



ANC TODAY

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7–13 August 2026

9 AUGUST 2026

NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



CELEBRATING 70 YEARS OF THE **HEROIC**

*Happy
Women's
Day*

1956 WOMEN'S MARCH

We pay tribute to the brave and valiant women who marched to the Union Buildings.



CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PRESIDENT

Conversations *with the*
President

The just energy transition is gathering pace and creating opportunity

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

ON the Mpumalanga highveld, between the towns of Bethal, Dav-el and Morgenzon, are powerful symbols of South Africa's energy future. Wind turbines rise above a landscape that was once dominated by the cooling towers of coal-fired power stations.

The wind turbines form part of the first phase of the Ummbila Emoyeni wind farm that entered into commercial operation last week. The facility has been built by Seriti Green, a subsidiary of Seriti Resources, a proudly South African company.

This is a demonstration that South Africa's clean energy investments are not only being driven from abroad, but also by domestic firms with the foresight to invest in their country's future.

The 155 MW of clean energy generated by the 25 wind tur-

bines will be wheeled through Eskom's transmission network to supply Seriti's coal mining operations. Once completed, this 900 MW hybrid energy cluster will comprise wind, solar and battery storage. Once fully operational, it will be the largest hybrid energy facility in the country.

The Ummbila Emoyeni project is an important contribution to South Africa's evolving energy mix. The 2025 Integrated Resource Plan aims to achieve a diversified portfolio of energy sources that relies more on wind and solar, and a reduced share of coal, supported by gas, battery storage and nuclear power.

Since the late 1800s, the coalfields of Mpumalanga have helped industrialise our country. Coal miners, artisans and power station workers in Mpumalanga have produced the electricity to power our mines, factories, businesses, hospitals, schools and

homes.

It is therefore significant that it is on the Mpumalanga highveld where some of the energy systems of tomorrow are being built, while drawing on the strengths and resources we already possess, including coal-fired power.

Even though coal continues to dominate South Africa's energy mix, the growth of renewable energy is accelerating.

According to Statistics SA, in 2016 renewable energy supplied just 2% of locally generated electricity. By 2021 that number had risen to 6% and by 2024 renewables accounted for 9% of local electricity generation. The country now has close to 16 GW of installed renewable capacity, with 32 GW of projects now in the grid connection process and expected to connect by 2030.

The installation of rooftop solar



by households and businesses has exceeded expectations. According to Statistics SA, there has been an 86% increase in households with solar panels over just a three-year period, totalling 675,000 households in 2025.

The investment in clean energy technologies, which was accelerated by load shedding in recent years, was enabled by far-reaching legislative and regulatory reforms.

The removal of the self-generation licensing threshold and the revival of the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme unlocked large-scale private investment in electricity generation. Attracting clean energy investment supports our climate com-

mitments while promoting inclusive growth and job creation.

At this year's South Africa Investment Conference more than R50 billion in green energy investment commitments were announced. We also released South Africa's first Energy Infrastructure Invest-

ment Prospectus, a coordinated pipeline of investment-ready projects across the electricity value chain.

Secure, reliable and affordable energy is critical to growing industry, developing our economy and improving the lives of citizens.

The just energy transition is not only about protecting affected communities, workers and businesses from the impact of the shift towards renewable energy. 'Going green' must also make electricity cheaper for consumers.

That is why we are working to establish a competitive electricity market in which several operators will compete to provide elec-

tricity most efficiently and at the lowest cost.

Last week, Cabinet approved the publication of the Revised Electricity Pricing Policy and the draft Electricity Sector Market Transformation Position Paper for public comment. Also in the past week, I received a progress report from the task team working towards the establishment of a fully independent state-owned entity responsible for transmission and the operation of the electricity market.

The opening of the Ummbila Emoyeni facility in Mpumalanga and the clean energy revolution underway bear witness to a country that, even when confronted with an energy crisis, adapted, reformed and laid the groundwork for a new future.

It is now incumbent on government, working with business, labour and civil society, to ensure that South Africa's energy transition delivers for all.

It must be a transition that is inclusive, that expands opportunity and that leaves communities stronger than before. Most importantly, it must deliver affordable electricity for all, now and into the future. ■



Current energy system dominated by FOSSIL FUELS:

- Carbon intensive
- Affects human health and environment
- Increasing price trend



Future energy system dominated by RENEWABLE ENERGY:

- Low carbon emissions
- Better for health and environment
- Decreasing price trend



VETERANS' Voices

Malibongwe igama lamakhosikazi

Tribute by Comrade Mac Maharaj at the Memorial Service of the late
Cde Shantie Naidoo Tweedie

DEAR Dominic, members of the Naidoo and Pillay families, comrades and friends, thank you for inviting me to speak at this profoundly moving occasion.

We are gathered today to bid farewell to Shantie and to celebrate a life lived with courage, dignity and unwavering commitment.

Shantie was born into a family whose roots lay deep in South Africa's liberation struggle. Her grandfather, Thambi Naidoo, was among the founders of organised political resistance within the Indian community and one of Mahatma Gandhi's closest comrades during the early passive resistance campaigns.

Her father, Thambi Naran "Roy" Naidoo, inherited and carried forward that tradition. Her mother, too, paid the price of resistance, serving at least two prison terms during the Passive Resistance Campaign of 1946-48.

Shantie matriculated in 1953, just as tragedy struck the family. Her father died in the prime of his life, leaving Shantie and her brothers, Indres, Murthi and Prema, to find work so that the family could survive. Responsibility came early, and she accepted it without complaint.



Then came the darkest years of apartheid.

The Sharpeville massacre, the banning of the ANC and the PAC, the destruction of the Congress Alliance and SACTU, the introduction of detention without trial in 1963, and the Rivonia arrests created the impression that organised resistance had been crushed. Torture in detention became the norm. Banning orders became instruments of everyday repression, silencing individuals and isolating activists from society.

Shantie became one of those targets.

In December 1963 she was served with a five-year banning order. During its operation she was arrested twice for allegedly breaching its harsh restrictions. When that order expired, the state simply imposed another, even more severe, five-year banning order in December 1968.

On 19 June 1969 she was detained under the Terrorism Act.

Later that year, twenty-two activists including Samson Ndou and Winnie Mandela, were placed on trial for allegedly furthering the aims of the banned ANC. The state called upon Shantie to testify. She refused.



The consequences were severe. Judge Bekker sent word encouraging her to reconsider. Her family could easily have urged her to comply to secure her freedom. Instead, they stood firmly behind her decision. Shantie accepted two months' imprisonment rather than betray her comrades.

Even after completing that sentence, she remained in detention without trial.

In all, she spent 371 days in detention before being released.

Seeking nothing more than the freedom to leave the country and join her sister Ramnie in the UK, she applied for an exit permit. The authorities repeatedly refused. When permission was finally granted in March 1971, her banning order prevented her from travelling to the airport. Only

in September 1972 was she finally allowed to leave South Africa.

This brief account scarcely captures the fortitude required to endure such sustained persecution. It speaks of extraordinary courage in the face of relentless brutality. It tells of an unbending commitment to principle. It also tells of a remarkable family, one prepared to endure continued suffering rather than ask their daughter to abandon her comrades or betray the cause to which she had dedicated herself. Above all, it reminds us what repression under apartheid actually meant in the lives of ordinary people.

Yet there is another story woven through Shantie's life: the indispensable role of women in South Africa's struggle for freedom. Nondwe Mankahla, who recent-

ly celebrated her ninetieth birthday, also refused to testify and served a prison sentence rather than betray her comrades. Joyce Sikhakane and Rita Ndzanga faced enormous pressure during detention to turn state's witness but remained steadfast. Together with Martha Dlamini, Thokozile Mngoma and other women in the case, they demonstrated a truth that history has repeatedly confirmed: women were not simply participants in the liberation struggle – they were among its strongest pillars.

As we celebrate Shantie's life today, we also honour the millions of South Africans – and especially the women – whose courage, sacrifice and steadfastness made our democracy possible and helped secure a Constitution founded on the values embodied in the Freedom Charter of 1955.

In the "Long Walk to 'Freedom'" published in 1994 Nelson Mandela reminded us that with the achievement of democracy, we had taken only the first step to freedom. The greater and more difficult task still lay ahead: building a South Africa that truly belongs to all who live in it; a society founded on non-racialism, non-sexism, justice and equality; a country whose people live not only in peace with one another, but in friendship with the peoples of our continent and of the world.

That remains our unfinished task.

The finest tribute we can pay to Shantie is not simply to remember her courage, but to continue the work to which she dedicated her life – to build the South Africa for which she devoted her life.

Malibongwe igama lamak-hosikazi. ■

PHILA PORTIA NDWANDWE

Memory and Betrayals

■ By **VUSI MAVIMBELA**

AS we observe the South African Women Month this August, we simultaneously commemorate the ultimate sacrifice these women made in the struggle for liberation. It is important never to forget that behind that ultimate sacrifice, there were dark shadows, turncoats and Askaris that facilitated the hand of Apartheid butchers and slaughterers. Memory of yesterday is a weapon against betrayal of today.

Makhosi Nyoka, Lindiwe Mthembu, June-Rose Cothoza

We received news that on 8 June 1988, a minibus carrying comrades from Swaziland to Durban had been ambushed near Piet Retief, and three young women comrades, Makhosi Nyoka, Lindiwe Mthembu and June-Rose Cothoza had been killed, together with an Indian male comrade, Surendra Lenny Naidu.

I had seen these comrades before they were sold out to their treacherous death. Even in their absence their young and innocent eyes continued to flutter about in my mind like beautiful butterflies in search of a world of truth and validation. They were driven by the ideal of comradeship, common good and the common struggle that could yield liberation and emancipation in the fullness of their sacrifice. They had not calculated the betrayal that was soon



to come clothed in erstwhile comradeship and turncoats. These were young lives full of idealism and youthful optimism, with their souls burning unquenchably in the wind of promising possibilities that lay in front of them.

They were all unarmed when they were ambushed and the vehicle they were travelling in was riddled with bullets. Weapons were planted on them to suggest that they were carrying weapons, and

that they had fired at the police.

In their amnesty application, the perpetrators confessed that one of their agents had infiltrated the underground Natal machinery to which these comrades belonged.

The unit of perpetrators comprised of Eugene de Kock, Frederick Johannes Pienaar, Christo Petro Deetlefs, Paul Jacobus van Dyk, Cornelius Johannes Botha, Douw Gerbrandt Willemse, Leon

William John Flores, Jury Bernardus Hayes and Gerrie Johan Barnard. They were all granted amnesty for the crimes.

The minibus that carried Makhosi Nyoka and her comrades was, in fact, driven by an Askari, Lieutenant Silulami Mose, from the Luthuli Detachment. These Apartheid units and death squads operated from the Vlakplaas Farm, from Security Branch offices in Piet Retief, and as part of the Port Natal Security Branch in Durban.

Phila Portia Ndwandwe

Four months later, on an October day in 1988, a comrade of mine who was part of our leadership echelon in the underground in Swaziland, sent an urgent message requesting to see me. As it was often the case with the treacherous underground working conditions in that country, we agreed to meet under the cover of darkness in the evening of the same day at a venue in Mbabane. I primed my pistol and holstered it securely on my belt. I put a few hand grenades in a holding panel in the inside of the driver's door and set out on a drive to the evening rendezvous. As pre-agreed, the comrade emerged out of the shadows, opened the front passenger door of my car and quickly slid into the passenger seat.

We both looked around, scanning the environment for any possible surveillance or for any suspicious movement as we proceeded to exchange comradely greetings. She immediately got onto the point of why she had requested for the urgent appointment. She told me that Zandi, also called Zandile (Phila Portia Ndwandwe) was nowhere to be found. Zandi was Phila's nom de guerre,



and she was a crucial part of our underground structure in Swaziland. Importantly, she was one of the leading figures attached to what had become a beleaguered Natal Machinery.

The previous day, one of the comrades had driven Ndwandwe to George Hotel in Manzini where she met two men who behaved like her acquaintances. After happily greeting them, she had left together with them in their car. Ndwandwe had told the driver who had accompanied her to the venue not to worry about her and that she would meet him later. The two men had been comrades who had been infiltrated into the country but, unbeknown to Ndwandwe and all of us in the underground, had turned coat and became Askaris working with the Apartheid police.

