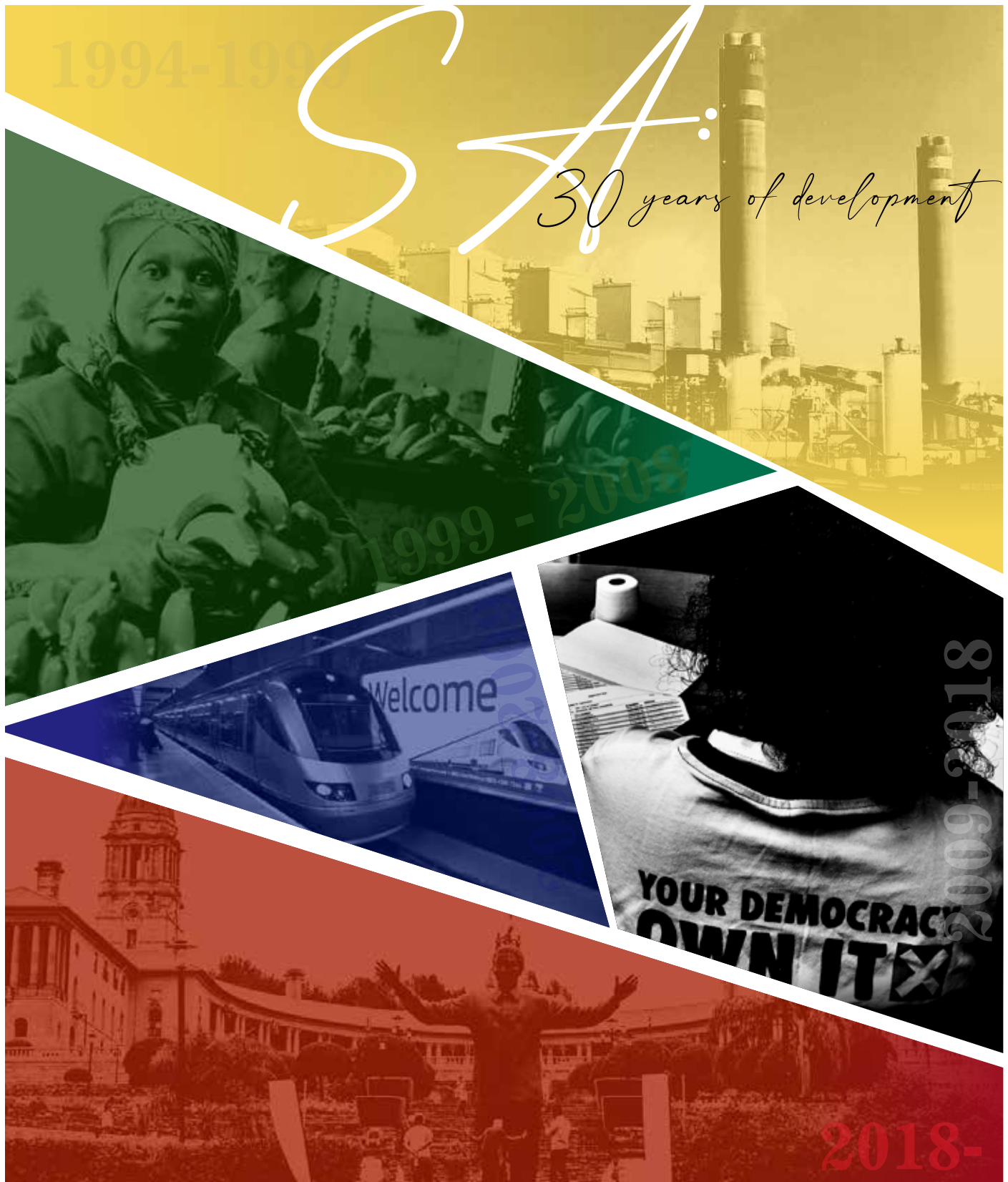


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FOREWORD

The energy, the emotion, the excitement. The warm, fuzzy feeling that moment in time and history, hardly fails to bring.

If you were lucky enough to be there - then, goose bumps will be par for the course, every time you take a trip down the memory of standing in the long lines that characterised the first national democratic elections, held in South Africa, in April 1994.

That powerful, all-encompassing energy of excitement, freedom, and tangible hope at last that reverberated throughout our country was palpable.

Following on the heels of those warm, fuzzy feels, came the day when the father of our nation, Tata Nelson Mandela, took to the podium in Parliament, to deliver his first address to a democratic nation. In that rare moment, we knew in our hearts, the magic in our country had just begun.

This first address to the new rainbow nation took place on 24 May 1994, following Tata Madiba's inauguration on 10 May 1994. This historic speech marked the dawn of a new era in South Africa, as President Mandela, the country's first democratically elected president, addressed the nation and outlined his vision for reconciliation, unity, and rebuilding - following decades of apartheid.

As we reflect on 30 years of democracy, we honour the milestones that shaped our nation: the strides in economic growth, the relentless pursuit of equality, and the unwavering commitment to uplifting the most vulnerable in our society. From the electrification of households to the bridges that now connect communities, every achievement stands as a testament to the resilience and determination of the South African people.

We remember the challenges too - the moments that tested our unity and resolve. The ongoing fight against gender-based violence, the scars of unrest, and the weight of a global

pandemic. Yet, through every hardship, South Africans have stood together, embodying the spirit of 'Ubuntu'.

This publication showcases a series of SAnews.gov.za articles (formerly known as BuaNews) written and published over the last 30 years.

The articles are more than a commemoration of the past; they are a celebration of the human spirit and an unwavering belief in a brighter future. It is a reminder that the hope we felt in 1994 still lives within us, carried forward by each new generation who dares to dream of a better South Africa.

As we turn the page to the next chapter, may we carry the lessons of the past, embrace the opportunities of the present, and walk boldly into a future where the promise of freedom, dignity, and prosperity for all, is fulfilled.

That is because the magic in this country never faded. It lives on in every South African heart, beating with hope for tomorrow.



Roze Britz

Editor: SAnews.gov.za

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30 Years of development

Chapter 1

Restoring SA
after Apartheid &
Democracy

Restoring SA after apartheid

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

As South Africa celebrates reaching the historic milestone of 30 years of democracy, Minister in the Presidency, Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, says in their reflections of this journey, South Africans should remember the kind of state that was inherited by government in 1994.

“For some, 30 years may seem like a long time, yet when we consider what the democratic state inherited in 1994, it was always clear that our journey would be long and with many highs and lows. In 1994, we were a fractured nation,” Ntshavheni said on Wednesday in Pretoria.

Addressing the launch of the 30 Year Review Report, the Minister said the very fabric of the country had been torn apart by apartheid’s policies, which had systematically excluded black South Africans to the fringes of society.

“Planning and development in South Africa before 1994 was fragmented, thus enabling their exclusion and marginalisation from developmental opportunities,” the Minister said.

The 30 Year Review Report reflects on the work South Africa has collectively undertaken to build a democratic, prosperous and free South Africa.

