.

It is an intervention that aligns directly with the Water Services Amendment Bill and Operation Vulindlela Phase 2, which require the separation of Water Services Authorities and Providers. This shift is widely supported by experts, National Treasury and our own department. This is the

kind of reform that restores public confidence and ensures long-term sustainability.

But government alone cannot succeed. Water security is a shared responsibility. For the Vaal Corporation Water Utility to succeed, partnership must become a way of life in Emfuleni and across our nation. Residents must protect infrastructure, report illegal connections, and embrace responsible water use. Vandalism and theft are not victimless acts. They directly undermine service delivery and impoverish communities.

Business must recognise that water reliability is essential for investment, growth and jobs. Labour must continue to champion professionalism and safety in the sector. Faith communities, NGOs and civic organisations have played an important role in raising awareness and holding institutions accountable. Their voices remain essential in safeguarding public interest.

Our youth must seize opportunities in engineering, environmental science, public administration, and innovation. They are the future custodians of our water resources. They are the ones who will carry the responsibility to

ensure that never again must a community face the indignity that Emfuleni has endured.

The launch of the Vaal Corporation Water Utility is not the end. It is the beginning of a long journey of repair that will require discipline, unity and persistence. There will be challenges. There will be disruptions. But together, as government, communities, labour, civil society and business, we will rebuild Emfuleni pipe by pipe, pump station by pump station, river by river. And one day, when the taps run reliably, when the Vaal River flows cleanly again and when dignity is restored to every household, we will be able to say: This is the Emfuleni we built together.

Let this special purpose vehicle mark the beginning of a new era of accountability, partnership and hope. It is an era where no community is left behind. An era where water becomes not a daily struggle, but a guarantee of dignity for all. Let us walk this path together for Emfuleni, for Gauteng and for the promise of a free and democratic South Africa that will restore dignity to all its citizens. ■

David Mahlobo is the Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation.



THE G20 SUMMIT

“Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability”

■ By **GEORGE MAGOMA**

 ON 22-23 November 2025 South Africa will host the G20 Summit under the theme “Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability”. This important gathering of global leaders will be anchored on three core sessions of “inclusive and sustainable economic growth, leaving no one behind, building our economies, the role of trade, financing for development and debt burden.

These sessions will deliberate on the increasing and massive debt that has trapped many underdeveloped countries, explore solutions towards ameliorating these countries of the heavy burden that has stifled development. Building strong economies entails addressing the fault lines in the skewed global economy characterised by inequalities and high tariffs, climate change and other factors which are a barrier to economic growth and prosperity.

Building strong economies, the role of trade in the world of inclusive multilateralism and partnerships, forging new trade relations in a world steeped in progressive internationalism, closing the deep crevices of inequality and sustainable development will top the agenda of the G20 Summit.

This meeting of minds occurs against the backdrop of an ailing economy incapable of driving development, astronomical

cost of living, a weak economies with a huge bearing on development, poverty, unemployment, migration, corruption, draught, illicit trade and capital flight. As a forum for international economic cooperation the G20 plays an important role shaping and strengthening global architecture and governance on all major international economic issues. It is through these themes that its objectives are pursued as an act

of progressive internationalism, levelling of the economic fields and advancing sustainable development.

Why is South Africa part of the G20? As a developmental state South Africa is a powerful and global influencer and powerhouse in the diplomatic and economic space hence its rootedness in progressive internationalism, inclusive multilateralism, affiliation



to economic bodies, its macro-economic policies and strategies to drive development. For years since its readmission into the international fold after years of isolation and economic sanctions for its apartheid policies of separate development and racial segregation which affected its economy South Africa is a global role-player, having carved itself a space and recognition internationally by exercising its sovereignty and role in the community of nations in pursuance of its agenda of development.

“We achieved a consensus on the need to pursue policies that support economic growth while confirming medium-term national fiscal consolidation strategies.

The situation in the global economy looks better now than it did five years ago.

Economic growth is recovering, but risks of course are still very, very great. That’s why, since the start of our G20 presidency we have set our tasks as stimulating growth, creating new jobs - above all by encouraging investment, effective regulation and increasing confidence in markets.”

President Vladimir Putin,
G20 Summit 2013, St. Petersburg

Its role includes nurturing a more sustainable trade and development landscape and commitment



to working on solutions for infrastructure challenges faced by the African continent, which hinder access to both regional and global markets. Its membership to the G20 and its economic strategies of development is a boost to the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, South-South relations, the African Union Agenda 2063 and other partnerships within the G20 member states.

There is much scepticism surrounding the G20, putting its success into doubt. Firstly, the United States (US) under President Donald Trump will not be joining the G20 in South Africa due falsehoods peddled by the racist right-wing organisations accusing South Africa it of acts of genocide against a minority section of society.

This is done despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary and South Africa’s commitment to non-racialism, common citizenship and equal rights, and its transformative policies of redress to change the economic landscape and face of society towards an equitable and inclusive society where the wealth of the country shall be shared by all.

Secondly this is a deliberate grand scheme to undermine the country’s stature globally,

its agenda of inclusive growth and multipolar world as opposed global subjugation, inequality and imperialism that frown against progress, economic freedom and the debt relief agenda, collaboration, shared prosperity, reciprocal growth and mutual benefit.

The non-attendance by Argentina is a broader scheme to undermine South Africa’s leadership of the G20 by virtue of its membership of BRICS, its relations with China, Russia and policy on a free Palestine. Argentina, is not coming because of icy diplomatic relations with South Africa. The answer is simple, it had eaten the Trump goat. This when the countries of the South are suffering the wrath of the US for their refusal to kowtow to the US, a principled stance that South Africa had adopted. South Africa will never mortgage its sovereignty at the altar of convenience, our country is not for sale.

The presence of the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU) and other economies on the African soil is demonstrative of a changing global order, the complexities and dynamics geopolitics and an evolving environment of multilateralism and economic cooperation, portending towards future growth, collaboration and a new global order of partner-

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ships, and end to dominance and economic bullying.

The G20 Summit must emerge with the clear solid, sustainable agenda aligned to its theme of “Solidarity, Equality and Sustainability.” Long-term partnerships are necessary to drive its agenda. As an economic development key driver, infrastructure projects and technology are important for economic stimulation, job creation, poverty eradication, knowledge sharing, skills transfer. The G20 Summit fits within the ANC’s economic development plan, reinforces its role in the international space as a global force.

Prosperity is important for the South Africa and the AU in order to address pressing global challenges and foster economic cooperation. Partnerships and collaboration are new weapons to drive development, to rid the world of the debt burden, malnutrition, diseases, inequality and other disparities which inhibit development and sustainability.

For the African continent as South Africa as a gateway for continental development to build relations, forge partnerships and resource mobilisation. It is a plat-

form for the African voice to be heard, highlight the pernicious effects of the debt of its member states, the state of agriculture, opening new opportunities and creating new partnerships, beneficiation and to unlock the continent’s growth potential driven through the SADC protocol, the African Development Bank (ADB) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in order to boost intra-African trade and strengthen the continent’s position in global value chains.

Our pillars of a better Africa and better world are crucial and should top the G20 agenda through collaboration and new ventures and trade relation. This pillar is supplementary to our strategic foreign pillars of the AU Agenda, South-South cooperation, and inclusive multilateralism, national interests in addition to our sovereignty, progressive internationalism, solidarity peace and friendship against an agenda of protectionism and neo-colonialism.