Ndwandwe was part of the reconnaissance machinery responsible for the infiltration route from Swaziland into South Africa, which made us suspect that her kidnapping wasn't completely unconnected with the two am-

bushes that had taken place near Piet Retief four months earlier. One ambush had taken place on 8 June and involved the Makhosi group, but the other had happened on 12 June and involved a separate group of all-male comrades. We were correct in our suspicion, although we had no direct proof at the time. The truth was revealed through TRC amnesty applications, which showed that some of those involved in her kidnapping and subsequent murder were also involved in the ambushes that had killed the other comrades.

When my comrade finished delivering the unnerving news to me, I immediately felt like our very rendezvous was under surveillance. We looked at each other, and again scanned the dark environment around us as we exchanged views on what could have happened. Two immediate thoughts came into our conversation at that time; Ndwandwe had been lured away and kidnapped by people she knew or, she had defected to the enemy. My comrade further told me that Ndwandwe had nothing in her possession when she went for the appointment except for the clothes she was wearing at the time and a small handbag.

When we met in my car, it was already more than twenty-four hours since Ndwandwe's disappearance. That was worryingly a long spell of time in underground military and combat work (MCW) where one member's very life and death depended on the next member's undivided loyalty to the cause, where every minutes that passed by and we could not provide credible information about her whereabouts spelled imminent danger and possible death. What gave us a glimmer of hope

that she had not defected was that there was no immediate noticeable enemy follow-up in terms of the information she had about our underground structures; there had been no raids on houses that she knew about in Swaziland and no reported arrests of unit members she serviced inside South Africa. Nonetheless, we took the safe route and agreed to give immediate instructions to all units that Ndwandwe knew about, both inside the country and in Swaziland, to change codes of communication, to vacate houses and get rid of the cars that they had been using in coordinating operations with her.

The two of us also had to immediately embark on survival adjustments of our own. We reassured to each other the need to take extra care, she opened the passenger door and slid out into the night.

Ndwandwe's disappearance was very hard news to swallow. I had not met a more congenial and down-to-earth underground operative in my work in Swaziland. She was a warmly reassuring comrade to work with and that is partly why I could not seriously countenance that she had defected. At the time of her disappearance, her baby Thabani was only two months old. For her to defect and leave behind such a young baby did not make much logic. My commiserations went to Bheki Mabuza, the father of the baby and the man who had driven the car that clandestinely picked me up from the Mozambique border and drove me in the dead of night into the heart of Swaziland to join underground structures which I now oversaw.

Although I was more inclined to believe that Ndwandwe had been

hoodwinked and then kidnapped by Askaris or underground operatives she serviced inside South Africa, I did not completely rule out defection. Over many years of struggle, I had learnt that the human mind is like a thick and dark forest that can also be inhabited by unknown apparitions and wild beasts. Which one of those animals would leap into the open at any given time depends on the threshold of an individual's frailties or the outer limits of their fortitude and integrity. It is always foolhardy to assume that the human mind is knowable; it is extremely naïve to assume that it can be studied like a book and be passed magna cum laude like an examination. During the struggle, I learnt always to leave room for disappointment. Over the decades, we had managed to unmask enemy spies even in the most uncharacteristic individuals. Therefore, I developed a simple dictum for myself: believe with your heart but trust with your mind!

As soon as my comrade shut the car door behind her and melted into what had now turned into a

suffocating evening, something else happened to me. I began to experience palpable panic attacks; it dawned on me that Ndwandwe knew my underground hideout in one of the suburbs of Mbabane. A few months before her disappearance, several comrades in the Natal Machinery to which we belonged had been withdrawn to Lusaka and Angola for security questioning. Both at headquarters in Lusaka and amongst us in Swaziland, there were strong suspicions that enemy agents within us were informing the apartheid regime about operatives and planned operations in the Swaziland and inside the country, especially in Natal. The Natal Machinery seemed to be the most beleaguered of all our underground outfits in Swaziland.

The recall of some of these operatives resulted in a shortage of personnel in our underground structures, forcing us to multi-task. It was in those circumstances when we were compelled to share some key operational resources, including hideouts

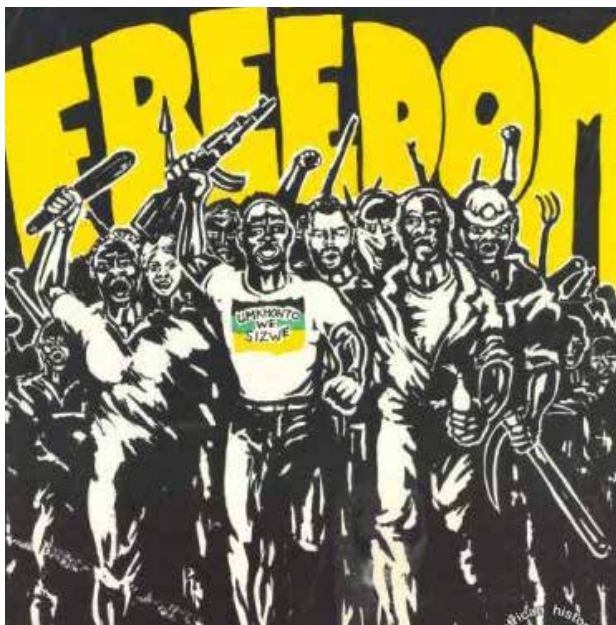


and cars, contrary to strict prescripts of underground work. Under the circumstances we had little choice because, doing nothing would have resulted in the work coming to a standstill.

Apart from apartheid spies that had infiltrated our ranks, collaboration between the apartheid police and their Swazi counterparts was at a very high level. We were under siege from all quarters – enemy agents from within our ranks, Swazi police collaborators and the South African police with their death squads.

Following the attainment of political liberation in South Africa, Apartheid police members from the Port Natal Security Branch testified at the Ndwandwe amnesty hearings organised through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) which took place from 9 to 19 November 1998. They confessed that they were involved in her abduction and murder. The group included Andrew Taylor, Hendrik Botha, Jakobus Forster, Lawrence Wassermann, Salmon du Preez and Johannes Steyn. They further testified that after Ndwandwe's abduction, they took her back to South Africa where she was interrogated and left naked for 10 days. She was then killed execution-style at the Elandskop farm in KwaZulu-Natal. This farm was often used as a security branch safe-house.

The members also unanimously testified that, after 10 full days of her resistance to torture and refusal to turn into a collaborator and Askari, she was struck with a baton on her head before she was shot in the head whilst kneel-



ing naked on the ground. Brutality and savagery unsurpassed!

They then prepared a shallow grave at that Elandskop farm as they disposed of her clothes. They covered her naked body with lime, plastic bags and refuse in order to create the impression her grave was a dumping site. They were already trying to forestall an investigation that they predicted might take place in the future. At the time of the exhumation, a blue plastic bag was found around the waist of her remains, and one of her murderers testified that she had worn it as a 'panty' to uphold her female dignity.

The perpetrators of Ndwandwe's murder were later granted amnesty based on the disclosures they made. However, although the identity of the two black male Askaris that fetched her from Goerge Hotel in Swaziland were well known among Ndwandwe's comrades that worked in the underground Natal Machinery in Swaziland, the TRC declined to name them publicly in the proceedings. To the chagrin of the family and disappointment to Ndwandwe's fellow comrades from

the underground, as per its terms of reference, the TRC had decided that the two were not directly linked to Ndwandwe's murder. It was little comfort to Ndwandwe's comrades who remembered that Solomon 'Kalushi' Mahlangu was hanged by the apartheid regime under the controversial legal doctrine of "common purpose" that treated collective association as collective guilt.

Following the exhumation, the TRC handed the remains to her family after she had been missing for about 10 years. The reburial took place on 12 March 1997 and it had the honour of being addressed by President Nelson Mandela.

Ndwandwe is one of the most outstanding female guerrilla figures in the history of South Africa. In 2003 she received the Order of Mendi for Bravery in Silver for demonstrating bravery and valour and for sacrificing her life for her comrades in the struggle for a democratic South Africa.

Repeating the memory and the ultimate sacrifice of these women in struggle is a celebration of women's fortitude and triumph against betrayal. It is to say:

"The dearest possession of any person is life. It is given only once, and it must not be lived only to feel tortured by regrets for wasted years or to know the burning shame of a mean and petty past; so live that when dying you have the right to say: all my life, all my strength was given to the finest cause in the world – the fight for the liberation of humankind".
(Nikolai Ostrovsky - **How the Steel Was Tempered**). ■



Every Vote Must Be Earned

Edited extracts from an address by ANC NEC member and North West deployee **COMRADE BUTI MANAMELA** to a regional meeting of ANC ward councillor candidates and PR nominees in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda Region,

3 August 2026

THE African National Congress approaches the forthcoming local government elections in circumstances radically different from those we have known before.

We cannot rely simply on our history, our symbols or the loyalty that communities have shown the ANC over many decades. Every vote must be earned. Every ward must be organised. Every candidate must demonstrate, through conduct and work, why the people should entrust the ANC with responsibility for their municipality.

This begins with the integrity of our own candidate-selection process. Names must be captured correctly. Identity documents, CVs and declarations must be submitted. Candidates must undergo the required vetting. The lists presented to the Provincial List Committee must be com-

plete, accurate and capable of withstanding scrutiny.

These requirements are not administrative inconveniences. They are part of rebuilding the integrity of the organisation.

A candidate who refuses vetting, provides incorrect information or fails to comply with the rules places not only themselves at risk, but the region, the province and the ANC itself.

The rules must apply equally to everybody.

A more difficult political terrain

The ANC enters these elections after a period of declining electoral support and growing public frustration. Communities are tired of promises which do not become water, roads, reliable electricity,

refuse removal, housing, jobs and safe neighbourhoods.

We also enter a more fragmented political environment.

The SACP has resolved to contest the local government elections independently. Whatever our individual views may be, this changes the electoral terrain, particularly in communities where ANC and SACP members have historically organised and campaigned together.

We must approach this reality with political maturity. We will not rebuild the ANC by insulting communists, denying the history of the Alliance or pretending that political differences do not exist. But an ANC candidate carries an unambiguous responsibility to campaign for the African National Congress and to implement its programme.

There are also formations drawing on the Forum for Service Delivery tradition and other local organisations that have built support around municipal failure. Their appeal does not arise principally from the brilliance of their ideology. It arises from the anger of communities where the ANC has not governed well, has not communicated or has appeared only during elections.

Our opponents do not create pot-holes for us. They do not interrupt water supplies for us. They do not produce our audit outcomes. They do not make our councillors inaccessible.

Where we fail to govern, we campaign for the opposition without their having to spend a cent.

Our response cannot be panic, insults or manipulation. It must be organisation, political clarity, credible candidates and demonstrable service.

The condition of local government

The conditions confronting the people of North West demand honesty from us.

The latest Auditor-General's report shows that, although there have been improvements in some municipalities, these have not yet produced the change in governance and service delivery that communities require.

Municipalities continue to confront unfunded budgets, going-concern difficulties, unauthorised expenditure, procurement failures and weaknesses in infrastructure management. The City of Matlosana was specifically identified as having regressed because political and adminis-



trative leadership did not consistently implement the required improvements.

These are not opposition slogans or factional allegations. They are recorded findings of the Auditor-General.

Behind every audit finding is a consequence for ordinary people. An unfunded budget means commitments are made without the resources to honour them. Weak procurement means public money is diverted from services or spent without value. Poor infrastructure management means a small defect becomes a major breakdown because maintenance was postponed.

The people do not experience government as separate national, provincial and local columns on an organogram. They experience one government.

When the tap is dry, residents do not ask which sphere failed. When refuse is not collected or sewage runs through a street,

they do not debate the constitutional division of powers. They say government has failed them. In many communities, they say the ANC has failed them.

We must have the courage to hear this without becoming defensive.

Councillorship is not a reward

Being nominated as an ANC candidate is not a reward. It is not compensation for years spent in a branch. It is not a pension for organisational service. It is not a licence to control employment, tenders or development projects. It does not make anyone the owner of a ward.

A councillor is a public representative and must therefore belong first to the people they are elected to serve.

Councillors must be available and accessible. They must convene community meetings and report back. They must know the con-



dition of water, sanitation, roads, electricity, housing and public facilities in their wards.

They must understand municipal budgets, Integrated Development Plans and audit reports. They must monitor municipal managers, interrogate expenditure and defend public resources.

A councillor who cannot understand the budget cannot protect the public purse. A councillor who never reads the Auditor-General's report cannot exercise oversight. A councillor who appears only when there is a funeral, a tender or an election is not serving the people.

ANC councillors must refuse corruption, even when it is proposed by a comrade. They must oppose patronage, even when it benefits their supporters. They must never use municipal employment to construct personal factions or convert ward committees into applause committees.