“Thirty years of freedom and democracy in South Africa is a journey through triumphs, challenges, and ongoing progress. It’s a testament to the resilience and spirit of a nation that has overcome immense adversity to embrace unity, democracy, and equality.

“While milestones like the end of apartheid have been monumental, there’s recognition of the work still ahead to address systemic issues and ensure that freedom truly reaches every corner of society. It’s a time to celebrate progress, honour those who fought for change, and commit to building a future where every South African can thrive,” the Minister said.

She emphasised that the South Africa of today is much better than the South Africa of 1994.

According to the World Bank, South Africa is the leading economy in the African continent with



nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of over \$US 373 billion.

“Gross Tax revenue collection increased from R147.3 billion in 1996 to R2.155 trillion in 2023/2024 - the ever growing economy, while facing headwinds at present, has demonstrated the ability to create jobs and employment despite historical and structural challenges. South Africa has 750 000km of road network and it ranks 11th amongst the countries with the largest road network,” the Minister said.

South Africa’s road network that is paved and/or tarred is at 159 272 kilometres. It ranks 19th globally.

“It is no small feat that South Africa has achieved universal access to education for children between the ages of 7 - 15 years and we are on track to achieve universal access to Early Childhood Development. Through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, and its predecessor, the Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa (TEFSA), the government continues to break generational poverty with families and households having first time graduates - something many would not have dared dream of,” the Minister said.

– [SAnews.gov.za](https://www.sanews.gov.za)

30 Years of development

Democracy **restored** **the dignity** of South Africans

Monday, April 29, 2024

President Cyril Ramaphosa says the advent of democracy in South Africa 30 years ago, allowed all South Africans to reclaim their dignity.

The President was addressing the nation through his weekly newsletter on Monday.

On Saturday, 27 April 2024, South Africa celebrated 30 years of democracy when millions of South Africans – most voting for the first time – cast their vote in 1994 to remove the racist apartheid government from power.

This as the President led the 2024 Freedom Day national celebrations at the Union Buildings in Pretoria, on Saturday.

“At times of difficulty in the life of our nation, some have found themselves tempted to question whether life has really been better under democracy. For all who experienced apartheid, there can be no doubt that democracy has restored the dignity of every South African,” the President said in his newsletter.

He called apartheid and its “bureaucratic

pettiness” a “national humiliation”.

“[27 April 1994] was the day on which the country turned its back on apartheid. Beyond the great wrong that was apartheid, it was a system designed to deny people their dignity.

“This national humiliation and degradation ranged from bureaucratic pettiness like whites-only benches, restaurants and beaches, to the brute force that saw families torn apart and forcibly moved from their houses and land. People were tortured, imprisoned, exiled and killed. The so-called solution of ‘separate development’ resulted in nothing but underdevelopment for the country’s majority,” he explained.

Children of democracy

President Ramaphosa expressed joy at how people born after 1994 exude confidence “secure in the knowledge that their dignity is both respected and protected”.

“Democracy’s children are self-assured about their human rights, in their citizenship, of their role



and place in society, and of their own potential.

“During apartheid, Bantu education was served up to the country’s black majority as a reminder that there was no place for them ‘above the level of certain forms of labour’. In South Africa today, equal access to quality education has enabled black children to become CEOs of companies, professors, engineers, and fighter pilots.

“Young South Africans, our nation’s future, are making their mark in the workplace, in arts, culture and music, in academia, in the high-growth tech and IT sectors, and in serving their communities,” he said.

The President said a great sense of gratitude engulfs him when observing those South Africans born post-1994.

“I am grateful that they will never have to endure the humility and indignity of previous

generations, of being forced to sit on separate park benches, dispossessed of their land, denied opportunities for advancement and of being pariahs in the land of their birth,” he said.

Moving forward

Reflecting on the journey to rebuilding the nation, President Ramaphosa acknowledged that “we are not as far as we had hoped to be”.

He added that while government has done much to unravel apartheid’s legacy, many local and global challenges have hampered progress.

“In recent years, as we sought to recover from more than a decade of low growth and the era of state capture, our progress was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the loss of more than 100 000 lives in our country and caused the greatest contraction of our economy in decades.

“The public unrest in July 2021 and the catastrophic floods in parts of the country the following year led to further loss of life and destruction of property and infrastructure.

“While these events severely hampered our collective efforts to rebuild the country, they also showed the resilience of the South African people. Despite these great difficulties, we have persevered with the task of reform and recovery, to grow an inclusive economy and create jobs,” he said.

The President said government remains committed to resolving the challenges that the country faces.

“We have continued to work together to overcome the crises of unemployment, poverty, inequality and underdevelopment. These challenges impact on the lives of millions of people and undermine the dignity that we have worked throughout our democracy to restore. “And yet we maintain our resolve to move forward with optimism. We have come a long, long way. And we are determined to go further to achieve the free, just and equal South Africa for which millions voted on Freedom Day 30 years ago,” President Ramaphosa said. – **SAnews.gov.za**



SA: An impressive example for democracies



As the indelible ink used to register voters in the recent general elections has almost faded from the left thumb; work to move South Africa Inc forward has been moving ahead steadily.

Following the hotly contested 2024 National and Provincial Elections (NPE), which produced no outright winner, South Africa is traversing partially new ground with the possible formation of a government of national unity (GNU).

I say partially new ground because the country adopted a GNU following the historic elections

of 1994 which saw everyone who was eligible to, cast their vote for the first time and the African National Congress (ANC) win the polls. The elections ushered in a new democratic dispensation as well as the decision to put in place a three-party GNU under President Nelson Mandela, despite there being an outright winner.

However, following the 29 May 2024 polls, no political party received an outright majority, necessitating consideration of a number of options, including a GNU which President Cyril

Ramaphosa has described as “the beginning of a new era.”

President Ramaphosa said the first GNU was established to promote nation building and inclusivity from a racially divided past during a period of political transition.

While many are wondering what the new GNU will entail in detail, what is clear is that our 30-year-old democracy is growing and maturing.

In other parts of the world, an unfavourable elections outcome for a ruling party could very likely be met with violence and a disregard for organisations established under chapter nine of the Constitution, like the Electoral Commission. Additionally, this violence would be closely followed by intolerance and instability as uninvited guests to an already tumultuous party.

However, in South Africa’s case, the will of the people exercised at the ballot box, is being implemented through the GNU. And before we moan and complain about the time it is taking to announce the new Cabinet, we ought to appreciate the fact that lives have not been lost or disrupted because of the Constitution-provided right for adult citizens to vote in elections and to do so in secret. Dialogue and engagement have been the first port of call - a clear indication that our 30-year-old democracy is dependable, resilient and respected.

To date, we’ve seen the swearing in of Members of Parliament, the election of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly; the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces as well as the election and inauguration of President Ramaphosa.

The President affirmed this in his first address to the nation as President of the seventh administration. In his address following his inauguration at the Union Buildings, the President said: “In their multitude, in voices that are many and diverse, the people of South Africa have voted and made known their wishes, their concerns and their expectations. They did not give any single party the full mandate to govern our country alone.”