The G20 Summit must emerge with the clear solid, sustainable agenda aligned to its theme solidarity, Equality and sustainability. Long-term partnerships are

“As the most industrialised and diverse economy on the continent, with a vibrant and engaged business community, South Africa is well positioned to enable investment and trade across Africa. Domestically, we are seeing the green shoots of an emerging economic recovery. The most recent employment figures are encouraging. We are set to record another primary budget surplus and are on a path to reduce our sovereign debt.”

President Cyril Ramaphosa
18 November 2025

necessary to drive its agenda. As an economic development key driver Infrastructure projects and technology are important for economic stimulation, job creation, poverty eradication, knowledge sharing, skills transfer. The G20 Summit fits within the ANC’s economic development plan, reinforces its role in the international space as a global force.

These are major benefits which the country, the African continent, the EU, the ASEAN economic countries and many progressive countries across the world will reap. South Africa has cemented its place in the world, and a pride to its citizens with tis flag nestled among many in the world.

The world is coming to South Africa for we are building, true to Joe Jackson’s famous words.

A better Africa, a better world. ■



The Empty Chair of a Shrinking Empire

■ By **STAN ITSHEGETSENG**



THERE comes a time in world politics when the truth walks into the room with no diplomatic suit, no silk gloves and no fear. The G20 in South Africa is that moment. For the first time in history, a G20 Leaders' Summit is taking place on African soil. A Black led country. A constitutional democracy that has taken the moral high road in global affairs. A nation that stands for justice in Palestine. A nation that refuses to worship at the altar of superpower intimidation. That is precisely why Donald Trump's America is boycotting.

The United States does not fear South Africa's weaknesses. It fears our example.

When South Africa challenges genocide before the International Court of Justice, it exposes the cracks in the Western claim to moral authority. When South Africa insists that the rules apply to all nations, it disrupts the United States' habit of deciding who may live, who may die and which war is fashionable. Trump does not boycott because of land reform. He boycotts because South Africa refuses to kneel. He boycotts because the Global South has found its voice.

And so the United States stays home – a sulking giant in a shrinking room.

But here is the irony. While Trump folds his arms in a tantrum, the

rest of the world gathers to shape the economic future. From Africa to Asia. From Latin America to Europe. The very countries that carry the productive capacity, population power and emerging markets that will define the world of the next fifty years.

Trump's boycott is not a show of strength. It is a self-inflicted wound.

The Economic Future is being written in Johannesburg, not Washington

Real development is no longer a luxury of the North Atlantic. It is a Global South necessity. When the G20 meets in Johannesburg, the agenda is not a beauty con-

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test of Western egos. It is about the fundamentals of global survival.

Countries are discussing:

- New industrial corridors;
- Infrastructure pipelines;
- Digital trade reforms;
- Energy security;
- Climate finance;
- Debt restructuring;
- Market diversification;
- Green minerals;
- Africa's position in global value chains;
- A redesigned global financial architecture.

These are not abstract theories. These are trillion rand questions. These are policy levers that determine jobs, investment, infrastructure, energy, food access, and the long-term stability of nations.

What does Trump offer in exchange? Rage. Threats. Whiteness in panic mode. He wants the world to freeze while he waits for applause. Those days are gone.

The world has moved on. Donald Trump is still trying to drag it back to 1952.

The Economic Advantage of the Global South cannot be silenced

A United States boycott does not break the G20. It breaks the United States.

Because here is the truth that terrifies Washington. The Global South is where the majority of growth is occurring. The Global South is where many minerals are located. The Global South is where labour markets are located. The Global South is where future consumers are located. The Global South is where the

new industrial demand is coming from.

When Trump boycotts, he walks away from:

- The world's most dynamic energy transition partnerships.
- The fastest-growing digital economies.
- The richest green mineral belts.
- The largest agricultural expansion zones.
- The biggest youth markets.
- The strongest infrastructure programmes.

He walks away from Asia's industrial power.

He walks away from Africa's demographic rise.

He walks away from Latin America's new development models.

He walks away from Europe's search for stability.

He walks away from the Middle East's capital surplus.

He walks away from the future.

Because he believes the world must orbit around the United States. But these countries are not planets in the Washington solar system. They are equal sovereign states. And they no longer care for American permission.

Trump's empty chair is the new symbol of global change

Let us say it plainly. The United States did not boycott the G20 in South Africa. The United States boycotted the future.

While serious nations are discussing industrialisation and co-operation, Trump is playing cowboy politics. He wants to lead the

world as if he were still in an old Western film, where the white sheriff decides who may breathe and who may not.

He wants to treat sovereign nations like schoolchildren who must beg for approval. He wants to drag the world into a racist fantasy where might makes right and the United States is the eternal sheriff.

But the world has rejected that script.

Today, the United States is not the centre of the world. It is merely one chair in a circle. A chair that Trump decided to leave empty. Instead of humiliating South Africa, he has humiliated the very country he claims to love.

Because every nation seated in Johannesburg knows the truth: you cannot shape the twenty-first-century economy by hiding behind your walls.

The boycott damages the United States more than South Africa

Trump has weakened his own country by refusing to attend a summit focused on:

- global financial stability;
- trade flows;
- investment decisions;
- infrastructure competition;
- global tax reform;
- energy transition;
- industrial policy synchronization.

This is how global rules are made. This is how new markets are opened. This is how investment corridors are established.

These are the conversations that determine what the next decade looks like. They decide who

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leads, who follows and who falls behind.

By boycotting, Trump has chosen isolation over influence and ego over strategy. He has decided to punish the United States economy in retaliation for South Africa's actions. He has chosen to remove his country from the table where the future is being negotiated.

No serious superpower behaves like this.

Even during the Cold War, rivals still attended summits because tantrums do not measure leadership. It is measured by participation.

Trump's boycott proves only one thing. The United States is losing the discipline of leadership. It is slowly becoming a spectator in a game it once dominated.

The age of the Global Bully is ending

Let us tell the truth without fear. Trump's America is not being undermined. It is undermining itself.

A nation that:

- arms oppressive regimes;
- shelters apartheid style violence in Palestine;
- keeps a six-decade embargo on Cuba;
- destroyed Libya and left Africa to pick up the pieces;
- talks about sovereignty only when convenient;
- protects police officers who choke Black people to death;
- preaches democracy while supporting coups.

Cannot pretend to be the referee of world affairs.

The world is tired. The world is moving on. The world is building new partnerships. The world is

communicating with each other without needing to run to Washington for permission.

The era of the global bully is coming to an end. The age of collective power is on the rise.

Trump can boycott the summit, but he cannot boycott history. History is unfolding here, on African soil, under the leadership of a nation that refused to submit.

South Africa stands tall

Let this be written clearly. South Africa did not flinch. South Africa did not beg. South Africa did not apologise. South Africa did not bow.

We hosted the world. We shaped the agenda. We defended the role of the Global South. We proved that Africa can lead without fear.

The boycott of the United States did not weaken us. It exposed itself. It exposed its anxiety. It exposed its childishness. It exposed its shrinking influence. It exposed its belief that it can threaten, insult, and destabilise any country that refuses to comply.