The people are not looking for councillors who can explain endlessly why nothing can be done.

They need leaders who identify problems, mobilise the relevant institutions, report progress and remain accountable until matters are resolved.

The task of the candidate

Between now and election day, every candidate has clear re-



The people are not looking for councillors who can explain endlessly why nothing can be done. They need leaders who identify problems, mobilise the relevant institutions, report progress and remain accountable until matters are resolved.

sponsibilities.

The first is to unite the organisation. Once internal processes have been concluded, there can be no private campaign against an ANC candidate. Those who were nominated but were not selected must not be treated as enemies; they must be integrated into the campaign.

The second is to know the ward: every voting district, every community, where support has grown and where it has declined, and which people have stopped voting.

The third is to organise continuously. Elections are not won through one rally. They are won household by household, street by street, village by village and voting district by voting district.

The fourth is to listen. Candidates must not arrive in communities with speeches before hearing what residents are saying.

Finally, candidates must defend the ANC through truth and work. We must speak confidently about what the ANC has achieved, but also acknowledge where we have failed and explain what will be done differently.

The people of North West do not owe the ANC their votes. We must earn them.

We will earn them by placing service above personal ambition, respecting communities and demonstrating that renewal is not merely a word in conference documents.

The title of councillor must recover its proper meaning: a person who listens, acts, accounts and serves. ■

The Republic Must Be Rebuilt from the Pavement Up

■ By **ANDILE LUNGISA**

AS South Africa prepares for the local government elections on 4 November 2026, we in the African National Congress must speak to the nation with honesty, humility and resolve.

We must resist the temptation to treat municipal elections as merely another contest between political parties. This election must become a national reckoning about the condition of local government and the future of the South African state. Municipalities are not the administrative basement of democracy. They are where democracy becomes visible, practical and measurable.

Parliament may pass laws, Cabinet may adopt policies and presidents may announce ambitious programmes, but it is the municipality that must ensure that water flows, sewage disappears, roads are maintained, refuse is collected and streetlights remain illuminated. A citizen does not encounter the Constitution primarily through a policy document in Pretoria. The citizen encounters it through the tap, the road, the municipal account, the robots, the building inspector and the refuse truck.

When these things work, democracy acquires meaning. When they fail, even the most progressive Constitution begins to resemble an expensive menu in a restaurant without a kitchen.



As the ANC, we must acknowledge that too many municipalities under our leadership have failed this elementary test of government. We cannot invoke the achievements of the democratic transition as an alibi for the failures of the democratic state. History may explain how we arrived here, but it cannot repair a burst water pipe or the unkept children's park.

Apartheid left us a brutally unequal inheritance, but three decades into democracy, we must also accept responsibility for what we have done, and failed to do, with the power entrusted to us.

We liberated South Africans from an unjust state. We must now prove that we can build a capable one.

In too many municipalities, political instability has paralysed administration. Factional battles have displaced public service. Cadre deployment, conceived as a means of transforming a hostile state, has been vulgarised into the appointment of the connected over the competent. Procurement has become a feeding scheme for political intermediaries that add no value. Councillors have interfered in administration, administrators have behaved like politicians and both have forgotten the citizen standing outside the municipal office.

This is not what generations of ANC members sacrificed for. Our struggle was never for the right of factional zombies and charlatans to inherit the habits of the old order. It was for the creation of a



democratic state capable of restoring dignity to ordinary people.

A city cannot grow if it cannot perform its basic functions. It cannot attract investment if electricity is unreliable, roads are deteriorating and sewage flows through communities. It cannot create employment if businesses spend their productive hours negotiating with bureaucratic delay and infrastructural collapse. Investors may agree with our policy documents and liberation history, but capital possesses the irritating habit of asking whether the lights work.

The ANC must therefore advance a new municipal compact. Developmental in ambition, professional in administration, ethical in conduct and measurable in performance.

We will stabilise municipal administrations by restoring the distinction between political leadership and professional management. Councillors must set policy, exercise oversight and represent communities. Qualified administrators must implement policy without improper political interference. A municipality cannot remain a revolving door through

which every faction marches with its own municipal manager, consultants and cousins.

We will strengthen accountability by making responsibility unmistakable. Every project must have an accountable executive, an approved budget, measurable milestones and a completion date. Where targets are missed, there must be consequences. Accountability cannot mean appointing a new committee to determine why an old committee ignored the recommendations of an even older committee.

We will restore financial discipline. Municipal budgets must be credible, funded and aligned with actual revenue. Public money is not an abstraction. It is the accumulated labour of workers, households and businesses, entrusted to government for the common good. Irregular expenditure must be investigated promptly, wasteful expenditure recovered where possible and officials responsible for financial misconduct held personally accountable.

We will professionalise municipal services. Engineers, planners, accountants, electricians, artisans, data specialists, cyberse-

curity experts, and administrators must be appointed because they can do the work. Transformation without competence is ultimately a betrayal of the very people transformation is intended to serve. A water-treatment plant cannot be repaired by revolutionary slogans, nor can a substation be persuaded into operation by a caucus resolution.

We will end the culture in which maintenance is neglected because political leaders prefer the ceremonial splendour of launching new infrastructure. A functioning pump is more valuable than a ribbon-cutting ceremony beside a broken one. Roads, substations, pipelines, wastewater-treatment plants and public buildings must have properly funded maintenance plans supported by modern monitoring systems.

We will introduce rigorous performance-management systems throughout local government. Senior officials and municipal departments must be evaluated against clear indicators- water losses, electricity interruptions, refuse-collection reliability, infrastructure uptime, revenue collection, response times and project completion rates. What is not

measured is easily disguised, and what is measured becomes much harder to explain away at the next branch meeting.

We will strengthen anti-corruption measures through independent investigations, protected reporting channels, lifestyle audits for officials in high-risk positions, digital expenditure monitoring and meaningful consequences for misconduct. Corruption is not merely the theft of money from a municipal account. It is water stolen from a household, employment stolen from a young person and dignity stolen from an entire community.

We must also be honest that incompetence and aimless corruption within our ranks has inflicted grave damage upon the moral authority of the ANC. We cannot continue condemning corruption in resolutions while accommodating it in practice. The movement cannot renew itself while protecting those who use its colours as camouflage for private accumulation and collapse of critical institutions. No comrade is more important than the community. No faction is more important than the Republic.

We will make procurement transparent from advertisement to final payment. Tender specifications, bid evaluations, awarded contracts, beneficial ownership, project milestones and payment records must be open to public scrutiny. Technology must be used to detect collusive bidding, inflated invoices, conflicts of interest, repeated awards and suspicious payments. Sunlight remains an excellent disinfectant, a searchable public database is even better.

Our movement must return to the

elementary ethic of public service that insists that leadership is a duty before it is a privilege. The ANC was not founded so that its members might become tenderpreneurs, bureaucratic aristocrats or absentee councillors. It was founded to organise the African majority, advance human dignity and build a South Africa belonging to all who live in it.

We therefore ask South Africans not for a blank cheque, nor for forgiveness without reform. We ask to be judged by the seriousness of our programme, the quality of our candidates and our willingness to correct our own failures. Loyalty to the ANC cannot mean indifference to incompetence. Indeed, the most loyal act an ANC member can perform today is to insist that the movement confronts its weaknesses before the electorate does so on its behalf.

The renewal of South Africa will not begin at another conference hall, in another slogan or through

another beautifully drafted resolution. It will begin when the tap works, the refuse is collected, the streetlight is repaired, the permit is processed and the municipal official remembers that the citizen is not an interruption of government business but the reason government exists.

Before South Africa can become a great nation in theory, it must become a functioning country in practice. The ANC once helped give South Africans political freedom. Our historic obligation now is to make that freedom administratively competent, economically productive and materially real.

That work begins in every ward, town and city – one repaired road, one honest tender, one competent appointment and one accountable municipality at a time. ■

Comrade Andile Lungisa is an ANC NEC Member and Former ANCYL Deputy President.

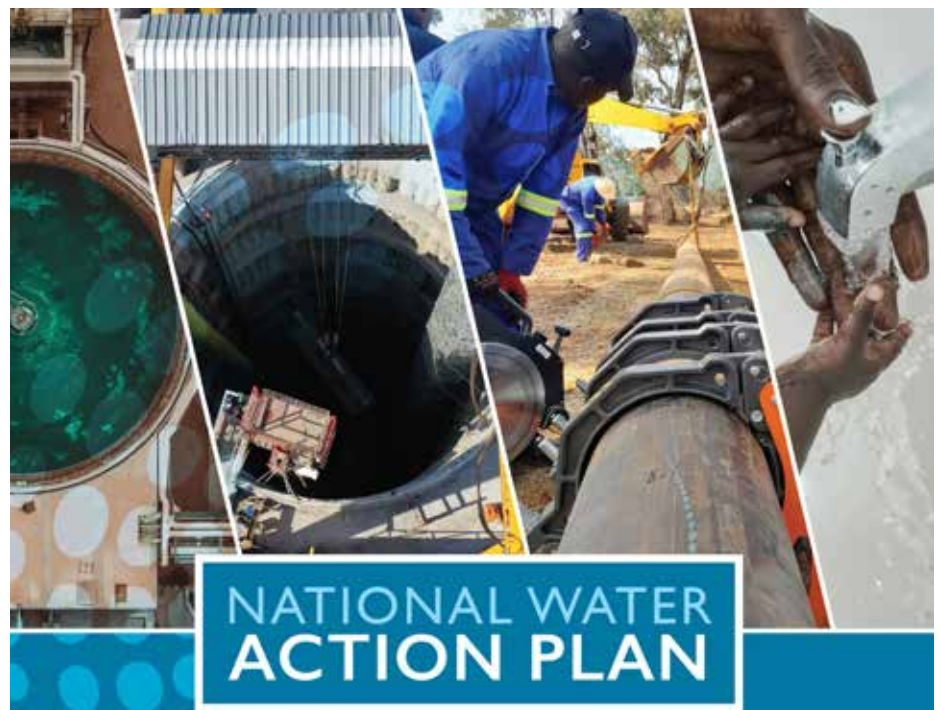


We are ready to turn the President's National Water Action Plan into results

■ By **DAVID MAHLOBO**

I recently had the honour of joining President Cyril Ramaphosa as he unveiled the National Water Action Plan, a bold and necessary roadmap to confront one of the greatest challenges facing our country. Since the Plan was released, I have followed the public conversation closely about its reception. I sense scepticism. Many South Africans believe this may become another well-intentioned government initiative that fails to produce meaningful change. After years of ageing infrastructure, recurring water outages, municipal dysfunction and institutional weakness, that scepticism is understandable. But this is precisely why the National Water Action Plan matters.

As the country moves towards the next local government elections, water will inevitably become one of the defining issues in public debate. And as it should. Citizens have every right to demand reliable water services and to hold public representatives accountable. What would be a mistake, however, is to reduce a national crisis to a political contest. However, as the Ministry of Water and Sanitation, we are not distracted by the politicking; our responsibility is to ensure that water reaches the people who need it most. This is why I believe the National Water Action Plan deserves the support of every South African, regardless of political affiliation.