While the election results were not fully favourable for all parties, the results have been largely accepted and this is evidenced through the 10 of 18 parties with seats in Parliament having signed the GNU’s Statement of Intent.

According to President Ramaphosa’s recent weekly newsletter, the Statement of Intent commits signatories to a set of foundational principles that include respect for constitutionalism, accountability, transparency and community participation in government, evidence-based policy and decision-making, professionalisation of the public service, integrity and good governance.

In addition, the election results are proof that voting is not a futile exercise. The act of making one’s X on a ballot goes a long way. It has the potential of changing the trajectory of the country.

While that stubborn indelible ink may have faded off the left thumb, its impact has not only been an eyesore for those with beautifully manicured fingernails, but has also produced a new valuable chapter in South Africa’s autobiography that we can learn from.

While this autobiography displays all the good, such as increasing enrolment in public universities from 494 356 in 1994 to over a million students in 2023, steadily edging closer to the National Development Plan’s target of 1.6 million enrolments by the year 2030, as well as the provision of social grants to the most vulnerable - the story also lays bare some ugly truths, such as the ongoing battle against inequality, gender-based violence and unemployment that continues to plague society.

Citizens should be proud of how far the country has come. Our Constitution has been stretched and tested. Yet, it is still standing. Our country has not descended into chaos.

Democratic South Africa’s manuscript may have its fair share of stains across its pages in history. What is clear however, is that it has not found itself under the thumb of undemocratic practises. As in 1994, when South Africa showed the rest of the continent and globe that a peaceful transition, together with an inclusive government is possible - again, 30 years later, we are shining the same light of hope for the rest of the world, as we begin our new era.

- SAnews.gov.za

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Chapter 2

The First
10 Years of
Democracy

Mandela makes fervent plea to the nation

By Matome Sebelebele : Monday, 10 May 2004



Former President Nelson Mandela has called on the nation never to forget the country's past but utilise that experience as a guiding light to overcome challenges that still remain.

"Let us never be unmindful of the terrible past from which we come - that memory not as a means to keep us shackled to the past in a negative manner, but rather as a joyous reminder of how far we have come and how much we have achieved," he affirmed.

Madiba made the profound statement during

his special address to Parliament today, to mark the inauguration of the first democratically elected President and his two deputy presidents, ten years ago.

At the time, Mandela was installed as head of government with FW de Klerk and incumbent President Thabo Mbeki as second in command during a decisive period that ultimately set the "rainbow nation" on a path to peaceful and democratic rule.

To this end, the trio unveiled a commemorative

30 Years of development

“My wish is that South Africans never give up on the belief in goodness; that they cherish that faith in human beings as a cornerstone of our democracy.”

inscription at the legislative organ cementing the historic path the country underwent then as well as celebrating ten years of democracy.

Madiba said the country’s past history of division, injustice and suffering ought to “inspire us to celebrate our own demonstration of the capacity of human beings to progress, to go forward, to improve, to do better.”

He called on the nation never to stop embracing each other, saying the country had become “an inspiration to many symbolising that “good can be achieved among human beings”.

“My wish is that South Africans never give up on the belief in goodness; that they cherish that faith in human beings as a cornerstone of our democracy,” he said to loud applause.

There is enough reason for cynicism and despair, he said, but advised that the nation ought to take serious “our own experience and performance” to heart.

“Let us refrain from chauvinistic breast-beating; but let us also not underrate what we have achieved in establishing a stable and progressive democracy where we take freedoms seriously; in building national unity in spite of decades and centuries of apartheid and colonial rule; in creating a culture in which we increasingly respect the dignity of all.”

He warned about challenges still remaining, especially poverty, unemployment, disease - including HIV and AIDS - calling on the Speaker of Parliament Baleka Mbete to help turn Parliament into the “voice of the people.”

Constantly referring to himself as an “old man and a retired old pensioner,” Madiba, who was surprisingly dressed in a suit, told the MPs that he was grateful to have been elected to lead the

country during its turbulent years.

“This old man (Madiba)... notes with immense satisfaction and pride today the persistence and strengthening of that spirit of generosity, magnanimity and confident hopefulness about the future of our nation.”

He also took off his hat to his successor, President Thabo Mbeki, for his “sterling” leadership.

“No President or Prime Minister in the history of this country can claim to have done more for the people and the country than has been achieved by President Thabo Mbeki,” he said.

“He is a modest man and I know he would prefer that I do not sing his personal praises, but his achievement as President and national leader is the embodiment of what our nation is capable of.” Madiba sealed his thought-provoking address by calling on God to bless Africa, using six of the country’s 11 official languages. - **BuaNews**



Parliament honours Madiba



By Karen Pretorius:
Monday, 10 May 2004

These were the words of former President FW De Klerk as he paid tribute to his successor, Nelson Mandela, at a joint session of Parliament, earlier today.

Mr De Klerk was one of the people who saw to the ushering in of democracy in South Africa, leading to the release of Madiba from prison in February 1990.

He later became one of the two Deputy Presidents in the democratic South Africa. He retired from politics in 1997.

The session commemorated the day, exactly ten years ago, when the first democratically elected President in the country was sworn in, following the country's first democratic elections on 27 April 1994.

Former President FW De Klerk told the House

that he never expected to be back to address Parliament.

He praised all South Africans for their role in bringing about change in the country, but he had a special tribute for Madiba.

"To a great leader, a man who towered out like a giant in this transformation, to a man who has shown to all of us what it means to really build reconciliation," Mr De Klerk said.

The former President hailed South Africa's achievements over the last decade, and singled out delivery in housing as well as in water and in sanitation as positive improvements.

He asked all South Africans to join hands for further socio-economic transformation, saying the challenges were still huge. "We must ensure that South Africa becomes a winning nation."

At the end of the joint session, the Presiding Officers of Parliament unveiled the replica of a plaque that would become a permanent fixture.

The plaque pays tribute to the country's achievement of democracy.

MP Jeremy Cronin, with his writing "To learn how to speak" was one of four people who rendered poetry at the start of the sitting.

Madiba left the Chamber, assisted by former President De Klerk, as those gathered chorused 'Rolihlahla Mandela, freedom is in your hands, show us the way to freedom in this land of Africa'.

- **BuaNews**

Cape Town - "Today in more than one sense of the word is the day of Nelson Mandela, of Madiba".

Towards a Ten-Year Review

21 March 2004

Feature: After 75 years of hardship, I have my own house

The legacy of apartheid in South Africa is acknowledged and disputed by some, but the system deprived so many people such that it is easy in the country to find a 75 year-old who had never owned a house. Thabo Mokgola speaks to one such grateful and insightful citizen.

Clad in red traditional Pedi regalia, complete with a matching head-scuff, 75 year-old Anna Moshabi speaks with mixed feelings when reciting her history from a farm worker in Ga-Seleka in Limpopo, to her present pension life.

At some points, tears stream down her eyes, but now that she has a house of her own, her face glows with happiness the very moment she wipes the tears off.

