



3.2 The national Coat of Arms - construction and meaning

The national Coat of Arms is a series of elements organized in two distinct circles placed on top of one another.

The complete structure of the national Coat of Arms combines the lower and higher circles in a symbol of infinity. The path that connects the lower edge of the scroll, through the lines of the tusks, with the horizon above from which the sun rises at the top, forms the shape of a cosmic egg from which the secretary bird rises. It symbolizes the rebirth of our great heroic nation.

The lower circle represents the elements of Foundation

The first element is the Motto, in a green semicircle. Completing the semicircle are two symmetrically placed pairs of elephant tusks pointing upwards. Within the circle formed by the tusks are two symmetrical ears of wheat that, in turn, frame a centrally placed gold shield.

The shape of the shield makes reference to the drum and contains two human figures from Khoisan rock art. The figures are depicted facing one another in greeting and in unity.

Above the shield are placed a spear and a knobkierie, crossed in a single unit. These elements are arranged harmoniously to give focus to the shield and complete the lower circle of foundation.

The circle of Ascendance

Immediately above the circle of foundation, is the visual centre of the Coat of Arms, a protea. The petals of the protea are rendered in a triangular pattern reminiscent of the crafts of Africa.

The secretary bird is placed above the protea and the flower forms the chest of the bird. The secretary bird stands with its wings uplifted in a regal and uprising gesture. The distinctive head feathers of the secretary bird crown a strong and vigilant head.

The rising sun above the horizon is placed between the wing of the secretary bird and completes the circle of ascendance.

The combination of the upper and lower circles intersect to form an unbroken infinite course, and the great harmony between the basic elements results in a dynamic, elegant and thoroughly distinctive design. Yet it clearly retains the stability, gravity and immediacy that a Coat of Arms demands.





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3.2.1 The circle of Foundation



The national Coat of Arms is a series of elements organized in two distinct ovals placed on top of one another. The elements in the circle of foundation include the following:

- ① **The motto:** *!ke e:/xarra/!ke*, written in the language of the /Xam people, literally means *Diverse People Unite*. It represents the nation uniting in a common sense of belonging and national pride.
- ② **Elephant tusks:** These symbolize wisdom, strength, moderation and eternity.
- ③ **The ears of wheat:** An emblem of fertility, germination, growth and the development of potential. The ears of wheat also relate to the agricultural aspects of the earth.
- ④ **The shield:** The shape of the gold shield is drum-like. It has a dual function: the display of identity and of spiritual defence.
- ⑤ **The human figures:** The figures are derived from images on the Linton Stone, a world-famous example of South African rock art. The Khoisan, oldest known inhabitants of our land, testify to our common humanity and heritage as South Africans. The figures are depicted in an attitude of greeting, symbolizing unity. It also represents the beginning of the individual's transformation into the greater sense of belonging to the nation and humanity.
- ⑥ **The spear and a knobkierie:** Dual symbols of defence and authority, they also represent the powerful legs of the secretary bird. The spear and knobkierie are lying down, symbolizing peace.





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3.2.2 The circle of Ascendance



The Circle of Ascendance includes the following elements:

- ⑦ **The protea:** An emblem of beauty of our land and the flowering of our potential as a nation in pursuit of the African Renaissance. It also symbolizes the holistic integration of forces that grow from the earth, nurtured from above.
- ⑧ **The secretary bird:** The secretary bird is characterized in flight, the natural consequence of growth and speed. It is a powerful bird whose legs – depicted as the spear and the knobkierie – serve it well in its hunt for snakes. It is a symbol of divine majesty. Its uplifted wing is an emblem of the ascendance of our nation, while simultaneously offering us its protection.
- ⑨ **The rising sun:** An emblem of brightness and splendour, the sun symbolizes the promise of rebirth, the active faculties of reflection, knowledge, good judgement and willpower. It is the very symbol of the source of life, light and the ultimate wholeness of humanity.

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