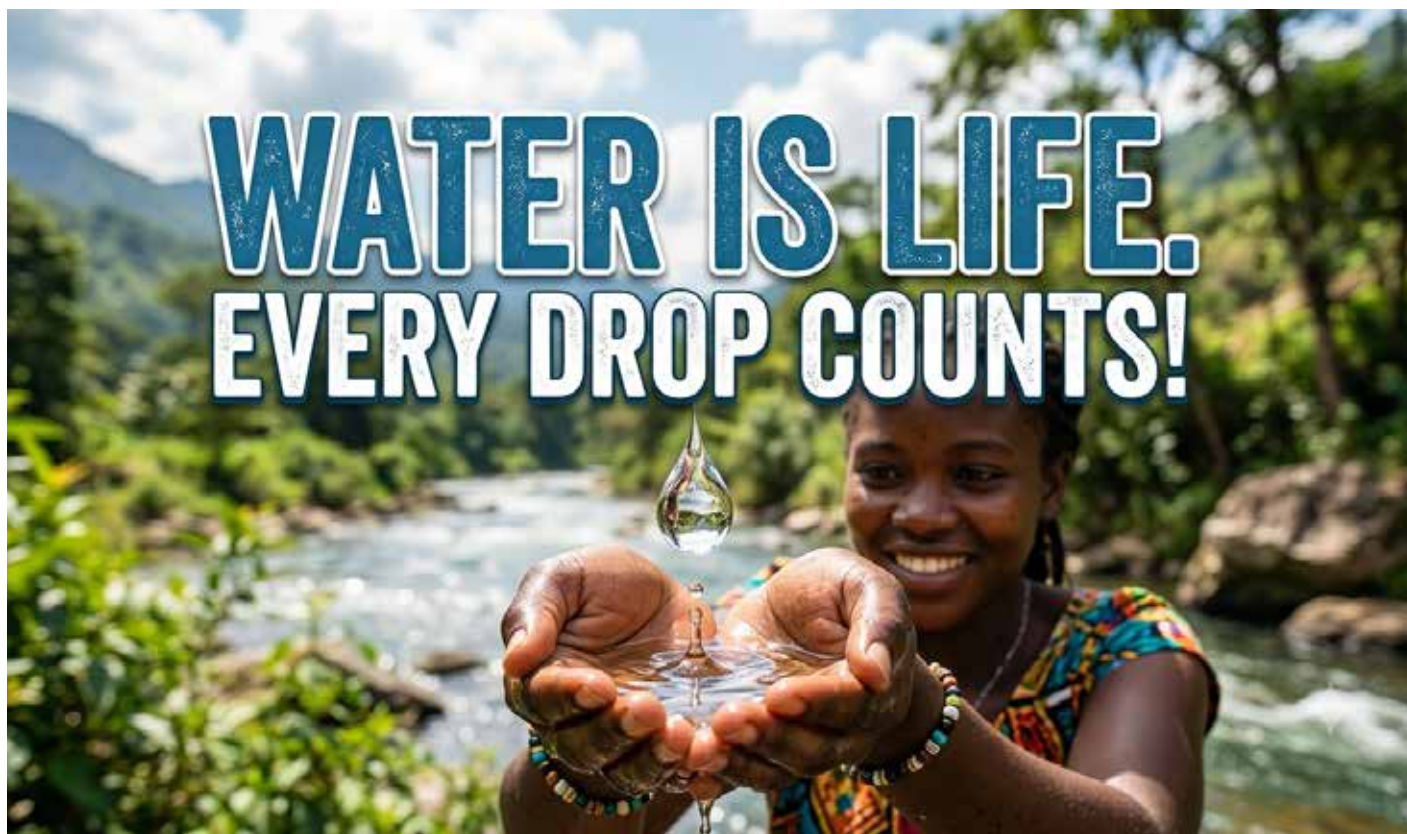


As such, the urgency of the Plan is reflected in the evidence. The latest national assessments show that 74% of water services authorities are performing poorly or are in a critical state, while 81% of municipal wastewater infrastructure is in poor or critical condition. Nearly half of municipal water systems recorded poor or unsafe microbiological water quality compliance, and non-revenue water losses average 47% across municipalities. In simple terms, almost half of the water that is pumped through municipal systems is lost through leaks, theft, faulty meters or other failures before it generates revenue or reaches consumers. This represents communities without

reliable water, rivers polluted by failing wastewater systems and municipalities trapped in a cycle of declining infrastructure and shrinking revenue.

The difference between this Plan and many previous interventions is that it is not simply a policy statement but a practical implementation plan with clear responsibilities, measurable outcomes and a coordinated national approach that brings all spheres of government together around a common objective.

It focuses on five areas that are essential to rebuilding the sector. The first is stabilising municipalities where water and sanitation



services are under severe pressure through targeted technical support, infrastructure delivery and stronger oversight. The second is reforming institutions to improve accountability, ring-fence water revenues and ensure that water services are managed with the technical and financial discipline required for long-term sustainability.

The third is mobilising substantially greater investment in water infrastructure through partnerships with the private sector, blended finance and investment-ready projects. The fourth is strengthening the legal and regulatory framework so that government can intervene more effectively where service delivery has collapsed and support municipalities in implementing sustainable turnaround measures. The fifth is confronting corruption, vandalism, infrastructure theft and organised criminal activity that continue to undermine service

delivery across the country.

Taken together, these interventions represent something South Africa has not previously had. A coordinated national programme that aligns infrastructure investment, institutional reform, regulation and implementation under one national framework.

And I must say that an honest conversation requires us to acknowledge why previous efforts have fallen short. Too often, water infrastructure has been neglected, revenues intended for maintenance have been diverted, technical capacity has been eroded, and different institutions have worked in isolation from one another. The National Water Action Plan confronts these failures directly by improving coordination, strengthening institutions and linking funding to implementation.

The Plan is not beginning from

scratch, as important reforms are already underway. The establishment of the South African National Water Resource Infrastructure Agency, the acceleration of legislative reforms, the expansion of infrastructure partnerships through the Water Partnerships Office, and targeted interventions in distressed municipalities are all part of the implementation architecture that supports the Plan.

More importantly, the Plan already contains measurable commitments against which government can be judged. South Africa has committed to reducing non-revenue water losses from an average of 47% to 39.5% by 2031, bringing at least three private-sector water infrastructure projects to market before the end of this year, ensuring that all metropolitan municipalities ring-fence water revenues for water services, appointing the Board and Chief Executive Officer of the National Water Resource Infra-

structure Agency, and completing a pipeline of priority infrastructure projects across multiple provinces by the end of 2026. These are implementation milestones that will be monitored and reported on publicly.

The examples in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal illustrate what implementation looks like in practice. In Gauteng, Johannesburg's water system has reached a critical point, with water losses of 46.1% and rising infrastructure failures. The Plan commits to reducing non-revenue water in the city to 28.8% by June 2030, increasing Joburg Water's capital budget to at least R5 billion per year, replacing 85 kilometres of ageing pipelines by June 2026, adding 140 kilometres of pipe replacement annually thereafter, and rehabilitating leaking reservoirs while improving response times for pipe bursts and blockages from 48 hours to 24 hours.

In KwaZulu-Natal, implementation is equally tangible. The Maphumulo Bulk Water Scheme, valued at approximately R1.1 billion, is being implemented through uMngeni-uThukela Water and is expected to provide reliable water supply to about 21,000 households. This is one of several priority projects scheduled for completion by the end of 2026 as part of the broader programme to restore water services and expand access in underserved communities.

Municipalities remain central to this effort because they are the institutions through which the overwhelming majority of South Africans receive water and sanitation services. Many are operating under severe financial and technical constraints. The purpose of the Plan is not to shift

responsibility away from local government, but to strengthen its ability to fulfil its constitutional mandate. Ring-fenced water revenues, improved asset management, stronger technical capacity and better governance are practical reforms designed to help municipalities deliver more reliably and sustainably.

The private sector also has a vital role to play. South Africa cannot close decades of infrastructure backlogs through public funding alone. We are fortunate to have world-class engineering firms, financiers, construction companies and infrastructure investors capable of helping expand and modernise our water system. Greater private sector participation through partnerships, blended finance and investment-ready projects is not a retreat from the state's responsibility. It is a practical way of accelerating delivery while government remains the custodian of this strategic public resource.

Communities, too, are indispensable partners. Protecting infrastructure, reporting vandalism and illegal connections, using

water responsibly and rejecting criminal syndicates that profit from water shortages are all essential contributions to rebuilding the sector.

I fully support the National Water Action Plan because it reflects the kind of leadership this moment demands. President Ramaphosa has set a clear direction, and the responsibility now rests on all of us to implement it with urgency, discipline and accountability.

The National Water Action Plan provides a clear set of targets, timelines, and responsibilities.

The real test now is implementation, and that is the test we are prepared to be judged by. We are ready to turn this Plan into results, and to ensure that it is remembered not as another government document, but as the moment South Africa began rebuilding a water system worthy of its people and its future. ■

Comrade David Mahlobo is an ANC NEC Member and Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation.





South African Women Have Every Reason To Celebrate: **The National Democratic Revolution and the Ongoing Struggle for Women's Emancipation**

■ By **SASABONA MANGANYE**

WOMEN'S MONTH is not merely a period of celebration; it is a revolutionary reminder that the liberation of South African women was won through organised struggle against colonialism, apartheid, capitalism and patriarchy. The historic march of 9 August 1956 stands as one of the defining moments in the National Democratic Revolution (NDR), where more than 20,000 women demonstrated that the liberation of South Africa could never be achieved without the liberation of women.

The slogan *"Wathint' Abafazi, Wathint' Imbokodo!"* was not simply a protest against pass laws. It was a declaration that women are not passive victims of history but revolutionary agents capable of transforming society. The struggle led by Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa,

Sophia Williams-De Bruyn and thousands of ordinary women became an integral component of the broader liberation struggle led by the African National Congress and its allies.

As South Africa commemorates Women's Month, women have every reason to celebrate the democratic gains achieved since 1994. Those gains did not emerge spontaneously. They are the product of decades of revolutionary struggle led by the liberation movement, guided by the Freedom Charter and later entrenched in one of the world's most progressive constitutions.

Triple Oppression: Race, Class and Gender

The ANC, together with the South African Communist Party and the progressive trade union movement, correctly understood that

the oppression of Black women could never be explained solely through gender.

South African women suffered triple oppression:

- Oppression on the basis of race under colonialism and apartheid.
- Exploitation on the basis of class through a capitalist economy designed to provide cheap Black labour.
- Patriarchal domination that relegated women to subordinate positions in both society and the economy.

These three systems of domination reinforced one another. Capitalism required cheap labour. Apartheid ensured that cheap labour was overwhelmingly Black. Patriarchy ensured that women performed the unpaid labour of social reproduction, raising children, caring for families and

sustaining communities, while remaining economically marginalised.

The oppression of women was therefore not accidental. It was embedded within the political economy of colonialism and apartheid capitalism.

Before 1994: Women Under Colonial and Apartheid Capitalism

Before democracy, Black women occupied the lowest position in South Africa's socio-economic hierarchy.

Millions were confined to domestic work, farm labour and other low-paying occupations with little labour protection. African women were denied meaningful access to land ownership, quality education, finance, productive assets and political representation. The apartheid migrant labour system deliberately separated families, forcing women to shoulder the burden of sustaining households while men worked in distant mines and industries.

Black women were simultaneously workers, mothers, community organisers and freedom fighters, yet remained excluded from political power and economic ownership.

Democratic South Africa: Advancing Women's Liberation

The democratic breakthrough of 1994 fundamentally altered the balance of forces in favour of the historically oppressed.

Guided by the National Democratic Revolution, the ANC introduced one of the most progressive constitutional and legislative frameworks for women's empow-



erment anywhere in the developing world.

The Constitution entrenched equality, dignity and non-sexism as founding values of the Republic. Parliament enacted transformative legislation including the Employment Equity Act, the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act, strengthened labour protections and laws combating domestic violence and gender-based violence.

These reforms were accompanied by deliberate political interventions. The ANC adopted voluntary gender quotas within its own structures, ensuring that women increasingly occupied positions of leadership previously reserved almost exclusively for men.

The results have been historic.

Today, women occupy approximately 45% of seats in South Africa's National Assembly, placing the country among the world's leading democracies for women's parliamentary representation. Before 1994, Black women

had virtually no meaningful representation in the institutions that governed the country.

Women today serve as the Deputy President, Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Premiers, Speakers, Judges, Directors-General, Ambassadors, Municipal Managers and leaders across the public service.

At local government level, women now account for around 37% of councillors, reflecting a democratic transformation unimaginable under apartheid.

These are not symbolic victories. They represent a decisive restructuring of political power and demonstrate the success of deliberate transformation policies pursued since the advent of democracy.

BBBEE and Women's Economic Transformation

Political freedom without economic transformation would leave the structural foundations of apartheid intact.

This understanding informed

the introduction of Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE).

BBBEE recognised Black women as one of the designated groups requiring targeted intervention because they had suffered the combined effects of racial exclusion, class exploitation and gender discrimination.

Through preferential procurement, enterprise development, ownership targets, supplier development and skills development, thousands of women entrepreneurs have entered sectors previously dominated by a privileged minority.

Government has progressively expanded procurement opportunities for women-owned enterprises, with a target of 40% of public procurement benefiting women-owned businesses. This has opened opportunities in construction, manufacturing, agriculture, technology, financial services and professional sectors that were virtually inaccessible before democracy.

Women today own businesses, chair corporate boards, lead universities, manage financial institutions and participate in strategic sectors of the economy that apartheid deliberately reserved for white men.

While implementation has not always been without shortcomings, BBBEE has fundamentally altered the economic landscape by opening opportunities previously denied to Black women.