Trump's America behaved like a playground menace. But the world is no longer in primary school. Grown nations are forming grown alliances. And the empty United States chair will be remembered

as the moment the world stopped chasing approval and started shaping its own destiny.

Conclusion: the world is not Washington's Oyster

The world is a community of equals. The world is a table of many voices. The world is a collective project.

Trump's boycott was meant to embarrass South Africa. Instead, it embarrassed the United States. It reminded the world that a superpower without humility becomes a superpower without allies.

The G20 in Johannesburg has marked a turning point. It has been shown that Africa cannot be ignored. It has been demonstrated that the Global South has significant economic weight. It has been shown that the United States cannot press a tantrum button and expect the world to freeze.

The United States can keep its empty chair. The rest of us are building the future. ■

Stan Itshegetseng is a member of the ANC Ward 27, Vuyani Mabaxa Branch in Zone 10 Greater Joburg Region and an NEC member of the Progressive Professionals Forum. He writes in his personal capacity.





The CRL Rights Commission Appoints a Section 22 Committee for the Christian Sector

■ By **PROF MUSA XULU**

ON 02 October 2025, an important milestone was reached within the Christian faith community with an announcement of the members of the Section 22 committee at Rhema Bible Church in Randburg. This event marked the conferral of significant responsibilities on these individuals, underscoring their crucial role in advancing the objectives and commitments of the faith community.

The handover on this day symbolized a collective commitment to fostering integrity, respect, and accountability within religious communities, paving the way for a more ethical and responsible future.

The Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Rights Commission) established this committee in pursuance of its mandate provided for under sections 181(1)(c) and 185 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, and further given effect and shape by the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities Act 19 of 2002. Also, it is an effort to help find solutions that will considerably safeguard the spiritual and emotional well-being of congregants. Significantly, it is also intended to reaffirm principles that promote

and advance respect for the human dignity of all people, and to bring an end to instances of abuse reported to the Commission and in the media.

The process to this point has not been without challenges, especially from disinformation campaigns that falsely claim the CRL Commission advocates state regulation of religion. On the contrary, the issue of concern has been and continues to be about the conduct or behaviour of certain religious leaders, who abuse and violate their members. The Commission reiterates that freedom of religion is sacrosanct and an inviolable constitutional right that must never be compromised

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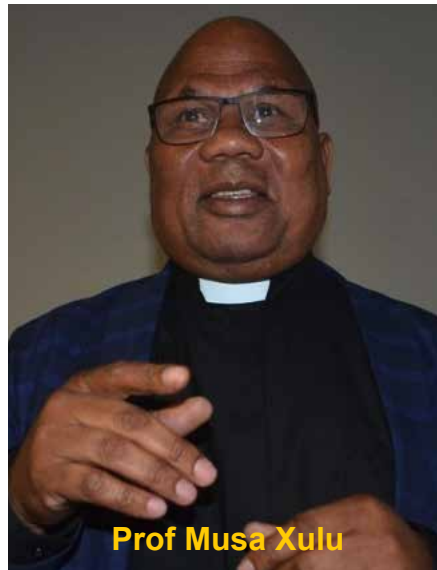
by any individual.

As a context, in 2015 and 2016, the CRL Rights Commission investigated the *“Commercialization of Religion and Abuse of the People’s Belief Systems.”* This inquiry revealed a series of appalling incidents that shocked the nation and sparked widespread outrage across communities. Among the disturbing occurrences were individuals being sprayed with insecticide, others seen ingesting grass, consuming petrol, and others seen chewing snakes. Also, allegations of sexual assault against young girls perpetrated by certain religious leaders were reported, alongside harrowing cases of individuals who were made to lie down and vehicles driven on them.

The findings of this investigation were subsequently presented to the Portfolio Committee on Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), which held discussions with a diverse array of religious leaders, resulting in a set of significant recommendations in 2018. The Committee noted the abuse in the religious sector and thus recommends the following:

- A charter for self-regulation
- Code of conduct for the sector, which should be recognised by legislation.

In response to these recommendations from the CoGTA Portfolio Committee regarding Self-regulation in the Christian sector, the Commission invoked Section 22 of the CRL Rights Commission Act to establish a Section 22 Committee, which has accordingly been constituted and comprises Christian religious leaders from various umbrella organisations, inter alia, mainline, independent, charismatic, and pente-



Prof Musa Xulu

costal churches. The CRL Rights Commissioners will not be part of this committee, except for the staff members who will provide administrative support.

Among its members is: Council of African Independent Churches (CAIC), Ebuhleni Nazareth Baptist Church, Gauteng Nazareth Baptist Church, Ginyezinye Nazareth Baptist Church, Moral Regeneration Movement, Rhema Bible Church, South African Council of Churches, St Engenas Zion Christian Church, The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa, The Great Commission, Thembezinhle Nazareth Baptist Church, Zion Christian Church

Thus, its mandate is to facilitate broad consultations and engage in dialogue with Christian organisations and leaders across the country to develop mechanisms for self-regulation and a code of conduct, thereby helping to halt the harmful practices of some religious leaders within their congregations. By integrating diverse perspectives and experiences from organisations and leaders, the Committee will be seeking to promote a safer, more accountable environment for all individuals.

It will also conduct research on self-regulation in the context of Church history, noting that the concept of self-regulation is as old as the church itself, thereby ensuring that the rights of congregants are protected and their concerns are addressed in pursuit of integrity and accountability within the Christian sector. The necessity for research stems from the recognition that many countries across the globe are facing significant challenges in addressing various forms of abuse.

This research will enable the committee to develop a comprehensive report that considers related issues such as physical, mental, and emotional abuse, humiliation, violations of dignity, fear, sexual violations, gender-based violence, and other offenses.

The Section 22 committee is finalising its consultation plan and schedule, which will be disseminated across various media platforms.

It is important to emphasise that this process and its outcome is particularly in the hands of the Christian sector. Therefore, Christian leaders and organisations are strongly encouraged to participate in the forthcoming nationwide dialogues and consultations so that their views and inputs can be heard.

Notably, similar processes will soon be announced to address challenges in other faith communities, namely, the Muslims, African Traditional Religion, Rastafarians, and others. ■

Prof Musa Xulu is the Chairperson of the Section 22 Committee.

Thinking Africa and Regeneration

■ By **VUSI MAVIMBELA**



THE very First Pan-African Conference was held in the city of London in the year 1900, the first time in history that black people had gathered from all corners of the globe to discuss the improvement in the condition of their race; to assert their rights and to organise so they can take the equal place among nations of the world. The main resolution of the Conference was drafted by W.E.B. Du Bois, and he titled it **'Address To The Nations Of The World'**. Du Bois helped to usher in the united struggle of the black race in a century which he later characterised as, *"The problem of the 20th Century is the problem of the colour-line; the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea."*

Du Bois formulated a resolution that called for the regeneration of black consciousness and renaissance of the black race. Although he later expanded on the concept of 'the colour-line', especially after he travelled abroad and realised that oppression is not universally defined in terms of black and white race, in South Africa, as in many other struggles in Africa and around the world, the concept of the colour-line remained and constituted the definition of the struggles right up to the last decade of the 20th Century.