Ms Moshabi is one of 10 000 beneficiaries of government's subsidised houses in Letlhabile, north-west of Pretoria, where the Minister of Housing Bridgitte Mabandla, last month, handed over 8 500 houses to residents of the Madibeng Municipality, formerly Brits.

"It pains me to see that a lot of young people do not appreciate what the new government has done for us, especially considering the horrific deeds some of us had to endure to attain freedom in this country," she says.

Having trekked all the way from Ga-Seleka to Pretoria in search of better employment opportunities, Ms Moshabi was banished to Brits because she did not possess a pass book as was required by the apartheid government.

In Brits, she could not have her own house. She lived in her employer's cottages reserved for

domestic workers and employers "would chase us out whenever they felt like it and we would end up in another employer's house", she says, as she wipes away more tears that fall down her wrinkled cheek.

In 1985, she decided she would wind her life up in Oskraal, a remote rural settlement next to Letlhabile, where she lived in a mud hut with her late husband. They then moved to her present site, called the Centreville section, ten years later.

In a nonchalant mood, she explains that she witnessed the metamorphosis of the township from being a "veld with few shacks, to being a proper township with running water, electricity and now houses we can proudly call our own".

She says initially they had to use self-made lanterns and primus stoves to get by in the absence of electricity. Also, they bought water from those who were fortunate enough to own boreholes.

"We used to buy 150 litres of water for R6 and that would only last for two or three days, due to a lot of chores to be performed in the house."

In late February this year, Minister Mabandla and officials from her department descended on Ms Moshabi's doorstep, presenting her with the keys to her first ever house.

The handover formed part of five projects in Lethabong, Mothotlung, Damonsville and Oukasie.

They had been in construction since September 2000 and have cost over R800 million.

Speaking during the handover, Minister Mabandla said through the delivery of houses



to the Madibeng communities, government had ensured that they enjoyed improved living conditions.

“Most importantly, these projects have demonstrated the success of the approach that promotes many alternative options, which are available to meet the diverse needs of our beneficiaries,” she said.

In April, government will be commemorating ten years of democracy and one of the yardsticks that would be used to measure its successes or failures would be the provision of houses to South Africans.

Minister Mabandla acknowledges that it has not been plain sailing.

South Africa, she explained, was facing a unique housing problem.

“Whereas most countries are mainly focusing on meeting the emerging demand for housing resulting from new families and change in family size, South Africa has to first grapple with the housing backlog; a legacy of past neglect of the majority of our people by the apartheid government.”

Nonetheless, government managed - within a decade - to deliver more than 1.6 million houses to over 7.35 million beneficiaries, an unprecedented feat very few developing nations can boast.

In the process, 400 000 former municipal houses worth R32-billion had been transferred for ownership by people who had been renting them.

The initiation and implementation of the Rental Housing and Urban Renewal Programmes also enhanced the delivery of housing.

In recognition of the magnanimous achievement, former housing minister Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele was conferred with the United Nations (UN) Habitat award for her role as the head of housing provision in the country.

Ms Mthembu-Mahanyele is a walking encyclopaedia of heart-warming memories of recipients of houses countrywide.

In one of the most memorable occasions as a minister of housing, she recently told BuaNews, “while handing over a title deed and keys to an 80 year-old pensioner in Northern Cape, she said to me: ‘Now that I have got my own house I can die’ and she died the next day”.

Such is the kind of impact the delivery of low cost housing has on individuals.

But the 75-year-old Anna Moshabi is thrilled about her house and dying is not part of her lingo at the moment because “Now, I feel like a complete human being,” she proclaims. “I am happy that they (government) have restored my dignity.”

She has a lot to think about - including how will furnish her new house but for now she beams, she has her “proper pass book” - the green bar-coded identity document - and would use it to cast her vote on April 14, when the country holds its third democratic elections. - BuaNews

Recipients of free water set to increase

By Trevor Gozhi : 2 July 2002



At least 27 million people, who had no access to water previously, are now able to enjoy a basic amount of water free, per household per month, following government's free basic water programme - implemented a year ago.

And, government says this figure is set to increase.

This month marks the first anniversary of government's implementation of its free basic water programme.

Water Affairs Minister Ronnie Kasrils says at least 239 municipalities are implementing the national water policy, with 24 having announced this week that they were ready to provide the service.

"An additional 3.4 million people will be served, increasing the percentage of the population who receive a basic amount of free water from 67 percent to 76 percent."

Minister Kasrils says government is committed to eradicating poverty and building a better life for all.

Since 1994, government has provided the infrastructure for clean, safe water to over seven million people, but the provision of infrastructure

does not guarantee access to water if people cannot afford to pay for the water, the minister explains.

Throughout the developing world, he says, the lack of access to water is one of the defining criteria of poverty, and adds that the eradication of poverty and access to basic services form part of government's highest priorities.

Mr Kasrils says government's free basic water programme is the result of the realisation that many South Africans cannot afford to pay for services to which the Constitution guarantees the right of access.

The programme, however, stipulates that all people using more than the stipulated volume of free water must pay their bills.

Of the 27 million people benefiting from the water infrastructure and free basic water programme, 40 percent are found in Limpopo; 45 percent in the Eastern Cape; 54 percent in the Northern Cape; 59 percent in Mpumalanga; 66 percent in the North West; 87 percent in the Free State; 90 percent in KwaZulu-Natal; 92 percent in Gauteng and 100 percent in the Western Cape. -

BuaNews

South Africa intensifies efforts to push back the frontiers of poverty

By Veronica Mohapeloa: 20 December 2002

The State of the nation address by President Thabo Mbeki early this year started the ball rolling to intensify efforts to arrest poverty among children in the country.

Delivering his speech to the nation, the President called on people to volunteer in the spirit of Letsema, to ensure all eligible children are registered for the social grants, to reach a target of 3 million children by 2005.

And so the country heeded the call, with many people volunteering to help push back the frontiers of poverty, and at the helm was Social Development Minister Zola Skweyiya.

For this reason, more than two million children are already receiving the grant.

The move saw much intensification in October, which was declared Children's Month with the theme 'Lend a hand to protect children's rights'.

At the beginning of the month, Government announced plans to spend at least R4.8-billion a year to reach an additional 3.2 million children who qualified for its child support grant and plans are also afoot to extend the grant to children up to the age of 14.

Significantly government increased the Child Support Grant by R10 from R130 to R140, grant aid from R120 to R130, foster care grant from R450 to R460 and care dependency from R620 to R640.

Addressing a seminar recently, Dr Skweyiya said government was injecting more than R2-billion of cash income into domestic budgets of poor households per month, through the payment of social grants.

On average, about five million people were receiving the grants per month. These included over two million older persons, parents of caregivers of more than 2.1 million children

and more than 800 000 people living with disabilities, among others.

The call was spread throughout the country; most importantly during government's outreach programme, known as Imbizo.

This saw the prioritisation of poverty eradication in many parts of the country, including the northern parts of the Eastern Cape, after the media reported that children were dying of malnutrition there because they were not registered to receive the much-needed grant.