Women in Leadership: A Democratic Achievement

One of the greatest successes of democratic South Africa has been the emergence of women as leaders throughout society.

Women have become leaders in government, organised labour, business, academia, the judiciary, state-owned enterprises and civil society.

South Africa consistently ranks among the countries with the highest levels of female parliamentary representation in the

world, demonstrating that political transformation can produce measurable gender equality in democratic institutions.

These achievements confirm that the National Democratic Revolution has fundamentally changed who governs South Africa.

The daughters of domestic workers now serve as judges.

The daughters of farm workers now lead universities.

The daughters of mine workers now sit in Cabinet, Parliament and corporate boardrooms.

This is one of democracy's greatest achievements.

The Contradictions that Remain

Marxism teaches that every historical advance produces new contradictions requiring further transformation.

Despite significant political progress, economic power remains



highly concentrated.

Women occupy nearly 45% of Parliament, yet they account for only about 7% of chief executive officers in South Africa's private sector. This contradiction demonstrates that while political transformation has advanced considerably, economic transformation has not kept pace.

Black women continue to experience disproportionately high levels of unemployment, poverty and economic insecurity.

Women continue to perform the overwhelming majority of unpaid care work, effectively subsidising the economy through invisible labour.

Many women-owned enterprises continue to struggle with access to finance, markets and productive assets.

Gender-Based Violence and Femicide remains one of the gravest threats to women's freedom and dignity, exposing the persistence of patriarchal social relations despite constitutional democracy.

These realities confirm that legal equality alone cannot dismantle the structural legacy of colonialism, apartheid and capitalist inequality.

Deepening the National Democratic Revolution

Women's Month should therefore be understood not simply as a celebration of past victories but as a call to advance the next phase of transformation.

The struggle today is to deepen industrialisation, expand productive employment, transform ownership patterns, strengthen work-

er rights, support women-owned enterprises, accelerate land reform, eliminate gender-based violence and build a developmental state capable of advancing shared prosperity.

Women's emancipation cannot be separated from economic emancipation.

The liberation of women requires not only constitutional rights but also economic power, decent work, access to productive assets and equal participation in the ownership and control of the economy.

South African women therefore have every reason to celebrate.

In just over three decades of democracy, they have moved from systematic exclusion to becoming central participants in political leadership, governance and economic transformation. Their representation in Parliament, government and public institutions stands among the highest in the world, while legislative reforms

have expanded rights and opportunities unimaginable under apartheid.

Yet the National Democratic Revolution remains unfinished.

The task before the democratic movement is to ensure that political liberation is matched by economic liberation, so that the daughters of workers, rural women, informal traders and township entrepreneurs become not merely participants in the economy but owners of productive wealth.

The women who marched to the Union Buildings in 1956 demanded dignity, justice and equality.

The democratic state has advanced that struggle significantly.

The responsibility of this generation is to complete it.

Wathint' Abafazi, Wathint' Imbokodo!

Viva the women of South Africa! Viva! ■



THE PROMISE OF 1956:

Advancing Women's Emancipation Beyond Commemoration

■ By **CORNELIUS MONAMA**

WHEN we proclaim, “*Wathint’ Abafazi, Wathint’ Imbokodo,*” let it not become a ceremonial refrain repeated every August. Let it be a solemn national pledge that South Africa will continue to dismantle every barrier that denies women equality, dignity and opportunity. The true measure of our commitment to the women of 1956 lies not in the speeches we deliver or the wreaths we lay, but in whether every woman can experience the full promise of freedom in her everyday life.

The historic Women’s March of 9 August 1956 was a defining moment in our liberation struggle. More than 20,000 women from every corner of South Africa marched to the Union Buildings not only to reject the unjust pass laws, but an entire political system built on racial oppression, gender discrimination and economic exploitation, but also to proclaim a vision of a society founded on equality, justice and freedom.

Seventy years later, that vision remains both our democratic inheritance and our unfinished national task. Their courage permanently altered the trajectory of South Africa’s liberation struggle and demonstrated that no movement claiming to fight for free-



dom could succeed without placing women at the centre of that struggle.

Imagine one of those women returning home to Stinkwater after the march. She still had to fetch water from a distant river before sunrise, prepare food for her family, care for her children and navigate the daily indignities imposed by apartheid. Yet she marched

because she believed that her daughters deserved a different future. That aspiration continues to echo across generations.

The women of 1956 were marching for a democratic South Africa that millions enjoy today. The democratic breakthrough of 1994 sought to fulfil that vision by linking political freedom with social justice and ensuring that women,

particularly black women, who bore the greatest burden of colonialism and apartheid, would become equal participants in shaping the nation's future.

That commitment was embedded in the Constitution, one of the world's most progressive frameworks for gender equality. It guarantees equality, dignity and freedom from discrimination while recognising that substantive equality requires dismantling the structural barriers that continue to limit women's opportunities.

Three decades into democracy, South Africa has made undeniable progress. Women now occupy leadership positions across public and private life, while millions have gained access to education, healthcare, housing, electricity, social protection, clean water and dignified sanitation. These advances have expanded opportunity, reduced hardship and improved the quality of life for millions of women and their families.

However, the democratic promise remains unfinished. The face of poverty, unemployment and inequality is still disproportionately that of a black woman, particularly in rural communities where historical disadvantage continues to limit access to land, finance, quality education, healthcare and economic opportunity. Women also continue to shoulder the burden of the unpaid care economy, with inadequate water and sanitation services imposing an invisible tax on their time, health and economic participation.

South Africa also continues to confront unacceptable levels of gender-based violence and femicide, persistent economic exclusion and uneven implementation



of progressive laws and policies. Institutional weaknesses, ageing infrastructure and service delivery failures continue to undermine constitutional rights, with women and girls bearing the greatest burden.

Recognising these shortcomings is not an indictment on our democracy but an affirmation of democratic accountability. Progress should inspire determination rather than complacency. The next phase of women's emancipation must therefore move beyond representation alone and be anchored in competence, integrity and accountable leadership that advances the constitutional promise for every woman. Genuine empowerment demands competence, integrity and accountability. All leaders, irrespective of gender, must pass through the eye of the needle.

Equally, difficult conversations should not be avoided because they are uncomfortable. Issues such as the so-called "Ben 10" and "sugar daddy" phenomena deserve honest and mature public discussion because both reflect unequal power relations that

can undermine dignity, exploit vulnerability and damage lives. Addressing these realities openly is part of building a society founded on equality and mutual respect.

True empowerment requires selecting and advancing women whose competence, integrity and commitment to public service meet the requisite standards. Anything less reduces women to tokens and empowerment to symbolism. This is what has been aptly described as "*patriarchy in a skirt*", where men determine which women get elevated, while the underlying systems of patronage, exclusion and mediocrity remain unchanged.

Charlotte Maxeke remains the enduring benchmark. One of the first Black women in Southern Africa to earn a university degree, she devoted her life not to personal advancement but to organising, educating and expanding opportunities for others. Her legacy was defined by service, institution-building and sacrifice – qualities that remain the true measure of transformational leadership.

Ethical standards must apply equally to everyone. Corruption, abuse of authority and the misuse of public office are indefensible regardless of gender or race. To excuse such conduct because the perpetrator is a woman is itself patronising. Leadership is ultimately measured by integrity, accountability and conduct under power.

There is also a strategic danger in elevating individuals who lack the necessary integrity and capability. When they fail, their shortcomings are too easily weaponised as evidence against women generally, making it harder for genuinely capable women to emerge and lead.

The next phase of women's emancipation requires renewed commitment from every sector of society. Government must continue investing in economic inclusion, education, healthcare, infrastructure and basic services. Business must accelerate women's participation in ownership, leadership and innovation. Communities must reject gender-based violence, while men must become active partners in dismantling patriarchal attitudes that continue to undermine women's dignity and opportunities.

Women's emancipation is not a sectoral issue or an annual commemoration. It is a constitutional imperative, an economic necessity and a measure of the moral health of our democracy. South Africa cannot realise its full developmental potential while millions of women continue to face structural barriers that limit their freedom and aspirations.

As we commemorate Women's Month, we should remember that the women who marched to

the Union Buildings on 9 August 1956 did not ask future generations merely to celebrate their courage. They challenged us to complete the work they began by building a South Africa founded on equality, dignity, justice and opportunity for all.

History will judge our democracy not only by the rights enshrined in our Constitution or by the number of women in leadership, but by whether every woman – whether the daughter of a farm worker in Limpopo, a domestic worker in Khayelitsha, a subsistence farmer in Libode or an unemployed graduate in Stinkwater – enjoys an equal opportunity to realise her potential. That remains the unfinished business of our democratic revolution.

The women of 1956 carried the hopes of generations they would never meet. Today, we are the custodians of that legacy. The greatest tribute we can pay them is not merely to remember their courage, but to complete their work by dismantling poverty, in-

equality, gender-based violence and every barrier that denies women the full enjoyment of their constitutional rights. Only then will the promise of our Constitution become a lived reality for every woman, especially the poor, the rural, the vulnerable and the historically dispossessed.

For when women thrive, communities flourish. When women lead, economies grow stronger, institutions become more representative and nations prosper. By fully unleashing the talent, resilience and potential of all its women, South Africa will move closer to realising the democratic promise envisioned by the heroines of 1956, secured through the struggle for liberation and enshrined in our Constitution. That is the enduring task of our generation and the legacy we owe to the generations that will follow. ■

Comrade Cornelius Monama is a Communication Specialist and former National Communication Manager of the ANC.

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Freedom cannot be achieved unless women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression.

NELSON MANDELA



Capitalism and the Illusion of Ideological Inclination

■ By **SCELO BUTHELEZI**

ONE of the greatest illusions under capitalism is the belief that ideas arise spontaneously within individuals, that people are “free thinkers,” detached from the material conditions that shape their consciousness. From a dialectical materialist perspective, however, consciousness is not born in a vacuum. It is produced, taught, and conditioned by the social relations into which we are born. As Karl Marx argued in the **Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy**: *“It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness.”*

In simple terms, this means that your thoughts, beliefs, and worldview do not primarily shape the world you live in. Rather, the world you live in, your job, your class position, your daily struggles, and your broader social conditions, plays a decisive role in shaping the way you think.

People often imagine themselves as autonomous individuals. Yet, from a Marxist perspective, autonomy without class consciousness is largely an illusion. In a society structured around private ownership and the extraction of surplus value, the dominant ideas are, unsurprisingly, the ideas of the dominant class. This is not a

moral accusation but a structural observation. Those who own the means of material production also exercise considerable influence over the means of mental production through ownership or influence over media corporations, publishing houses, cultural institutions, and the platforms through which dominant narratives are circulated.

In illustrating this the above, many comrades argue that media coverage of corruption reflects these underlying power relations. They contend that corruption allegations involving the African National Congress (ANC) are frequently labelled simply as “corruption,” whereas controversies involving the Democratic Alliance (DA) are sometimes framed using less damaging language, such as “procedural irregularities,” “exclusive engagements,” or actions that are described as being legally permissible. From this perspective, such differences in framing contribute to an ideological environment that is perceived to favour the DA and reinforce existing economic and political power structures. Comrades further argue that the DA represents the interests of established private capital and therefore receives significant financial backing from business interests.

Recent disclosures by the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) show that political



parties receive substantial donations from private individuals and organisations. According to these disclosures, Capitec Bank co-founder Michiel le Roux donated R58 million to the DA, while an earlier declaration recorded R62.5 million in donations from the Oppenheimer family to the DA. Other declared donations included R45.75 million to Action SA, R50 million to the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), R30 million to Rise Mzansi, R12 million to Build One South Africa (BOSA), and R1 million to the United Democratic Movement (UDM). This funding influences the policy priorities of political parties, particularly where donors have significant economic interests.

These parties that receives substantial support from private capital are defenders of private property, market-oriented policies, and the broader capitalist economic system.

This raises an important question: what shapes the ANC's thinking?

The ANC has consistently argued that its policies are informed by South Africa's material conditions, particularly the interconnected triple challenges of unemployment, poverty, and inequality. These challenges have long been presented as the central issues that government policy seeks to address. At the same time, the ANC does not advocate the abolition of capital. Instead, its approach has been characterised by what it describes as a relationship of both cooperation and contestation – or “*unity and struggle*” – with private capital, a position articulated in its Strategy and Tactics documents and reaffirmed at its 52nd National Conference.



The ANC argues that cooperation with business is necessary because private investment contributes to economic growth, industrialisation, infrastructure development, and employment creation. A modern economy, in this view, requires investment from both the public and private sectors, making collaboration between government and business an economic necessity.