When Pixley ka Seme wrote his poem **'The Regeneration of Africa'** at the very beginning of the 20th Century, he was also expressing a dream of all the African peoples.

*'Oh Africa!
Like some great century plant that shall bloom
In ages hence, we watch thee; in our dream
See in thy swamps the Prospero of our stream;*

*Thy doors unlocked, where knowledge in her womb
Hath lain innumerable years in gloom.
Then shalt thou, walking with that morning gleam
Shine as thy sister lands with equal beam'.*

This is the man who, with equal eloquence, called for the unity of the African people, of the disenfranchised, the oppressed, and the colonised. He told us to bury the demon of tribalism and disunity precisely in order that we can achieve the dream of African regeneration.

With Seme's words in our minds, and as we cast our eyes back at the beginning of the last century, it is impossible to see the struggles of the African people over that entire century without seeing the national liberation movements (NLMs) that spearheaded those struggles. Therefore, the struggle for liberation in Africa over the last century and the NLM are indivisible. Indeed, the politics and the culture of the struggle in South Africa also inspired those who waged their own anti-colonial struggles in our subcontinent, the continent, and in many developing countries around the world.

Although Seme talked of The Regeneration of Africa at the time when almost the entire continent was under colonial subjugation, in essence he was already articulating the concept of the African Renaissance in the continent. The very anti-colonial struggles of the African peoples were the struggles for the renaissance of the continent, for its awakening, for change, for development to a higher order of a liberated continent.

Dubois and Seme talked of the renaissance of the

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black race and the African continent at a qualitatively lower historical juncture, and in an almost wholly colonised continent. When Nkrumah called for African unity, for African renaissance, he was also talking of African regeneration, albeit at a juncture historically different from that of Du Bois and Seme. Nkrumah's juncture was qualitatively higher because it was already characterised by the intensification of anti-colonial struggles and the retreat of colonial regimes.

The political liberation in South Africa marked the collapse of the last major pillar of colonialism in Africa. When Thabo Mbeki invoked the concept of the **African Renaissance** and boldly declared the 21st Century to be the African Century, he was hoisting high the same torch that Du Bois, Seme and Nkrumah had passed from generation to generation. He was hoisting the same torch but at a qualitatively higher juncture than that of Du Bois, Nkrumah and Seme. Yes, the African continent was, at last, free of classical colonialism.

Themes of regeneration, renaissance and renewal presuppose change, mutability, and movement forward from a qualitatively lower order to a higher order impacted upon by the juncture and circumstances attendant to that era. Everything changes. As the Greek philosopher Heraclitus said, 'the only thing that does not change is change itself'.

The theme of regeneration, renaissance, renewal, of taking society from the present order to a future qualitatively higher order is the historical mission of all NLMs. They pursue their mission at a different juncture from the past, a juncture impacted upon by differ-

ent circumstances, and therefore they need to constantly regenerate, renaissance and renew themselves in line with a qualitatively different conjuncture.

In his book, *'The Origin of Species'*, Charles Darwin makes the following observation.

"Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object, which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows. There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one; and that whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being evolved".

Regeneration, renaissance, evolution and renewal all presuppose change and mutability in order that, as Darwin says, the production of higher animals can directly follow, so that forms most beautiful and most wonderful can evolve.

This is to agree with Karl Marx in his seminal work, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* that man make their own history, but not as they choose but *"under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past"*. The dialectics of moving forward entails getting the right balance between the collective weight from the past and the need to recognise the change that continues to happen even beyond our will. This is one of the major challenges that face the African NLM today.

Additionally, we need to constantly appreciate that there are two forces pulling at the nation state and, by extension, at the NLM in two different directions. One is centrifugal, pulling outwards, away from the nation state. The other is centripetal, pulling inwards. This 'appreciation' is a material law of nature that Hegel and Engels articulate as 'freedom is the appreciation of necessity'. It is the need to appreciate, embrace, adapt and ride on the inexorable and necessary forces of change, to live in harmony with inevitable challenges of nature



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– never to seek to fight the ‘necessity’ of nature but to negotiate coexistence with it.

The centrifugal force is evident in the growing power of multinational institutions, e.g. SADC, AU, UN, G20, IMF, BRICS, WTO, AfCFTA, etc. The nation state, and the NLM that assumed governance responsibility over the nation state, are compelled to surrender some of their power and sovereignty outwards to multinational institutions. These multinational institutions become collective governments acting on behalf and mediating some of the external and domestic interests of the nation state. This trend, at an underlying level, is driven by the globalisation and integratedness of the world economy and its platforms of governance and communication. Globalisation has coerced nation states to establish and join regional economic, political and social institutions.

The growing power of multinational institutions over the nation state is not, on its own, a negative development. At one level it can be seen as the harmonisation of international governance, bringing nations together and giving smaller and weaker nations the forum to raise their concerns. It can be seen as democratisation of world politics and economics at a level higher than the nation state.

The issue, however, is that the positives out of this development do not happen on their own, they must be worked for by the nation state and the NLM within the institutions in which they operate. That presupposes that the NLM should diligently, strategically and smartly contest for meaningful representation in these global and multinational organisations.



Smart intervention also presupposes that there should be closer coordination with African institutions of continental governance in engagement in global forums on behalf of the continent.

The African Union (AU) is designated the responsibility to unite and champion the course of the people of the African continent. However, as it can be observed, the organisation is facing many challenges including regional fragmentation, poor leadership, resource constraint, regional political and military instability, etc. That poses a huge question on how the AU's unity and strategy of intervention at a global level on behalf of the continent can be enhanced and sharpened. Given challenges in the continent, it can be argued that the project of the African Renaissance as espoused by Thabo Mbeki is urgent and imperative to refocus unity and collective leadership in the agenda of the continent.

What was innovative and adaptive in Mbeki's approach is that he sought to enlist the concurrence and collaborative participation of a handful, regionally representative, influential leaders in the continent. He understood the po-

litical and ideological divergence in the continent and adapted his approach by enlisting a handful of leaders and their respective countries to form a bridgehead of intervention in aid of the African Renaissance agenda. The political, ideological and cultural superstructural agenda espoused in the African Renaissance was underpinned by a programmatic base of New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) that sought to marshal Africa's integration into the global economy. With the subsequent establishment of the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and Agenda 2063, the programme for the regeneration and renewal of Africa has been set afoot.

The all-encompassing programme of the African Renaissance is imperative and a fundamental intervention that today is in dire need of bold and visionary collective leadership in the continent. Today Africa lacks that bridgehead of strategically placed and influential leaders that can help pull together divergent regional and political strands. That kind of a bridgehead is important in a continent that is not only

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huge but also regionally, demographically, economically, ideologically, politically and religiously diverse. Such a programme of Renaissance is cardinal because it articulates and outlines the political and ideological philosophy that underpins the global struggle of African people to, as Pixley ka Seme said, “*Shine as thy sister lands with equal beam*”.

Without resuscitating, strengthening and placing the political ideology of African Renaissance at the centre of Africa’s contestation with the world, our engagement will likely flounder. African leadership that is devoid of and ignores the centrality of this philosophy runs the risk of exercising superficial leadership and narrow technocratic interventions in a world where African marginalisation continues to be justified by the ideology of ‘superior versus inferior races’ as articulated by Du Bois in ‘the colour-line’ If we accept that the African nation state and the NLM have been compelled to surrender part of their power to global institutions, all the reason why Africa should be guided by a fundamentally coherent ideology in its engagement with the world.