The affected areas included Mt Ayliff, Mount Frere, Mt Fletcher, Maluti, Umzimkulu and Lusikisiki.

During the last leg of Imbizo in October, Deputy President Jacob Zuma and Dr Skweyiya visited the Alfred Nzo Municipality and announced R2-million to be used in poverty-relief programmes in the areas.

The relief wheel has started rolling towards the Eastern Cape people since then, as business and government have come together and responded appropriately to bring relief at last for the starving children and parents.

The private sector has also heeded the call, as government alone cannot help all those in need. For this reason, businesses such as the Sunday Times donated more than R250 000 and opened a trust fund to help feed the families there. In addition, the international charity organisation Gift of the Givers started donating food hampers to the hungry.

In the week before the Imbizo visit on 13 October, more than 300 000 children had been registered to receive grants in the Eastern Cape.

The Imbizo had come and gone but the need to rid children of poverty still lingered on. Dr Skweyiya then convened a two-day Business Summit, from which emerged a unanimous

decision to resolve the huge socio-economic challenges facing the country, including poverty.

Pick n' Pay undertook to look at 40 projects identified by Dr Skweyiya for social development, which the food retailer had agreed were projects in line with the commitment of their business social investment policies.

ABSA Bank and the National Development Agency (NDA) also signed a historic agreement, in which they agreed to team up to support and strengthen community-based organisations and projects dealing with social development matters.

The bank's general manager Etienne van Loggerenberg told BuaNews they had identified eight projects, for which R1-million would be used to evaluate financial implications and sustainability.

The Eastern Cape is also set to benefit from a R400-million poverty relief and food security programme that Dr Skweyiya launched there last month. In addition to efforts done for the Eastern Cape, government has also intensified poverty-relief for the Free State and KwaZulu-Natal. Including the Eastern Cape, the former are the country's most poor provinces.

Late last month, the minister launched the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) country support programme, setting aside R72-million to fight poverty and HIV/AIDS in the three provinces over the next five years.

The programme is set to support government in redressing past imbalances including combating the effects of poverty on the poor, promoting gender mainstreaming activities, raising the profile of population and development; and mobilising resources and contributing to capacity building in the population and development sector.

Through this, the UNFPA – which works to ensure universal access to reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health to all in the world – would provide technical support and research.

It was through the call by Dr Skweyiya that a Comprehensive Social Security System will soon be implemented in the country, including the social security agency to see to the efficient payment of social grants to beneficiaries.

It is also through the same minister among others, that Angola is receiving aid from South Africa.

Last month, the minister called for solidarity with the cash-strapped African country. For this reason, consignments including food, clothing, medicines and agricultural materials donated by South Africans were dispatched to Angola.

Through the same minister, South Africa may introduce volunteer legislation to regulate volunteerism in the country, to ensure that the social and institutional environment was conducive to volunteering activities in the country.

However, government believes the provision of social grants and the provision of food are two of the most important interventions it could make to stop the suffering.

Beginning this year, Finance Minister Trevor Manuel has said an amount of R400-million a year would be set aside for emergency relief for those facing desperate circumstances as a result of food shortages and food price rises.

Not only is the provision of social grants the most important task for the minister but the onslaught brought by HIV/AIDS is one other thorny issue government is grappling with.

Addressing a prayer meeting to eradicate the stigma and discrimination suffered by people living with HIV/AIDS, Dr Skweyiya said he wanted to leave behind a legacy of having changed the lives of millions of the country's poor, especially children who he said were most vulnerable.

The National Strategic Framework on HIV/AIDS Orphans points out that 'unless families and communities are strengthened and provision is made for adequate resources and support, the numbers of children orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS will place an unmanageable strain on extended families and an overwhelming pressure on government and community resources'.

For this reason, the minister called on people to organise themselves and initiate projects such as food gardens and others to ensure that poverty and unemployment were fought with vigour.

Not only are children, poverty and HIV/AIDS, government's only concern. Late in November, the minister brought an early Christmas treat to more than 800 older persons in Gugulethu, Western Cape.

This to assert that government has put children, older persons and the most vulnerable on top of its agenda. – BuaNews

Chapter 3

Overall Strides
in 30 Years of
Democracy

Government creates better life during 30 years of democracy

Tuesday, April 30, 2024



Over the past 30 years, government has empowered its citizens by implementing programmes aimed at improving their lives for the better.

As South Africa celebrates 30 years of freedom and democracy, Minister in the Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Maropene Ramokgopa has reflected on the country's development journey and applauded government for making significant strides in improving the

lives of its people, while navigating challenges that have impacted South Africa's development trajectory.

"Over the three decades, South Africa has faced systemic and contextual challenges that have impacted the country's development trajectory," Ramokgopa said.

In 2023, the National Planning Commission (NPC) released the Ten-Year Review of the National Development Plan (NDP). The review

reflects on the nation's progress and assesses the key NDP indicators and targets, such as poverty, inequality and unemployment.

"The NDP set a goal of achieving an annual average of 5.4% GDP growth and aimed to create 11 million jobs. Over the past 30 years, the South African economy has grown and is expected to be Africa's largest economy in 2024 according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

"Our labour force expanded from 11.3 million in 1994 to 28.3 million in 2023. Due to progressive labour legislation, the race, gender, age, and skills composition of the labour force and employment have altered considerably promoting more inclusive economic development," the Minister said.

She said government seeks to create an enabling environment for economic growth by addressing obstacles to transformation, innovation, competition and development.

"South Africa's social sector indicates notable progress in education, social wage, and health, with young people benefiting greatly from this progress. The country is moving towards universal access to education at all levels and improved overall educational outcomes.

"More individuals aged 20 and older have attained Grade 12 as their highest level of education, rising from 16% in 1996 to 38% by 2022. In 2002, there were 295 special schools for learners with disabilities. By 2022 there

were 489 (435 public and 54 independent)," the Minister said.

The matric pass rate has improved to 82.9% in 2023, from 53.4% in 1995.

"Enrolment in public universities has more than doubled, steadily edging closer to the NDP target of 1.6 million enrolments by 2030. Access to higher education has been bolstered by the establishment of more institutions of higher learning and increased National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) funding," the Minister said.

She noted that South Africa's health system has evolved and has led to improved life expectancy and increased access to Primary Health Care (PHC) services from 68 million in 1998 to 138.8 million in 2022/23.

"Furthermore, South Africa's social wage is one of the most advanced in the world and has proven to be an effective anti-poverty tool. It grew from 2.9 million beneficiaries in 1994 to more than 18 million in 2022. The COVID-19 grant increased reach to 27.6 million beneficiaries. Studies conducted over the two decades have shown that the child support grant is associated with a decline in incidents of poverty," the Minister said.

She said government has taken steps to address the youth unemployment challenge.

The Presidential Employment Stimulus has assisted in creating more than 1.7 million work and livelihood opportunities. – **SAnews.gov.za**

"Over the three decades, South Africa has faced systemic and contextual challenges that have impacted the country's development trajectory."