However, the ANC also argues that capital must be contested where market outcomes reinforce inequality, unemployment, and poverty. Consequently, it supports state intervention through regulation, labour protections, transformation policies, and programmes such as Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) to address historical injustices and promote more equitable economic participation.

Antonio Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony provides a useful framework for understanding these dynamics. In *Prison Notebooks* (1971), Gramsci ar-

gued that ruling classes maintain power not only through economic dominance or coercion but also through ideological leadership.

They shape what society comes to regard as “*common sense*,” thereby securing consent for the existing social order.

From this perspective, many people's political beliefs do not arise solely from their immediate material interests but are influenced by the ideological frameworks that surround them. Media institutions, educational systems, cultural organisations, and other social institutions all contribute to shaping public understanding of politics and economics. Marxist scholars therefore argue that these ideological processes play a significant role in reproducing existing social and economic relations. ■

Comrade Scelo Buthelezi is a member of the ANC Lilian Ngoyi Branch, Ward 40. He writes in his own capacity.

PART TWO

The National Question in Contemporary South Africa:

Learning from the Past to Understand the Present

■ By **DENIS MATWA**

IN Part One of this Series, we dealt with Nationalism and provided an introduction to our understanding of what constitutes the National Question.

Colonialism of a Special Type (CST): is it still relevant?

It is important to analyse the dynamics that have been at play in our country for many decades. Since the early 1960s, our ally, the SACP has correctly pointed out that colonialism in South Africa is a Colonialism of a Special Type. This means that the colonial masters are not based far away in Europe. Both the colonisers and the colonised share the same territory. In such a setting, the most oppressed and exploited are the masses of our people, the Africans. *“As conventionally understood in South Africa, as elsewhere, the National Question refers to the oppression of one or a number of other people/s by a dominant colonial/imperial power. Consequently, the right to self-determination or to national freedom/independence does not apply to the dominant group, but is applied exclusively to the oppressed or dominated group”* (Jordan: 1997). We therefore argue that it is still premature



to discard the CST thesis in the South African context at present.

The remnants of apartheid colonialism are still very starkly evident in our society. This is evident in the unequal distribution of wealth and we can see that monopoly capitalism is still intact. This situation requires the fundamental destruction of the unequal distribution of our resources in every aspect of our lives. As Comrade Mzala pointed out towards the end of the 1980s, *“the-*

oretically speaking the successful struggle against exploitation requires that the working class be free of narrow nationalism. If the working class of any one nation gives the slightest support to the privileges of its own national bourgeoisie, that will inevitably arouse distrust among the proletariat of another nation; it will weaken the international class solidarity of the workers and divide them, which is exactly what the capitalists want” (Mzala: 1988: 53). Therefore, we think

that to defeat the manifestations of the CST, the workers should continue to play a dominant role in the liberation struggle and the implementation of the vision of the Freedom Charter. The Freedom Charter, we argue, is not a socialist document and is, neither, a capitalist document. However, it leans towards a people driven social democratic order. The Freedom Charter accommodates both the capitalist and socialistic tendencies.

The watershed elections of 27 April 1994 ushered in a progressive government as led by the African National Congress (ANC). This was significant in many respects. First and foremost, the ANC led government is fundamentally biased towards the liberation of the African masses in general, and the black majority in particular. The ANC encapsulates a vision of a free democratic South Africa that accommodates the working class of our country by being in alliance with the working class as well. This has been demonstrated in our alliance with both the SACP

and COSATU. We are not shy to argue that, *“at its inception in 1985, COSATU exemplified ‘social movement unionism’, where democratically organised workers engage in both ‘production politics’ at the workplace and the ‘politics of state power’. Unlike a narrower form of ‘syndicalism’, this involved explicit alliances with movements and organisations outside the workplace, but under strict conditions of union independence based on shop floor accountability.”*

The 1987 adoption of the Freedom Charter as a ‘stepping stone to socialism’ by COSATU further entrenched this strategic compromise, which recognised the increasing popularity of the ANC-SACP alliance as well as a strong belief in the independence of the labour movement. The idea was to combine the best of ‘populism’ (an emphasis on cross-class solidarity against the apartheid state) and ‘workerism’ (ensuring working-class independence and democratic shop floor accountability), such that the working-class led the struggle against

apartheid. (Pillay: 2011: 35). The labour movement, as represented by COSATU, has been at the forefront of fighting for the rights of the workers of our country alongside the liberation movement as led by the ANC.

Going back a few years ago, Jeremy Cronin and Mohubetswane Mashilo argued vehemently about the shortcoming of the CST thesis. Although not intrinsically opposed to the CST thesis, Wolpe argues that the ‘CST (or internal colonialism) was... historically based in the ‘articulation between two modes of production’ upon which South Africa’s mineral-based industrial revolution was grounded. This was an ‘internal’, ‘racialized’ articulation between an oppressed black majority and a white minority. It was based through the first half of the twentieth century in a core/ periphery relation between what Wolpe analyses as an articulation between two modes of production – an advanced industrial capitalist mode centred on mining on the one hand, and subsistence farming based in a



patriarchal mode in the reserves on the other. At the heart of this articulation was the reproduction of cheap migrant labour. (Cronin & Mashilo: 2017:27).

This takes us towards understanding of the CST thesis in contemporary South Africa. The profound understanding of the CST thesis is still very much relevant in contemporary South Africa today. It is very important to locate the CST theory within the ambit of modern South Africa. We dare not undermine the relevance of the CST thesis in contemporary South Africa. Cronin and Mashilo argue that, *“in South Africa from the mid-1970s, however, the epicentres of much popular struggle occurred along the axes of CST’s exclusion/inferior-inclusion fault-lines. The proletarian township, the Bantu Education school and the bush college became the loci of popular power and partially liberated zones. The maximum weapon of struggle, even for the active working class which used the work-place as a point of organisation, was the temporary withdrawal of participation in disadvantaged inclusion- the general stay-away, consumer boy-*

cotts, school boycotts, and so on. Because these were essentially centred on proletarianised communities, they could not be sustained indefinitely” (Cronin and Mashilo: 2017: 34).

It is our view that to understand the current political dynamics around the National Question requires us, as members of the liberation movement, to honestly interrogate these questions in a more open and comradely manner.

We strongly feel that it is premature to discard the CST thesis. Our detractors from the ultra-left, always argue against the two-stage theory that has been advanced by the Tripartite Alliance over the years. This attack comes mainly from the Trotskyite understanding of the South African history. We do not wish to accuse these authors of being ultra-leftist or of Trotskyism. However, we are troubled by their argument in understanding the dynamics at play. For example, Khwezi Mabasa, borrowing consciously or subconsciously from Cronin and Mashilo, states that, *“moreover, stagism supported perverted conceptions of Marx-*

ism, which justify colonial capitalist dispossession by stating that it is necessary for the transition to socialism. The SACP recognised all these shortcomings in the early post-apartheid era, and developed a third view on revolutionary stages. This was expressed through the slogan of ‘socialism is the future, build it now’. The ninth national congress analysed this slogan by arguing: “In South Africa we are in the phase of advancing, deepening and defending the national democratic revolution. But there is no Chinese wall between this phase and the consolidation of socialism” (Mabasa: 2019: 177). We argue that, if the SACP decides to discard the two-stage conceptualisation of the national democratic revolution, this situation reinforces what Harold Wolpe was arguing in the early 1970s. ■

To be continued...

*[In the third and final part of the Series we will look at the **National Question within the ANC** and how the debate was shaped by events such as the **Defiance Campaign, the Freedom Charter** and the **exiled years.**]*

“

It is our responsibility to break down barriers of division and create a country where there will be neither Whites nor Blacks, just South Africans, free and united in diversity.

OLIVER REGINALD TAMBO





Tongaat Hulett:

Intervention is welcome but more needs to be done to urgently protect the sugar industry

■ By **ANDILE NTULI and JR SEBASTIAN**

TONGAAT HULETT is an agricultural and agro-processing company focused upon the complementary foodstocks of sugarcane and maize. The company has existed for more than a century, with operations across six Southern African Development Community countries, namely South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia and Eswatini. It previously commanded one of the largest market shares and provided employment to tens of thousands of people throughout South Africa's sugar industry. In recent years, however, Tongaat Hulett has faced serious financial challenges arising from management misconduct, together with external market pressures caused by unregulated and inexpensive sugar imports.

Tongaat Hulett was subsequently placed under business rescue,

although the process ultimately failed and resulted in the business rescue practitioners applying for provisional liquidation. Liquidation was averted through an intervention involving the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, the Industrial Development Corporation and Vision Group which had submitted the business rescue bid. This strategic intervention protected jobs and preserved an almost century-old value chain from which many households have derived their livelihoods. However, further intervention remains necessary to protect the wider sugar industry against the continuing threat posed by inexpensive imports.

Challenges Facing Tongaat Hulett and the Sugar Industry

Within South Africa, Tongaat Hulett has experienced serious financial and operational chal-

lenges resulting partly from gross accounting misconduct committed by members of its executive management. These findings were made by the auditing firm PricewaterhouseCoopers in 2019, when portions of its investigation were released through a report. The misconduct placed the company's financial position under severe pressure, with its accumulated debt eventually reaching approximately R11.7 billion.

As a consequence of these difficulties, Tongaat Hulett entered business rescue on 27 October 2022. The process subsequently failed because of disagreements between the business rescue practitioners and Vision Group, which had emerged as the preferred bidding company. The collapse of the business rescue process prompted the practitioners to apply for provisional liquidation.



tion on 3 February 2026 before the KwaZulu-Natal High Court in Durban. This application threatened a substantial number of jobs, livelihoods and economic activities connected to the company.

Tongaat Hulett has also been confronted by unfair market competition arising from inexpensive and subsidised sugar imports originating primarily from Brazil and India. The sugar industries within both countries receive government support, creating competitive pressures that have disrupted South Africa's domestic sugar industry. These inexpensive imports have reportedly displaced approximately R6,000 in revenue for every tonne of locally produced sugar removed from the domestic market. The resulting pressures had already contributed towards employment losses across KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga.

SA Canegrowers, which represents participants throughout the sugar industry, reported that sugar imports during the first five months of 2026 were nearly double the volumes recorded during the corresponding period of 2025. These imports displaced locally produced sugar from retail

shelves as food and beverage manufacturers increasingly purchased less expensive imported alternatives. The association further stated that South African Revenue Service data recorded 94,984 tonnes of imported sugar between January and May 2026, compared with 55,213 tonnes during the corresponding period of 2025. These figures demonstrate the serious and continuing threat confronting domestic sugar production.

The IDC and Vision Group Transaction

The immediate threat of liquidation was averted when Vision Group and the Industrial Development

Corporation concluded an agreement on 16 June 2026. The agreement involved financial support from the Industrial Development Corporation through post-commencement finance, which initially amounted to R2.3 billion, together with an additional R200 million converted into equity. Through this arrangement, the Industrial Development Corporation would become a shareholder in Vision Group, whose business operations extend across South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Botswana. The transaction protected tens of thousands of jobs connected directly and indirectly to Tongaat Hulett's operations. The intervention has successfully facilitated an agreement between the Industrial Development Corporation and Vision Group. The remaining task involves addressing the continuing pressure created by inexpensive sugar imports, thereby protecting jobs that remain vulnerable throughout the broader domestic sugar industry.

Protecting the Future of the South African Sugar Industry

The Scale of the Industry's Crisis Government's intervention protected Tongaat Hulett's operations and the extensive network



of growers, workers and suppliers dependent upon the company. The wider sugar industry still remains exposed to severe import pressure. SA Canegrowers reported that South Africa imported 213,000 tonnes of sugar from duty-bearing countries during 2025, this pressure continued into 2026, with the 16,000 tonnes imported during March representing twice the volume recorded during March 2025. Imported sugar (Deep Sea Imports) is sold below domestic production costs, it displaces locally produced sugar, reduces the revenue available to growers and millers and weakens the industry's capacity to sustain employment.

These conditions place the sugar industry directly within Priority Two of the ANC's 2024 Election Manifesto, which commits the movement to supporting labour-intensive industries and protecting productive employment.

The industry sustains growers, mill workers, transport operators, industrial users and rural communities in particularly KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga. Protecting sugar production therefore forms part of the broader national task of arresting deindustrialisation, rebuilding domestic productive

capacity and defending South African jobs against unfair external competition.

The Sugarcane Value Chain Master Plan was introduced in November 2020, by the ANC led 6th Administration when the industry found itself within an existential crisis.