The centripetal force, on the other hand, is evidenced by the growing activism and proliferation of non-governmental institutions or organisations (NGIs or NGOs) within the nation state. That includes the mushrooming and proliferation of political parties representing the whole gamut of political and ideological persuasions. The growing number and activism of these institutions is also informed by the weakening influence and dissipating moral authority of the NLM. These varied NGOs and fragmented political entities have wrestled away



part of the manifesto and agenda that was once the domain of the NLM largely because the latter’s moral authority has been seriously dented and, in other cases, completely lost. This includes instances where business organisations have taken upon themselves to provide delivery services to communities and their client bases where the nation state has fallen short.

This situation entails that the NLM abandons the hubris of the past and the complacency of incumbency, to accept and internalise that its post-liberation dominance has diminished, that it now fishes in the same pond as other multiple political formations, and that it does not hold the monopoly of knowledge, wisdom and the skills set of how to govern. That requires the candid boldness to accept that the skill set that is required to turn the country around resides throughout society and not only among those who share our political allegiances. It needs to live with the reality that the centripetal force of democratisation inwards has arrived, and its accelerated arrival has been facilitated by the weakness of leadership and moral degeneracy at all levels of leadership and cadreship within the NLM itself. The urgent realisation of this re-

ality should hopefully inspire a genuine agenda of regeneration, renewal and rebirth in the NLM.

It all starts with bold leadership that does not bury its head in a mound of its own make-believe. It is accompanied by the acceptance of the extent of moral vacuity that has set in the body of the NLM and society, and the need for zero tolerance to corruption at all levels of leadership and society. It goes with the realisation that we cannot create a world class society with an uneducated population, thus a need for the overhaul of the education sector. The developed South African economy that continues to be bedevilled by hugely skewed racial economic relations cannot be transformed by a young population that still evinces many vestiges of Bantu Education thirty years after political liberation.

The growth in the number of NGOs and proliferation of political parties that results directly from degeneracy in the NLM and the failure of governance is of greater concern as it invariably leads to the weakening of the power of the governing centre in a nation state, leading to political and governance uncertainty and instability.

There is however a dialectical interplay in the sense that it is not solely the result of degeneracy in the NLM that has resulted in the weakening of its authority, but it is also the manifestation of democratic devolution and localisation of power to respective active communities. There are times when governments need capable NGOs to extend delivery of services and to encourage the involvement of grassroots communities in governance and socio-economic development.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

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22–28 November 2025

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

22 November 1497 Vasco Da Gama passes the Cape of Good Hope

The Portuguese expedition, to find routes from Europe to India set off on the Atlantic ocean, southwards in July 1497, led by Vasco Da Gama. The three ships set foot on the island of St Helena on 4 November 1497, where he made first contact with the Khoi Khoi. Da Gama passed the Cape of Good Hope on 22 November 1497, landing in Mosselbay after being battered by storms, with the second encounter with the Khoi Khoi, where the exchange ended in a stand-off and Da Gama and his ships left with some haste, after firing canons at the Khoi. The next landing point was Durban, and then Mozambique.

22 November 1909 Educationist Moses Josiah Madiba born



The author, educationist, linguist and first African chancellor of the University of the North, was born

at Uitvlucht, Polokwane district. He was the first secretary of the Maune branch of the Transvaal African Teachers' Association in 1930. He played an important role in the development of the Northern Sotho language, and his books *Thuto ya Polelo* (1941), *Tsiri* (1942), *Mahlontebe series* (1952) and *Nkotsana* (1955) are still widely read. In 1960 he was appointed first chairperson of the advisory council of the newly established University College of the North, a position he held until 1973 and on 13 May 1978 was installed as the first African chancellor of the University of the North. A lay preacher, he was also served as first president of the Transvaal synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church from 1963. He died on 2 January 1985 in Seshego, Pietersburg district.

22 November 1943 Film maker Safi Faye born

Senegalese film maker was born in Dakar. After directing documentary and short films, she



made a movie *Kaddu Beykat* (Letter from my Village) in 1975, the first movie by a Sub-Saharan African woman to be commercially distributed as a feature film. Faye has directed many feature films, and today is recognized as one of Sub-Saharan Africa's most prominent directors. Her 1996 film *Mossane* received the Un-certain regard award at Cannes. Faye passed away at the age of 79 on 22 February 2023.

22 November 1962 Paarl Insurrection by Poqo

Poqo members from Mbekweni, Paarl, met and resolved to attack security installation in the town. Over 200 men armed with axes, pangas, sticks, sabres and possibly a few revolvers gathered at about 02h00 and split into two groups, one to attack the prison and the other the police station. The latter group approached the police station and began attacking police patrol vans. Three were shot dead in front of the police station and others were wounded. Several were arrested. As the rest of the group fled, they met those who had been planning the prison attack and formed a new group which began attacking houses in Loop Street. Two residents, Ms Rencia Vermeulen and Mr Frans Richards, were killed. The final death toll was seven, including five Poqo members: Godfrey Yekiso, Madodana Camagu, John

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Magigo and Ngenisile Siqwebo. Matthews Mayezana Mali was shot by the South African Police (SAP) on the following day. Mali was shot in the head and chest while marching in front of a group of Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) demonstrators on their way to the Paarl police station to hand over a list of grievances on the day after the uprising. Historian Tom Lodge wrote about the insurrection in the edition of *African Studies Review* journal (1982).

22 November 1973 The film, *Boesman and Lena* released

The motion film by playwright Athol Fugard and directed by Ross Devenish, was released, with its theme on apartheid forced removals. The play also was performed off Broadway, starring James Earl Jones and Ruby Dee in 1970, running for 205 performances. In 2000, another *Boesman and Lena* film, starring Danny Glover and Angela Bassett was released.

23 November 1887 ESKOM and ISCOR founder born

Hendrik Johannes van der Bijl, an industrialist who founded ESKOM (1923) and later ISCOR was born on 23 November 1887 in Pretoria. His father was a merchant and property investor. Van der Bijl studied physics in Germany where he obtained a Masters of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of Leipzig, after which he returned to South Africa in 1920. He founded the Electricity Supply Commission (Eskom) in 1923, providing inexpensive power to South Africa. Van der Bijl then set his sights on the steel industry and established the South African Steel and Iron

Corporation (IsCOR). Van der Bijl died in 1948 and is regarded as one of the great South Africans for his contribution to the country's industrialisation.

23 November 1971 Bridge of Death

Just 11 days after its opening, the Van Stadens bridge between Gqeberha and Humansdorp, Eastern Cape became known as the Bridge of Death. This is when the first of dozens of suicidal persons leaped to his death. In 2013, a wire mesh barrier and warning signs were erected to hinder jumpers. To date nearly 100 people have jumped to their death from the bridge, the latest reported in September 2021.