Reflecting on 30 years of democratic gains

Saturday, April 27, 2024

While South Africa's democracy is young, the significant strides made by government to improve the lives of its people since 1994, cannot be denied.

Marking the historic milestone of reaching 30 years of democracy, President Cyril Ramaphosa said South Africans should not let detractors, whether they are abroad or in the country, diminish what government has achieved in 1994 and in the years that have followed.

“Over the course of three centuries, the dignity of the black inhabitants of this land had been deliberately and cruelly denied, first by colonialism and then by apartheid. Millions of black South Africans – African, coloured and Indian – were at the mercy of laws and practices that were enforced to serve the interests of a white minority.

“Their land was taken, their labour was exploited, their prospects were stunted,” the President said on Saturday in Pretoria.

On 27 April 1994, South Africa changed forever as millions of people went to the polls to cast their vote in the first democratic elections.

“Exactly thirty years ago on this day, freedom’s bell rang across our great land. On that day, as we cast our votes for the first time, a great heaviness lifted from our shoulders. Our shackles had been cast off. The weight of centuries of oppression was no longer holding us down,” the President said at the commemoration of Freedom Day, held at the Union Buildings.

Today, thirty years later, the people of South Africa gathered as a united people of all races at the same Union Buildings that once symbolised pain and oppression.



“The progress that has been made in a relatively short period of thirty years is something of which we can and should all be proud. We have established a society founded on the rule of law and the premise of equality before the law.

“We have built democratic institutions and have rid our statute books of racist and sexist apartheid laws. As the democratic state, we have worked to restore the dignity of all the South African people, particularly the dispossessed, the marginalised and the vulnerable,” the President said.

To achieve this, government has sought to implement policies and programmes that advance equality and human dignity in areas like economic empowerment, education, health care, social support, and the provision of basic services.

Addressing challenges

“Although there have been setbacks, although we have faced challenges both beyond our borders and at home, our economy has tripled in size since 1994. While unemployment still remains our greatest and most pressing challenge, the number of South Africans in

employment increased from eight million in 1994 to over 16.7 million now.

“Through affirmative action, broad-based black economic empowerment, worker share ownership programmes and progressive labour laws, we have brought about transformative change in South Africa’s boardrooms, in workplaces and on the shop floor,” the first citizen said.

In South Africa today, more than half a million workers are part-owners of the companies they work for. This is about one in every 20 workers in the formal private sector.

“The proportion of black people in senior management position in both government and business has increased many times over. Today, our social development system benefits all, providing vital support to the poor and vulnerable, women and children.

“The democratic state has, through its health care programmes, brought down child mortality, improved life expectancy and made important strides towards overcoming the HIV/Aids pandemic. Working together, we have opened the doors of learning and culture.

“We have invested in improving and building new schools, colleges and two new universities. We have vastly increased the number of matriculants, graduates and young skilled people. Although we have much further to go, we have worked to ensure that poverty is no barrier to a decent education,” the President said.

Government has also introduced no-fee schools and the school feeding programme. In addition, it has expanded funding to students from poor and working class families and are now focused on early childhood development.

Equality

“In South Africa today, our Bill of Rights is the foundation for a society rooted in equality regardless of race, gender, sex or sexual orientation. Women in South Africa today enjoy full equality before the law.

“As a society, we have made significant advances in giving effect to the rights of women. We have worked together to ensure that women are empowered in the home, in communities, in society and in the economy. [Women] have fought for equal representation in positions of responsibility in the state, in academia, in

business, in sport, in culture,” the President said.

Close to half of the Members of Parliament, judges and magistrates are women. More than 60% of public servants are women.

“In South Africa today, girls learn alongside boys in our primary and secondary schools and receive equal education. South Africa is a beacon of hope for the protections it affords to the LGBTQI+ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning and intersex] community. Although we have much further to go, we have worked to overcome prejudice throughout society.

“We have sought to affirm the rights and improve the circumstances of persons with disabilities. We are still working to remove the barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from realising their full potential and living lives of comfort, security and material well-being,” he said.

Progress

Since the advent of democracy, government has pursued land reform, distributing millions of hectares of land to those who had been forcibly dispossessed and providing security of tenure to many others who had lived on the land for generations.

“We have built houses, clinics, hospitals, roads and bridges. We have brought electricity, water and sanitation into millions of homes.

“All those who cast their vote for a better South Africa in 1994 laid the foundation for a democracy that enhanced South Africa’s standing in the international community and opened up opportunities for engagement and cooperation,” the President said.

As a democratic country, the new South Africa was able to build alliances, negotiate trade agreements and participate in international organisations to advance the interests of its people.

Various sectors of society attended the celebrations, including musicians Yvonne Chaka Chaka, PJ Powers, as well as Ministers and Gauteng Premier Panyaza Lesufi. Lesufi joined the President in dancing to the tunes of Grammy Award winners Ladysmith Black Mambazo who entertained the crowd at the festivities. -

SAnews.gov.za

Reflecting on the achievements of 30 years of freedom

Monday, April 8, 2024

As the country reflects on 30 years of freedom and democracy, government is taking stock of the gains that have been made, its achievements and milestones, as well as what could have been done better over the last three decades.

“As government, we should count the successes and achievements that we have managed to achieve at this point in time. In areas where we have tried to intervene [and] the interventions were not successful, we now have the experience and innovation to resolve them,” Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) acting Director General, Nomonde Mnukwa, said in an interview with SAnews.

South Africa’s Census 2022 national results show an increase in the proportion of households that had access to piped water inside their dwelling, from 32.3% in 2001 to 46.3% in 2011 and to 59.7% in 2022.

The data show that in 2022, over four-fifths (82.4%) of households in the country had access to piped water either inside their dwelling or inside their yard.

The proportion of households using electricity as the main source of energy for lighting increased significantly from 58.1% in 1996 to 94.7% in 2022.

“The majority of us grew up in areas where water access was a dream. We never thought we would have access to water. We never thought that we would have access to electricity. We never thought we would have access to free

education. There are a number of non-fee paying schools that we have and a majority of those schools are contributing more than 60% of the Bachelor’s passes for matrics,” Mnukwa said.

She said South Africa reaching 30 years of democracy and freedom is a dream that has come true.

“We have come a long way. This is the year that we look back, particularly to 1994 when South Africa held its first democratic elections. It was one of those dreams that came true for us to be able to cast our vote,” Mnukwa said.

South Africans will once again go to the polls on 29 May 2024 to cast their votes in the 2024 National and Provincial Elections.

This year marks 30 years since millions of South Africans cast their ballot in the democratic election of 1994 for the first time in their lives.

The 30-year celebration in the country will be premised on celebrating the gains, achievements, and the milestone of 30 years of democratic rule as well as living in a free and democratic society.

Annually, the month of April is designated as Freedom Month in South Africa.

“As South Africans, we need to remember where we come from. We come from an era where people needed to carry a compass to go out in public. There were areas that we could not access as the segment of the population, which comprised the majority of the population,” Mnukwa said.