Phase One concentrated upon stabilising the sector through greater local procurement, policy certainty and coordinated commitments between government, growers, millers and downstream users. These interventions improved local market offtake and provided temporary stability, but their gains were weakened by rising production costs, falling global prices and renewed import penetration during 2025. Phase Two, signed during April 2026, consequently shifts the programme from immediate stabilisation towards long-term restructuring, trade protection, small-scale grower support, diversification and employment preservation.

Do Master Plans Work? The Poultry Master Plan as a Litmus Test

The recovery of South Africa's

poultry industry provides concrete evidence that sectoral master plans can arrest industrial decline when government, producers and industry stakeholders implement their commitments collectively. Prior to the introduction of the Poultry Masterplan's introduction in 2019, a decade of dumped, cheap poultry imports had weakened domestic production, reduced investment and displaced local producers from their own market. Coordinated implementation by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, the Department of Agriculture and industry participants subsequently reversed this trajectory. Between 2019 and 2025 more than R2.1 billion had been invested in the industry; while weekly production from 19.7 million to 23 million slaughtered birds. Import replacement measures contained in the masterplan also enabled domestic producers to recover market share and improve productive efficiency.

The recovery extended beyond established producers. Thirty-two poultry projects were successfully established, each attracting average investment of approximately R45 million, while new hatcheries, egg-production facilities and twenty broiler contract



farmers expanded productive capacity and broadened participation throughout the value chain. Poultry has consequently become South Africa's largest agricultural industry, valued at R74 billion and supporting more than 110,000 jobs. The poultry experience therefore demonstrates that masterplans are not merely statements of intention. When implemented decisively, they can mobilise investment, replace imports, expand domestic production, strengthen transformation and protect strategic South African industries.

Securing the Sugar Industry's Recovery Through Phase 2

During the opening weeks of South Africa's 2026/27 sugar milling season, it's reported that growers delivered 48 percent more raw sugarcane than during the previous corresponding period. This improvement demonstrates the resilience of producers and provides cautious evidence that the stabilisation measures introduced through the Sugarcane Value Chain Master plan may have begun to bear fruit. However, rising imports, increasing production costs and uncertainty surrounding major milling operations mean that the industry's recovery remains fragile. Protecting these gains requires the immediate and disciplined implementation of Phase 2.

The Phase 2 Master plan calls for stronger protection against low priced overseas imports at the time of its signing in April 2026, ITAC's tariff review was still underway. Phase 2 furthermore regulates sourcing by downstream users to at least 95% of their sugar requirements locally, subject to the availability of domestic supply. These commitments must



be implemented urgently coupled with consistent monitoring, stronger financial, technological and enterprise support for small-scale growers.

Importantly, Phase Two must also reposition sugarcane as the foundation of a broader and diverse industrial value chain. A current proposal entails transforming South Africa's 14 sugar mills into bio-energy complexes producing ethanol and electricity alongside conventional sugar. This diversification programme aligns with the revised Industrial Development Strategy of 2026, which seeks to confront deindustrialisation, declining productive capacity, weak investment and persistent infrastructure constraints. The sugar industry therefore represents an important test of whether sectoral master plans can translate policy commitments into technological upgrading, expanded domestic production, protected employment and long term industrial renewal.

Conclusion

The Tongaat Hulett intervention demonstrates that the determination to protect South African work-

ers, preserve productive capacity and prevent strategic industries from disappearing beneath the combined pressures of corporate failure and external market competition. The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition and the Industrial Development Corporation deserve recognition for responding decisively when liquidation threatened an entire value chain and the livelihoods dependent upon it.

Their intervention, together with the sugar and poultry master plans, provides tangible evidence that the ANC's commitment to industrialisation extends beyond political declarations into practical programmes of localisation, investment, transformation and employment protection. Saving Tongaat Hulett was therefore not the conclusion of this task, but the beginning of a wider national effort to rebuild the sugar industry and secure its place within South Africa's productive future.

Cde Andile Ntuli and Cde JR Sebastian are members of the ANC Department of Policy, Monitoring, Evaluation and Research (PMER).

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

8–13 August 2026

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

8 August 1999 Mboweni first day in office as SA Reserve Bank Governor



The late ANC stalwart Tito Mboweni serves his first day in office as Governor of the South African Reserve Bank (SRB). Mboweni, was appointed governor of the SARB to replace Dr Chris Stals. Mboweni became the first Black person to head the SARB. He first joined the Reserve Bank as an advisor to Chris Stals in 1998, and served as Governor until 2009. He was succeeded by Gill Marcus, the first woman to hold this position.

8 August 2004 Slaughter of Ostriches

In 2004, South Africa was hit by the H5N2 strain of the Avian Flu Virus. The virus killed over 2000 birds in the Middleton area of the Eastern Cape and quickly spread. On 8 August, the government ordered the slaughter of 30 000 ostriches in an effort to con-

tain the virus. All export of poultry was suspended as well as the movement of poultry between Eastern and Western Cape. Earlier that year the H5N1 strain of the virus had hit Asia. The devastation was so great that when it hit South Africa, the government acted swiftly in a bid to avoid the same devastation that Asia had suffered.

9 August 1956 Historic women's march to Union Buildings

In one of the largest demonstrations staged in South African history, 20 000 women of all races marched to Pretoria's Union Buildings on 9 August 1956, to present a petition against the carrying of passes by women to the prime minister, J.G. Strijdom. This famous march is commemorated as National Women's

day, a public holiday on 9 August every year. The march against pass laws was organised by the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW). The Federation famously challenged the idea that '*a woman's place is in the kitchen*', declaring it instead to be '*everywhere*'. Strijdom was not at the Union Buildings to accept the petition, the women of South Africa sent a public message that they would not be intimidated and silenced by unjust laws. After the petition was handed over to the secretary of the prime minister, the women sang the song: ***Wathint' abafazi, Strijdom!*** Since then, the phrase '*wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo*' (You Strike a Woman, You Strike a Rock) has come to represent the courage and strength of South African women, and the fight against patriarchy and for a non-sexist society.



THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

9 August 1975

Moses Kotane receives Isithwalandwe/ Seaparankoe



Moses Mauane Kotane, General Secretary of the SACP and ANC leader received this highest award from the ANC in 1975, on his seventieth birthday. Kotane was born at Tamosstad in the Rustenburg district of the western Transvaal on **9th of August in 1905**. He came from a devoutly Christian peasant family of Tswana origin. Largely self-taught, he received only a few years of formal schooling, but became an insatiable reader. Later as a young worker he enrolled in the Communist-run night school in Ferreirastown, Johannesburg, where he became known for his ability to master the most abstruse political writings. Starting to work at 17 in Krugersdorp, Kotane was alternately a photographer's assistant, domestic servant, miner, and bakery worker. He joined the African National Congress (ANC) in 1928. A year later, he joined the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) and served as a member of the Politbureau. In 1939 he was elected General Secretary of the CPSA. In 1943 he was invited by A.B. Xuma to serve on the Atlantic Charter committee that drew up African Claims, and in 1946 he was elected to the ANC national executive committee, a position he held until bans forced his nominal resignation in 1952.

He was one of the first to be banned under the Suppression of Communism Act. Charged with treason in December 1956, he remained a defendant in the Treason Trial until charges against him were dropped in November 1958. During the 1960 state of emergency he was detained for four months and in late 1962 he was placed under 24-hour house arrest. In early 1963 he left South Africa for Tanzania, where he became the treasurer-general of the ANC in exile. In elections held in Tanzania in April 1969 he was returned to the national executive committee. He later suffered a stroke and went for treatment to Moscow, where he remained until his death in 1978.

9 August 1987

Longest Mining strike starts



South Africa's longest and biggest strike was organised by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), led by Cyril Ramaphosa. At the time it was the second largest trade union in South Africa. NUM represented mainly Black mineworkers in the gold and coal mines belonging to the Chamber of Mines. Approximately 360 000 Black miners went on strike over wage and working conditions. It lasted for three weeks costing the Chamber of Mines close on R250

million. In an attempt to break the strike, the Chamber of Mines re-trenched approximately 50 000 workers. The mineworkers' strike was violent, according to NUM; 11 people died, 500 were injured and over 400 workers were arrested. The mineworkers' strike finally came to an end after an agreement was negotiated with the Chamber of Mines outlining new working conditions and wage increases for mineworkers.

10 August 1965

Karen Muir youngest person in world to break a sporting record



Karen Muir was born and lived in Kimberley and went to the Diamantveld High School, when she broke the women's world record for backstroke at an even for girls, swimming a 110-yard backstroke in 1 minute, 8.7 seconds. Over the five years that followed, she set another fifteen swimming records, and on twenty-two South African championships. She matriculated in 1970. After retiring from sport, she studied medicine at the University of Orange Free State, where she qualified as a doctor. She practiced as a doctor and family physician, and died of breast cancer at the age of 60 years in Mossel Bay on 1 April 2013. Karin Muir was elected to the International Swimming Hall of Fame in 1980.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

10 August 1969

Zambia nationalized its copper mines

Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda announces nationalisation of copper mining companies, key to Zambia's economy contributing over 50 percent of government revenue. This policy gave the Zambian government the powers to use revenues collected from these mines to substantially reduce prices of basic food products. When copper prices collapsed in the mid-seventies, the Zambian economy began to decline. The government borrowed money from the International Monetary fund (IMF) to maintain lower prices of basic foodstuffs. In 1985, the IMF put pressure on the Zambian government to restructure the economy and abandon socialist economic policies. As a result, the government adopted the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP). These programmes were blamed for causing Zambia's economic decline.

10 August 1971

Pamphlet bombs in Four Cities

Eleven bombs explode, scattering ANC propaganda leaflets in the four major cities. The blasts occurred twelve months after similar actions in the same cities.

10 August 2020

Radio personality and business person Bob Mabena passed on

One of the most iconic South African radio and television personality, Bob Kgomo Mabea passed away on this day. His career in radio began in 1989 and spanned over three decades. He is also the recipient of various awards.

11 August 1963

Escape from Prison



Four political detainees: Harold Wolpe, a listed Communist arrested on the Bechuanaland border; Arthur Goldreich, caught in the Rivonia raid; Moosie Moolla, accused in the Treason Trial; and Charlie Jassat, escaped from the Johannesburg Central Police station after bribing a young warder on 11 August 1963. Mannie Brown was involved in planning and implementing the successful escape of the four detainees, but a massive manhunt and police operation led closer to Mannie and he was forced into hiding while his family went into exile. Probably the most dramatic escape in South African history, the detainees' exit from the country, particularly Goldreich's, infuriated the prosecutors and police who considered Goldreich to be 'the arch-conspirator' with regard to the Rivonia Trial. Wolpe, Goldreich, Moolla and Jassat all went to exile.

11 August 1972

No more land to Bantustans

The Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, M.C. Botha declares that no more land will be allocated to the 'homelands' other than that stipulated in the 1936 Land Act. The apartheid government declared the four homelands, Bophutatswana, Ciskei, Transkei and Venda independent in the 1970's.

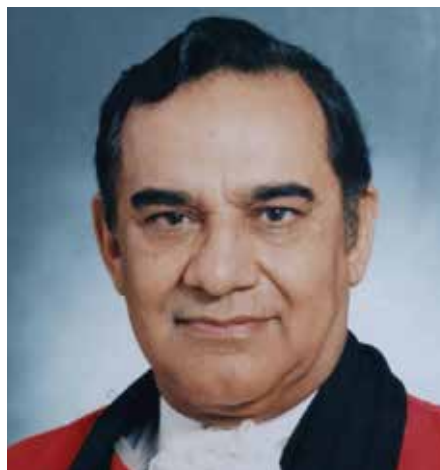
11-12 August 1976.