23 November 1973 Arab states agreed on Oil Embargo against apartheid South Africa

A summit of Arab countries adopted an oil embargo against apartheid South Africa. Other Arab countries, like Kuwait, already since 1962 refused to sell oil to South Africa

23 November 2005 Ellen Johnson Sirleaf elected as first female president in Africa



After a closely contested elections in Liberia, Ellen Sirleaf Johnson, a former assistant minister of finance (1972-73) and finance minister (1980-1985) was announced as the winner of the Presidential elections. She was sworn in as President in January 2006, and served as President until 2017, when she stepped down at the end of her second term. President Johnson Sirleaf, along with Leymah Gbowee and Tawakkul Karman won the Nobel Peace prize in 2011.

23 November 2019 National Museum of the DRC opened

President Felix Tshisekedi opened the National Museum, dedicated to Congolese artifacts stolen by European colonialist and now scattered around the world.

24 November 1948 Sculptor Vuminkosi Zulu born



Vuminkosi Zulu was born in Mapumulo, KZN on 24 November 1948. He studied art at Rocke's drift art school and completed his course in 1972, staying on as resident artist until 1974. Zulu is famous for his etchings and wood

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carvings and his famous wood-carving titled the Battle of Isandlwana (1982) won him praise and a sculpture award. Zulu had the ability to capture emotions such as loneliness or fear in his etchings. His work can be found in many collections locally and abroad. Zulu died in 1996.

24 November 1986 **Barclays Bank announces its disinvestment from South Africa**

Barclays Bank, announced that it was selling its remaining 40 per cent holding in its South African associate, Barclays National Bank Limited of South Africa. Sir Timothy Bevan, chairman of Barclays, admitted that while the decision to pull out of the South African market was a commercial one, the pressure exerted against the bank by anti-apartheid protesters had a detrimental effect on the bank's business in other areas. Student campaigns against Barclays Bank, initiated in the 1960s, were carried on year after year, especially at the beginning of every academic year, to persuade students not to open accounts with that bank.

24 November 1995 **Pretoria's first black mayor**

Johannes Lebone Slo Ramokhoase was born in 1951 in Eesterus before the residents were moved to Mamelodi. He was the headmaster of Mamelodi High School and chairman of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU). On 24 November 1995, Ramokhoase became the first black mayor of Pretoria. He was instrumental in integrating the old city council of Pretoria with the local munic-

ipalities of Mamelodi and other townships. A street in the Pretoria CBD has been named in his honour.

25 November 1841 **Amistad survivors returned home**

The 35 surviving Africans enslaved on La Amistad, who revolted, took over the slave ship and were arrested on arrival in the USA, set sail on a return voyage to Africa. They were freed by the US Supreme court, and arrived in Sierra Leone in January 1842.

25 November 1867 **Banker Talaat Harb born**

The Egyptian economist and financial pioneer, Talaat Harb was born in Cairo. A successful entrepreneur, he contributed to the building of an indigenous national economy, when he founded Banque Misr in 1920, with business conducted exclusively in Arabic, entirely owned and staffed by Egyptians. Today, Banque Misr is owned by the state, with 18,000 employees, 10 million clients and around 700 branches.

25 November 1980 **Footballer Aaron Mokoena born**



Footballer, Tebogo Aaron Mokoena was born on 25 November 1980 in Boipatong Johannesburg. In his early career, he played for local teams such as Jomo Cosmos. He later moved on to teams like Ajax Amsterdam, KRC Gent, Portsmouth and Bidvest Wits. Mokoena is the youngest player ever to represent South Africa. He was only 19 when he played in 1999 at the 2000 Olympic qualifiers. He also led Bafana Bafana in the 2008 Africa Cup of Nations in Ghana. Mokoena's tough tackling skills earned him the nickname "Mbazozo", meaning "The Axe".

25 November 1981 **South African mercenaries involved in Seychelles coup**

South African mercenaries, collaborating with Seychelles citizens who wanted to overthrow the Marxist government led by Prime Minister France-Albert René, were involved in a failed coup attempt in the African island state of Seychelles on this day. Twenty-seven (27) of the 54 mercenaries participating in the coup were members of the South Africa Defense Force.

25 November 1993 **Eritrean Cyclist Mossana Debesai born**



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Eritrean cyclist, Mossana Debesai was born in Asmara. Before competing in the Women's Road Race at the 2020 Olympics, she won the 2019 African Road Championships, establishing herself as one of Eritrea's and Africa's top cyclists.

25 November 2004 Poet Sheila Cussons passed on



Acclaimed South African poet Sheila Cussons died in Cape Town at the age of 82. Cussons was known for her poetry works in Afrikaans, produced in ten volumes. Cussons was born on 9 August 1922 in Moravia, near Piketberg in the Cape Province. She published her poetry over a period of 33 years with her first volume, *Plektrum*, appearing in 1970. She won awards such as the Hertzog prize, the WA Hofmeyr prize which she won twice and the Ingrid Jonker, Eugene Marais and CNA prizes.

25 November 2016 Fidel Castro passed on

90-year old former First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba and President of the Council of State, Fidel Castro died of natural causes on the evening of 25 November 2016. Castro, a founder of the Cuban revolution,



staunch supporter to the anti-colonial movements in Africa, was one of the defining leaders of the 20th century.

25 November 2011 Solar eclipse over Antarctica

The partial solar eclipse, with the moon covering about 80% of the sun is visible only in the most Southern Hemisphere areas, including South Africa. The eclipse was used to create awareness amongst thousands of school children.

25 November 2017 Minga and the Broken Spoon

Cameroon's first animated film, *Minga and the Broken Spoon* was released by Cledley Productions, based on a national folk tale. An orphaned girl accidentally breaks a spoon washing dishes in the river, and her furious stepmother tells her to find the only identical spoon that was hidden by her late mother.

26 November 1919 Corner stone of the Union Buildings laid

The Union Buildings is the seat of the South African govern-

ment and is situated in the capital city, Pretoria, now known as Tshwane. It was designed by Sir Herbert Baker in 1908 and the building started in 1909. On 26 November, 1910, the cornerstone was laid, with completion intended for 1913. The construction of the Union Buildings took approximately 1,265 artisans and labourers. Almost fourteen million bricks were used for the interior office walls. South African stone was used throughout the building, with most of the mountain stone quarried on the site.



26 November 1953 First woman to win Formula 1 racing born

Desiré Randall Wilson was born on 26 November 1953 in Brakpan. Wilson is a former racing driver who is one of only five women to have competed in

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Formula One. In 1980 she won the Formula One race at Brands Hatch in the British Aurora F1 series. The win made her the only woman to ever hold the Formula One title. Wilson also competed in CARTS and sports car racing. A book documenting her life as a racing driver titled 'Driven by Desire' has been published.

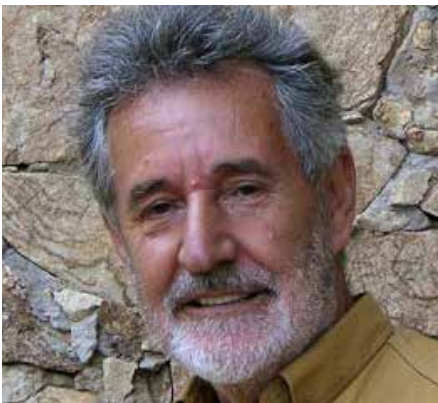
26 November 1957

Simon Nkoli born

South African gay rights and anti-apartheid activist was born in Soweto. He was the founder of the Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand (GLOW), a leader of the United Democratic Front and was charged with Treason in the famous Delmas trial. Nkoli founded and organised the first Pride March in Johannesburg. The Market Theatre in 2023 features an opera about his life, *The Vogue Opera*.