She emphasised that when South Africa was

30 Years of development



transitioning to a democratic country, it managed to avoid a war.

The country attained democracy and freedom through peaceful negotiations and talks.

“There were some careers that we couldn’t do because they were restricted to the chosen few. There were some areas that we could not stay in despite the fact that we were South Africans. It is something to celebrate, it is something to talk about and remember but it is mostly something that we can reflect on as individuals,” the acting DG said.

In his 2024 State of the Nation Address, President Cyril Ramaphosa said government’s policies and programmes have over the course of 30 years lifted millions of people out of dire poverty.

By 2010, the poverty rate had dropped to 60.9%, and it continued to decrease, reaching 55.5% in 2020, as reported by the World Bank.

“One of the most visible, impactful and

meaningful achievements in the first three decades of freedom has been in providing homes to the people. Today, nearly nine out of every ten households live in a formal dwelling.

“At the end of apartheid, only 6 out of 10 people had access to clean drinking water. Today, that figure has increased to nearly 9 out of 10 South Africans.

“We have introduced laws and undertaken programmes to enable black South Africans and women to advance in the workplace, to become owners and managers, to acquire land and build up assets. The proportion of jobs in executive management held by black people increased almost five-fold between 1996 and 2016,” the President said.

In addition, government has built more hospitals and clinics, especially in poor areas, providing better and quality healthcare to more South Africans. – **SAnews.gov.za**

Celebrate 30 years of Freedom!

Monday, April 22, 2024

Cabinet has called on South Africans to participate in the celebrations and commemoration of South Africa's 30 years of freedom.

Some 30 years ago, South Africa moved from the repressive and segregation based policy of apartheid into a new democratic dispensation – ushering in freedom for millions of South Africans, who were previously oppressed and disadvantaged because of the colour of their skin.

"Cabinet calls on all South Africans and sectors of society to participate in celebrating 30 Years of Freedom and Democracy. South Africans can participate by telling their stories on what it was like to have lived in apartheid South Africa and help us to build on the achievements we have made so far," a Cabinet statement read on Monday.

Cabinet reflected on the work that has been done to bring a better life for all South Africans, even as challenges persist.

"We have worked since 1994 to build a society based on unity and togetherness, and while many challenges still remain, conditions have fundamentally improved with each passing day. The great strides we have made since 1994 are reflected in Census 2022 and the 30 Year Review.

"Both paint a picture of a society on the move and which reflects improvements across most indicators. The findings of the Census and the 30 Year Review conclusively demonstrate that our development is not by chance, but rather by design from government programmes since 1994," the statement said.

Earlier this month, government officially launched the commemoration of 30 Years of Freedom and Democracy, held under the theme: "30 years of Democracy, Partnership and Growth".

The launch – which has held at Freedom Park Heritage Site – included the unveiling of the official 30 Years of Freedom logo which cabinet called a "symbol that will unify us as we celebrate this significant milestone in the history of our country".

"The launch marked the official commencement of the year-long activities to celebrate the remarkable progress we have made since 1994 in establishing a democratic society based on the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 and the Bill of Rights.

"This momentous occasion is also an opportunity to reflect on the challenges that remain and find ways to overcome them and move our country forward," the Cabinet statement said.

– **SAnews.gov.za**



Chapter 4

Economic
Growth &
Employment

30 Years of building our economy

By David Jacobs :Monday, May 27, 2024

The South African economy is today nearly triple the size it was when we embarked on our democratic journey. It is the result of 30 years of hard work and tough decisions taken amidst difficult challenges.

The economy inherited at the end of apartheid was technically bankrupt as a result of apartheid's distorted policies. It was structured to serve the needs of a minority and focused on supporting corporations rather than people.

Economic growth was dependent on the gold price and as it fluctuated, especially in the 1980s, our exchange rate and ability to import goods suffered. The living standards of blacks remained dangerously low while those of many whites had also begun to decline.

In 1994 when the democratic government took over, it began a process to structurally adjust the economy through the Growth, Employment and Redistribution programme. At the same time, the Reconstruction and Development Programme was introduced to address the massive socio economic challenges.

These interventions were occasioned by a statement by then-President Nelson Mandela

that debt service costs could not be higher than what we were spending on education because debt service costs were of the past and education of the future.

The prudent economic path pursued ensured that our economy improved dramatically with the transition to democracy and has been reasonably robust throughout the democratic era. This has enabled us to make strong inroads into transforming and creating an inclusive economy.

Addressing Freedom Day celebrations, President Cyril Ramaphosa said: "Through affirmative action, broad-based black economic empowerment, worker share ownership programmes and progressive labour laws, we have brought about transformative change in South Africa's boardrooms, in workplaces and on the shop floor."

Today more than half a million workers are part-owners of the companies they work for which represents about one in every 20 workers in the formal private sector. The proportion of black people in top management increased from 6,0 percent in 2001 to 17,0 percent in 2021 and at senior management level from 9,0 percent to



15,6 percent over the same period.

As we celebrate 30 Years of Freedom, we do so knowing that workers have over our democratic journey enjoyed rights including trade union workplace organising, collective bargaining, equal pay for equal work, health and safety, affirmative action, skills development, the right to strike and the right to peaceful protest.

The introduction of the national minimum wage in 2018 raised the earnings at the time for more than half of the country's labour force. This made a real difference in the lives of ordinary South Africans and into transforming the apartheid era wage structure we had inherited.

We have used the benefits of the economy to further the redistribution of public resources to meet the basic social needs of our people. While we still have a long way to go before we can declare that all South Africans share the wealth of their own country, we have made substantial progress and are determined to do much more.

Over successive democratic administrations we have implemented progressive economic policies that have seen more people than before meaningfully participating in the economy to support their families. While employment increased since 1994 from eight million in 1994 to over 16.7 million today, we are acutely aware that it remains our greatest and most pressing challenge. Work continues in earnest to dismantle the structural legacy that hampers job creation while at the same time scale up temporary work opportunities through our Expanded Public Works Programmes to support employment.

More recently, the Presidential Employment created over 1,2 million opportunities, reaching every province and district in our country. It included the country's biggest youth employment programme that saw 235 000 young people placed as school assistants in 23 000 schools in the country.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly derailed our planned economic advances, what began as a health crisis escalated into an economic one that severely impacted businesses and livelihoods. We saw economic activity drop 51 percent in the second quarter of 2020 and more than two million people were forced out of work.

This massive knock would be devastating for any nation, but this compounded centuries of

deep-rooted structural issues inherited from our fractured past had an overwhelming impact on the economy. It has taken immense effort from government, under the stewardship of President Cyril Ramaphosa, and our social partners to deal with the repercussions, many of which are still with us today.

Spurred on by interventions through our Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP), we have managed to claw back the economy to pre-COVID-19 levels. Our recovery has been remarkable given the enormity of the challenges we have faced since early 2020.

In reviving our economy, we have been on a deliberate path to reclaim our investment credibility and attract new investment into the country. Since the first South Africa Investment Conference in 2018, South Africa has attracted more than R1.14 trillion worth of investment commitments through the South African Investment Conference.