Student revolt spreads to Cape Town

The uprising started by students in Soweto on 16 June 1976 spread throughout the country. On this day, students organized protests in solidarity to Langa, Nyanga and Guguletu and then, for the first time, to Coloured townships in the city. Thirty three people were shot, and protesting student leaders from the University of Western Cape and others detained. Students at the Esselen Park High School in Worcester demonstrated in front of the school and were tear-gassed and baton charged. UCT students marched towards the city centre giving the Black Power Salute; 73 UCT students were arrested. In Bellville, 600 coloured students marched from the Bellville Training College and clash with police whilst in UWC a poster parade was broken by police. Poster bearers were arrested because of messages such as: *"Sorry Soweto, Kruger is a pig; the revolution is coming."*

11 August 1991

Ismail Mohamed First Black Judge appointed to the Supreme Court

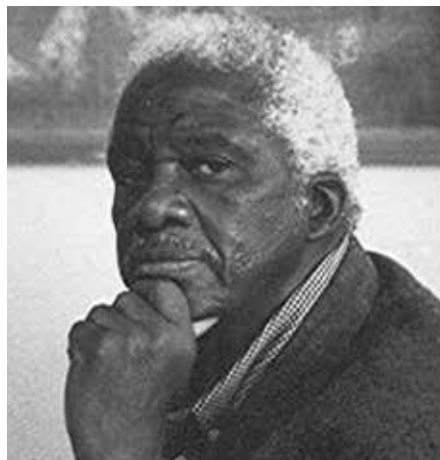


Ismail Mahomed was born in Pretoria on 5 July 1931 and died on 17 June 2000. Judge Mahomed

matriculated at Pretoria Indian Boys' High School in 1950, completed a BA degree at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1953, a BA honours with distinction in political science in 1954 and his LLB in 1957. Judge Mahomed was admitted to the Johannesburg Bar, because the Bar in Pretoria, where he lived, was reserved for whites. During the early sixties he was admitted as an advocate in Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. In 1984 he was admitted to the English Bar. He built an extensive litigation practice and in 1974 he became the first black person in the country's history to take silk. Judge Mahomed's practice was concentrated on civil rights. He appeared in numerous trials on behalf of some of the leading figures in the anti-apartheid movement and played a leading role in challenges to the government's administrative and executive decrees during his 35-year career as an advocate. In 1979 he was appointed a judge of the Appeal Court in Swaziland, in 1982 a judge of appeal in Lesotho, and later Chief Justice of Namibia and the president of the Lesotho Court of Appeal. In this capacity he gave some of these courts' leading constitutional and administrative law judgments. Judge Mohamed co-chaired the Conference for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), the negotiations forum that led to our democracy. In 1991, after the unbanning of the ANC, he became the first black person in South African history to be made a permanent judge of the Supreme Court of South Africa. Judge Mahomed was appointed to the Constitutional Court in 1994, and in 1998 he was made Chief Justice, a position he held until his death in 2000. Judge Mahomed published numerous articles in law journals and lec-

tured on human rights jurisprudence at universities abroad. He was made an honorary professor of law at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1990. He received honorary doctorates in law from the University of Delhi and the University of Pennsylvania. He was awarded the Indicator Human Rights award in 1990 and also received the special award of the Black Lawyers' Association for his outstanding contribution to the development of human rights in South Africa. (Source: <https://www.concourt.org.za/index.php/judges/former-judges/11-former-judges/57-justice-ismail-mahomed>)

11 August 2006 Poet Mazizi Kunene who penned *Emperor Shaka the Great*, passed on



The SABC reported that the celebrated African poet Professor Mazizi Kunene, well known for his epic poem *Emperor Shaka the Great*, which was inspired by the rise of the Zulu empire, has died in Durban at the age of 76 after a long illness. In 2005 Kunene was awarded the inaugural SA National Poet Laureate Prize, the M-Net Literary Awards Lifetime Achievement Award and recognised as a National Living Treasure by the Indigenous Knowledge Systems of SA. Kunene was born in Durban

on 12 May 1930, started writing at an early age and by 12 had a number of his poems published in newspapers and magazines. Professor Kunene wrote his masters thesis at the University of Natal on "*An Analytical Survey of Zulu Poetry, Both Traditional and Modern*" in 1959, and went on to do a PhD at London University. He became active in the ANC in the UK and did not complete his doctorate then. He went on to teach in the US, and returned to South Africa in 1993 to teach at the University of KZN. He published *Zulu Poems* (1970), as well as *Anthem of the Decades* (1981), a work dealing with Zulu religion and cosmology. His later books include *Isibusiso sikamhawu* (1994) and *Umwilili wama-Afrika* (1996).

12 August 1883 Last Quagga in the world dies

The last quagga in the world died in a zoo in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The quagga had once roamed the pastures of the Karoo and the southern Free State. It differed in appearance from other zebra in that it was striped on the front half of its body only. The upper part of its body was a creamy, light brown, while its belly and legs were whitish. The last wild quagga was probably shot in the late 1870s. The name is derived from a Khoi-Khoi word for zebra and is being said to resemble the quagga's call.

12 August 1952 Walter Sisulu arrested

Walter Sisulu and others were arrested on a charge under the Suppression of Communism Act. Sisulu played a significant role in the planning of the 1952 Defiance Campaign in which over 8

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

500 volunteers were mobilised to contravene apartheid laws. On 12 August 1952, Sisulu was arrested, and consequently banned under the Suppression of Communism Act. Later that year Sisulu, Nelson Mandela, James Moroka were tried for their involvement in the Defiance Campaign.

12 August 1946 African Mineworkers strike starts

A week-long strike by African mineworkers, led by JB Marks, leader of the African Mineworkers' Union, started on this day. The strike was initiated by the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), which was active in distributing pamphlets and other material related to the strike. About 60 000 miners went on strike. Government suppressed the strike by force. According to official figures, nine were killed and 1 248 injured. Fifty-one persons, mainly Communists, were later charged in connection with the strike.

12 August 1966 Bill to ban Communists from practicing law tabled

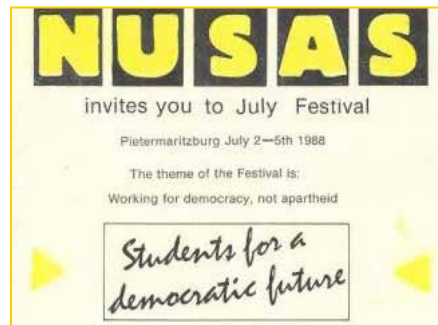
Under the Suppression of Communism Amendment Bill tabled in Parliament, any attorney or advocate who has committed an offence under the Act at any time is liable to be struck off the roll. Other clauses give the Minister of Justice powers to cut listed people off from contact with any organization he chooses. The Bill is rejected outright by the Progressive Party member Helen Suzman.

12 August 1969 UN demands withdrawal of South Africa from Namibia

The United Nations Security Council's resolution called on South Africa to withdraw its administration from Namibia immediately, and, in

any case, before 4 October 1969. South Africa was condemned for refusing to comply with previous United Nations resolutions.

12 August 1974 NUSAS students declared Traitors



The Commission of Inquiry into Certain Organizations submits its final report on NUSAS to Parliament. It finds that its leaders are traitors, guilty of providing terrorist groups and the like. The Commission recommended that the application of students to NUSAS should end and that NUSAS should not be allowed to accept funds from overseas.

13 August 1960 Oubangi-Shari achieves independence as the Central African Republic

Ubangi-Shari, then a French colony achieved independence as the Central African Republic (CAR). The colony was part of the French Equatorial Africa



(along with Chad and middle Congo). It was named after the Ubangi and Shari rivers. The Central African Republic (C.A.R.) was settled from at least the 7th century by overlapping empires, including the Kanem-Bornou, Ouaddai, Baguirmi, and Dafour groups based in Lake Chad and the Upper Nile. Population migration in the 18th and 19th centuries brought new migrants into the area, including the Zande, Banda, and M'Baka-Mandjia. In 1875, the Egyptian sultan Rabah governed Upper-Oubangui, which included present-day CAR, and in 1903 it became part of the French territory. David Dacko became the CAR's first post-independent president.

13 August 1965 Dr Silas Modiri Molema passed on

Dr Seetsele Silas Modiri Molema, medical doctor, politician and historian, died in Mafeking at the age of 74. He was the eldest son of Silas Thelesho Molema, maternal uncle of Chief Montshioa of the Barolong boo Ratshidi. He was elected Treasurer-General of the African National Congress and was served with banning orders by the government in 1953. He also served on the African Advisory Council, Joint Advisory Council, and the Constitutional Committee that set the Bechuanaland Protectorate on its road to independence as the Republic of Botswana.

13 August 1967 MK and ZAPU engaged Rhodesian Forces in Wankie Campaign

Umkhonto and ZAPU guerillas engaged Rhodesian forces in Wankie (now Hwange) Game Reserve, near the border of Zambia and Botswana.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

8–13 August 2026

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



8 August

International Cat Day

International Cat Day was created in 2002 by the International Fund for Animal Welfare, to raise awareness for cats and learn about ways to help and protect them. In 2021 there were an estimated 220 million domestic cats and 480 million stray cats.

9 August

National Women's Day

On 9 August 1956, over 20,000 women from all over South Africa travelled to the Union Buildings to join the Federation of South African Women's (FED-SAW) march against pass laws. Many thousands more were prevented from partaking in the march by the police or by bannings. Gathering on the lawn of the Union Buildings, a delegation of women – Lilian Ngoyi, Rahema Mohamed, Sophie De Bruyn and Helen Joseph handed over thousands of petitions against the hated passes to the representatives of the then Prime Minister, who was hiding from the women. As they raised their fists to the air, they chanted: *Wathint' abafazi, Strijdom! Wathint' abafazi! Wathint' imbokodo, Uzakufa!* (You Strike a Woman, You Strike a Rock, You shall be Crushed!)

This women's march inspired the women movement throughout the decades of struggle, and after 1994 the day is celebrated as National Women's Day, to remind our country of the bravery of women in struggle and the need to continue to strive for a non-sexist South Africa.

9 August

Book Lovers Day

An unofficial holiday observed to encourage bibliophiles to celebrate reading and literature. People are advised to put away their smartphones and every possible technological distraction and pick up a book to read. Book Lovers Day is widely recognized on global scale yet its origin and creator remain unknown to date.

9 August

International Day of the World's Indigenous People

9 August commemorates the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. It is celebrated around the world and marks the date of the inaugural session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations at the United Nations in 1982. Indigenous peoples

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY



live in all regions of the world and own, occupy or use some 22% of global land area. Definitions of indigenous people include 'original and earliest known inhabitants of an area'; 'cultural distinct groups affected by colonialism' or 'inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures and ways of relating to people and the environment. They have retained social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live.' Numbering at least 370-500 million, indigenous peoples represent the greater part of the world's cultural diversity, and have created and speak the major share of the world's almost 7000 languages. Many indigenous peoples continue to be confronted with marginalization, extreme poverty and other human rights violations. (www.unesco.org)

10 August

African Civil registration and Vital Statistics Day

Africa Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Day is celebrated on 10 August every year, with the aim of increasing public awareness on the importance of the timely registration of vital events, particularly births and deaths, through well-functioning civil registration and vital statistics systems.

10 August

African Day of Decentralisation and Local Development (ADD)

Local government is an important localized and decentralized form of government, from both a developmental and participation perspective. The day spotlights the role of local government in urban and rural areas across the continent. The African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralisation, Local Governance and Local Development was adopted in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea in 2014. Objectives

of African Day of Decentralisation and Local Development (ADD) is identified as follows:

1. Facilitate the exchange of best practices on inclusive local governance strategies that promote equitable development, historical redress, and community resilience.
2. Highlight the role of local governments in addressing systemic inequalities by expanding access to decent habitats, basic services, and social infrastructure for historically underserved populations.
3. Strengthen stakeholder engagement, especially of youth, women, and marginalized groups, in decision-making processes to harness Africa's demographic dividend through localized empowerment.
4. Assess policy and institutional progress made since the 2014 African Charter on Decentralization and propose strategic directions to deepen decentralization reforms across Member States.

12 August

International Youth Day

International Youth Day gives an opportunity to celebrate and mainstream young peoples' voices, actions and initiatives, as well as their meaningful, universal and equitable engagement. There are over 1.1 billion young people ages 15-24 in the world, the UN definition of youth. Eighty five percent live in developing countries. It also provides countries the opportunity to assess their investment in and education of its young people. The theme for 2026 is **Different Contexts, Common Aspirations**. Young people around the world live in different realities, yet they share common aspirations for dignity, opportunity, inclusion and a sustainable future. This International Youth Day, celebrate the diversity, resilience and leadership of young people in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals and building a better world for all.

12 August

World Elephant Day

The day is dedicated to the preservation of the world's elephants. There are two living species, the Asian and African elephants. The African elephant is the world largest land animal, weighing up to 10 000 kg. There are today only 40 000-50 000 elephants left in the wild, with between 15 000 and 20 000 in captivity. South Africa has around 24 000 elephants, 17 000 in the Kruger National Park and about 600 in the Addo Elephant Park.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE PLAN PILLAR 1



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**2026: The Year of Decisive Action
to Fix Local Government and
Transform the Economy**

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