26 November 1975

Afrikaans Author Breyten Breytenbach sentenced as a "Terrorist"



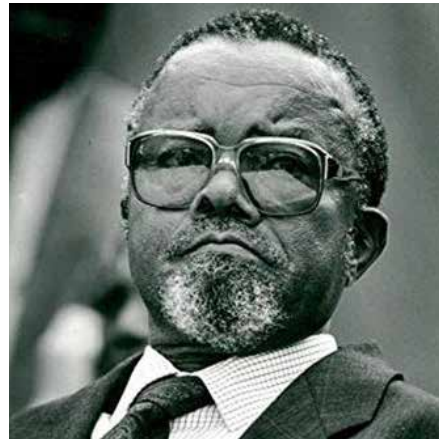
On an illegal trip to South Africa with a false passport, writer Breyten Breytenbach was betrayed, arrested and sentenced to nine years imprisonment for high treason under the Terrorism Act by the Pretoria Supreme Court. He had pleaded guilty for entering South Africa to start an organ-

isation Atlas or Okhela, a resistance group fighting apartheid in exile and was intended to be the White wing of the banned African National Congress (ANC). He served seven years as a political prisoner until his release in December 1982 amid international intervention.

26 November 1988

Struggle Icons

Harry Gwala and Zeph Mothopeng released



Two members of the banned liberation movements, Harry Gwala (ANC) and Zephania Mothopeng (PAC) were released from Robben Island. Both Gwala (1920-1995) and Mothopeng (1913-1990) served two terms on Robben Island for their political activities. After the banning of the ANC in 1960, Gwala became active in ANC underground structures until his arrest in 1964. He was charged and convicted for sabotage and recruiting members for uMkhonto weSizwe (MK). In 1972 he was released from prison and restricted to Pietermaritzburg. After the workers strike in August 1976, Gwala was arrested again with scores of ANC members, charged under the Terrorism Act and sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island. In the 1980s, Gwala developed a motor neuron disease which left him disabled. Mothopeng was ar-

rested in 1963 and sentenced in May 1964 to 3 years in prison for furthering the aims of the banned PAC. He was released in 1967 and restricted to QwaQwa for two years. Mothopeng continued with his political activities and was arrested in 1976 under the Terrorism Act and was sentenced to 15 years in prison on 26 June 1979. Even after their release, both men remained politically active within their respective organizations. Mothopeng died on 23 October 1990 and Gwala died of a heart failure on 21 June 1995.

27 November 1929

ANCWL and ANC Stalwart Winkie Direko born on this day



Isabella Winkie Direko, former teacher, winner of the Bloemfontein of the Year Award in 1993, Premier of the Free State from 1999-2004 and a member of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), was born in Botshabelo. Direko served in numerous positions in the educational and development fields, including as President of the National Council of African Women, a member of the Council of Vista University and Chancellor of the Free State University. Direko also played a leading role in the Girl Guides Association of South Africa and was a council member of NICRO

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

and the Child Welfare Organisation. In 2001 she obtained an M Ed degree at the University of the Free State. Mam Direko passed away on 17 February 2012 at the age of 83 years.

27 November 1987 Namibian artist John Ndevasia Muafangejo passed on



John Muafangejo was born at Etunda lo Nghadi, Angola in 1943. He grew up in a traditional homestead herding cattle during the day, playing communal and literary games, with their strong moral and philosophical content. This influenced his artistic work, with its strong autobiographical subject matter. He attended St Mary's Anglican mission school at Odibo in Namibia where his artistic skills were recognized, and trained at Rorke's Drift from 1968 to 1969 before returning to teach and establish an art school at St Mary's in 1971. He held his first of several solo exhibitions in Windhoek and represented South Africa at the Sao Paulo Biennale. He applied to attend the Michaelis School of Art in Cape Town but his application was rejected. In 1974 he took up the position of artist-in-residence at Rorke's Drift, producing his unique colour woodcuts. He held an exhibition at the African Art Centre in Durban and in 1976, participated

in the Brooklyn Museum's exhibition 'Black South Africa: Graphic Art'. Muafangejo returned to Namibia in 1977, continuing to participate in various global exhibitions. He died in 1987 at Katutura Township, Windhoek. In 1988, the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown hosted a retrospective exhibition of his work. A second retrospective was held at the Museum of Modern Art at Oxford in England between 1990 and 1992. Muafangejo is best known for his linocuts of figures, religious and historical scenes. His work can be seen in public galleries throughout South Africa."

[Source: <https://www.lifewithart.com/artists/john-muafangejo.html>]

27 November 1995 Rwanda Genocide Tribunal gets on the way

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), set up by the UN Security Council, got underway in Arusha, Tanzania, prosecuting those responsible for the 1994 Rwanda Genocide who saw close to a million people massacred, whilst Africa and the world watched. The genocide prompted the African Union in its Constitutive Act to shift from the OAU principle of 'non-interference', to the principle of non-indifference. The ICTR was the first international tribunal to deliver

verdicts for persons responsible for genocide, and also the first to recognize rape as a means of perpetuating genocide.

27 November 1996 SA severed diplomatic ties with Taiwan

South Africa announces its decision to sever diplomatic ties with Taiwan, in recognition of the one-China policy.

28 November 1907 King Leopold II hands over administration of Congo to Belgium

In the 1880s, following the 'scramble for Africa', the Congo belonged to King Leopold II of Belgium, the only private colony of the time. Leopold's administration of the Congo was ruthless and brutal, eventually leading to the death of over 10 million Congolese in his État Indépendant du Congo (Congo Free State). His rule resulted in the culling of African elephants for ivory, clearing natural forests for rubber plantations, amongst other environmental devastations wreck on nature and humans. Africans, employed as labourers by the company, were subjected to extreme levels of violence to ensure that they met the targets set for them by the officials. Atrocities committed by colonial officials in



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the Congo are chronicled in Conrad's book *"The Heart of Darkness"*, which was to be the most graphic account of the excesses committed by colonial officials on their subjects in Africa.

28 November 1934 ANCWL stalwart Bertha Gxowa born



The anti-apartheid activist, ANC Women's League leader and trade unionist Bertha Gxowa (né Mashaba) was born in Germiston and attended school in Thokoza. She joined the ANC Youth League during its campaign against Bantu education, started work in the South African Clothing and Textile Workers Union, and volunteered during the Defiance campaign in Krugersdorp, when she was arrested for the first time. She was at the founding conference of the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW), which adopted the first Women's Charter in 1954, and two years later helped mobilise for the 1956 Women's March to Pretoria. She was one of the famous 1956 Treason Trialists, and was banned under the Suppression of Communism Act. She was part of the rebuilding of the ANC after its unbanning in 1990, with Thokoza as one of its largest branches. She served as ANC Women's League Treasurer, and a Member of Parliament. Mam

Bertha Gxowa passed away on 19 October 2010.

28 November 1951 Trade unionist Clements Kadalie passed on

Trade unionist, Lameck Koniwaka Kadalie Muwamba, known by his adopted name, Clements Kadalie, was born in April 1896, in Nyasaland, now Malawi. After schooling at the Church of Scotland mission station, he was trained as a teacher. In 1915, he went to South Africa in search of work. Three years later, he settled in Cape Town and befriended activist and trade unionist, Arthur F. Batty. Kadalie established the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) in 1919, to protect the rights of workers, particularly those of Black workers. In the same year, Kadalie led a dockworker's strike, in which all goods were prevented from being exported at Cape Town's harbour. By 1927 the ICU had around 100,000 members. Kadalie welcomed cooperation with other organizations, such as the Communist Party of South Africa (now SACP). Due to his activities, Kadalie was classified as a "prohibited immigrant" and was deported from South Africa in 1924. By 1928, the ICU was marked by internal strife, and in the same year Kadalie was forced to resign. He then established his own branch of the ICU in East London and became a provincial African National Congress (ANC) organiser. On 28 November 1951, he passed away in East London.

28 November 1987 South African Airways Boeing 747 crashes into Indian Ocean

SAA flight 295, a Boeing 747 called Helderberg was en route

from Taiwan to then Jan Smuts International airport (now OR Tambo International) in Johannesburg crashed. Reports indicated that the plane experienced a catastrophic fire in its cargo area and crashed in the Indian Ocean near the island of Mauritius, killing all 159 passengers and crew aboard. The government appointed Judge Margo to investigate the causes of the crash, but no conclusions were reached as to the causes of the crash, especially since some of the air traffic control tapes of the incident were alleged to have gone missing. The Margo commission's inconclusive findings spurred many theories, the most persistent that the plane carried substances for the security forces (including mercury and other dangerous substances), which caused the fire that led to the crash. The matter also served before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1996. A decade after the crash, it was discovered that apartheid South Africa's chief oil sanctions buster, who was also a director of the IDC, also perished on the flight.

28 November 2009 Moses Mabhida Stadium officially opens



The stadium in eThekweni, completed for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, was named after SACP Secretary General, opened on this day.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

22–28 November 2025

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

25 November

International day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women 2025 is commemorated under the theme: **“UNiTE to End Digital Violence against All Women and Girls”**. Violence against women and girls affects one in three women. It is a global human rights emergency that must stop. As the world marks the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – one of the most progressive international agreements on women’s rights to date – the UN Secretary-General’s UNiTE 2025 campaign focuses on one of the fastest-growing forms of abuse: digital violence against women and girls. This year’s campaign is also a reminder that digital safety is central to gender equality.

What is digital abuse?

Digital tools are increasingly being used to stalk, harass, and abuse women and girls. This includes:

- Image-based abuse/ non-consensual sharing of intimate images – often called revenge porn or leaked nudes.
- Cyberbullying, trolling, and online threats.
- Online harassment and sexual harassment.
- AI-generated deepfakes such as sexually explicit images, deepfake pornography, and digitally manipulated images, videos or audio.
- Hate speech and disinformation on social media platforms.
- Doxxing – publishing private information.
- Online stalking or surveillance/tracking to monitor someone’s activities.
- Online grooming and sexual exploitation.
- Catfishing and impersonation.
- Misogynistic networks – e.g. manosphere, incel forums.

These acts don’t just happen online. They often lead to offline violence in real life (IRL), such as coercion, physical abuse, and even femicide – killing of women and girls. The harm can be long-lasting

and affect survivors over a prolonged period of time.

Digital violence targets women more than men, across all walks of life, but especially those with public or online visibility – such as activists, journalists, women in politics, human rights defenders, and young women.

The impact is even worse for women facing intersecting forms of discrimination, including race, disability, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

Why is digital abuse so hard to stop?

- Weak regulation of the technology sector or lack of legal recognition of digital violence in countries.
- Lack of accountability from tech platforms and social networking sites.
- Normalization of violence in manosphere spaces.
- Artificial Intelligence creating new forms of abuse and amplifying digital violence.



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- Growing backlash against gender equality.
- Anonymity of perpetrators and cross-border abuse make it harder to get justice.
- Limited support systems for survivors of cyberbullying or personal data leaks.

This day also marks the first day of the **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (25 November – 10 December)**.

25 November

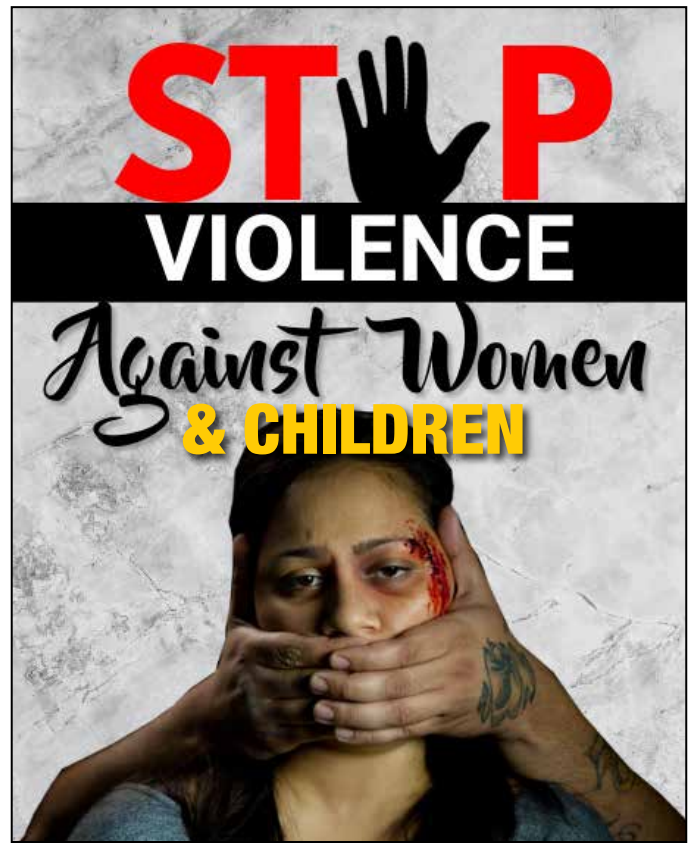
International Systems Engineer Day

The system that is sending and receiving your email, your company website, social media platforms, the file sharing system you use at work. These are just some examples of systems you may be using that someone somewhere designed, built and tested before empowering you with it to use. We may call them many things, such as Engineers, Systems Engineers, Infrastructure Engineers, Systems Integrators, Architects, Systems Analysts and so forth; they are at the heart of innovation and technology developments. (<https://www.systemsengineerday.com>)

26 November

World Olive Tree Day

The olive tree, with its roots in the Mediterranean, is a universal symbol of peace and harmony. Growing across five continents, olives provide jobs, security and natural resources to rural communities around the world. As an agent against global warming, olive trees have a positive carbon balance – they take more CO₂ out of the atmosphere than is emitted during the olive oil production process. Olive oil and table olives are a proven source of nutrition,



and key ingredients in the many diet. They offer a wide variety of aromas and flavours and enhance a unique cuisine that is gaining interest from renowned chefs around the world. The ability of their multiple medicinal and nutritional properties to prevent certain diseases is now widely recognised. Although the olive producing market in South Africa is still small, it is big business, with just 11 producers owning most of the country's olive groves, mainly in the Karoo region of the Western Cape. Olive growers also tend to process and package their own olive oils and olive packaging.

25 November - 10 December

16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women and Children