Our overtures have translated into foreign direct investment of R1.1 trillion between 2019 and 2023 compared to R312 billion in the prior five-year period. These investments start a cycle of economic activities that leads to employment and economic activity so that we can deal with the triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Despite our many successes, the grievous ills of our apartheid past still cast a long shadow over our economy. Decades of institutionalised discrimination has led to disparities in wealth and opportunities which still remain with us. We are also emerging out of a very challenging period where policy missteps, the disastrous effects of state capture and 2021 July riots worsened our challenges.

While we are not where we would like to be on the economic trajectory we envisioned, our efforts in a short space to reverse more than 350 years of discrimination and injustice, has created strong inroads to create a more inclusive economy.

****David Jacobs is the Chief Director: Cluster Communication (Economic Sectors, Investment, Employment and Infrastructure Development) at the Government Communication and Information System.***

30 Years: reflections on SARS

While having to engage with the taxman may conjure up feelings for some of going to the dentist to have a tooth pulled - the South African Revenue Service (SARS) has played a crucial role in where South Africa is today.

As the country turns 30 years old under a democratic dispensation, it reaches this milestone with the existence of institutions like the South African Revenue Service (SARS).

State capture may perhaps be the first thing to come to mind when thinking of the revenue service; closely followed by how unfair it may feel to pay taxes.

“What became increasingly clear as the Nugent hearings continued and was further underlined during the Zondo Commission proceedings which got underway in August 2018, was that the capture of SARS was part of a wider plan to capture the state,” said the revenue service in its anniversary book to commemorate 25 years of its existence.

While it did go through a grim period characterised by what it termed as “a significant loss of talent, marginalisation of staff, complete collapse of governance, as well as a lack of trust by citizens,” SARS still managed to make it through the rough years.

At a recent media briefing to release the preliminary revenue outcome for the 2023/24 financial year, SARS said state capture left the organisation in “distress and severely compromised.” “We embarked on a journey to re-imagine the organisation. SARS is succeeding in its strategic intent of building a tax and customs system that is based on voluntary compliance and sharpening its capability aimed at deterrence of wilful non-compliance,” it said at the briefing, held in Pretoria.

It added that the process of rebuilding entailed broadening the tax base, instilling, and improving a culture of voluntary compliance and fiscal citizenship as well as data and technology to

30 Years of development



South African Revenue Service

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optimally deliver “on our mandate and working with all stakeholders in the tax ecosystem and fostering trust and confidence on SARS.”

It was imperative for SARS - of which its higher purpose is to enable government to build a capable state, foster sustainable economic growth and social development that serves the wellbeing of all South Africans - to overcome this hurdle.

More so, for an institution that has collected R21.6 trillion in net tax revenues since its inception.

“The R21.6 trillion tax collections represents a compound growth of 9.9% per year since the inception of SARS in 1997. This has funded the South African democracy and touched the lives of millions who would be destitute without government support and services. We, who have the privilege to work at SARS are justly proud of these achievements because these efforts contribute directly to nation-building and sustain our democracy,” SARS Commissioner Edward Kieswetter said.

This as tax revenue collections have increased from R114 billion in 1994/95, at a compounded annual growth rate of 9.9% and an average tax-to- gross domestic product ratio of 22.2%.

Speaking at the 25-year celebrations of the existence of SARS in October 2022, President Cyril Ramaphosa said the encouraging progress of rebuilding SARS was evidence that it is possible to rebuild “ourselves from the deep damage we suffered during state capture.”

Evolution

While some taxpayers intentionally do not look at the tax portion of their payslips, paying

one’s share of tax is vital in closing the very real inequality gap that continues to exist in the country.

And thanks to innovation made at the revenue service, it has become far easier for taxpayers to pay their taxes.

The days of completing a paper-based tax return are all but gone.

That laborious exercise has been replaced by a sleek process where most citizens are now able to receive a pre-populated tax return that can be completed and submitted online in a matter of minutes, thanks to eFiling.

But just how did we get to where we are today?

SARS was formed out of the amalgamation of the segregated revenue services of the apartheid-based Bantustans, as well as the Departments of Inland Revenue and Customs.

Following the historic elections in which South Africans of all races could vote in April 1994, work to build a better country for not just a few but for all, went into full steam.

“The new democratic government inherited a moribund economy deeply in debt and an inefficient Revenue and Customs system that was incapable of providing the tax needed by the democratic government to meet the developmental needs of all its people. In particular, the democratic government faced the challenge of ratcheting up service delivery to address the socio-economic backlogs in education, housing, health care, water supply, electricity supply and sanitation, amongst others,” noted the revenue service in its anniversary book.

In 1995, the then democratic Cabinet approved a two-step approach to the administrative

autonomy of what would become SARS.

That process entailed the moving of the directorates of Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise out of the Ministry of Finance to the South African Revenue Service. The birth of the revenue service came in October 1997.

SARS - which is not only mandated to collect all revenues due and ensure compliance with tax, customs and excise legislation -- was formally established as an organ of state within the public administration, as an institution outside the public service.

Following that, government had the job of instilling a culture of tax compliance which was lacking in the country.

Change was needed and over the years, several steps were taken to "broaden the tax base, amongst others, these included legislative changes, service improvements, compliance strategies and enforcement actions," said SARS.

Examples of the steps taken include the closing of legislative loopholes for abuse, tax amnesties (1995 and 1996, foreign exchange amnesty of 2003) and the introduction of Capital Gains Tax in 2001.

Modernisation

What was also a challenge for the leaders at SARS at the time, was "the fact that all processes inherited from the past were still manual and paper based" with returns having to be mailed to individual taxpayers.

Previously, filing one's tax return involved the filling in of a minimum 12 pages to be tax compliant.

To reduce the paper-based processes, a new income tax system (NITS) was implemented in 1999. Increasing online business transactions, enhancing productivity as well as creating a more stable income tax system by reducing human intervention and improving data integrity were the main objectives of the new system.

"It was not until the launch of the Modernisation Programme in 2007 that SARS would finally be able to overcome the paper challenge," it said.

In 1998, South Africa began collecting VAT at Southern African Customs Union borders. According to SARS, prior to 1994, these ports of

entry were mainly managed by the South African Police, the South African Defence Force and Home Affairs (mainly for political control) and no revenue was collected.

Although a number of changes had been introduced after 1997, the revenue service found itself to be still "bureaucratic" and issues such as inadequate service to taxpayers and no standardisation of processes were still bugbears.

This led to the establishment of the Siyakha programme – which is isiZulu for "we are building". The programme was set up to improve the performance of the organisation and to standardise and centralise key processes.

Its main objective was to radically transform SARS into a modern revenue authority aimed at creating a service culture that focused on the needs of the taxpayer, based on the principle that good service would facilitate tax compliance.

"The significance of Siyakha was that it would lay the foundation for the automation of processes and the modernisation programmes which began in 2007," said the revenue service.

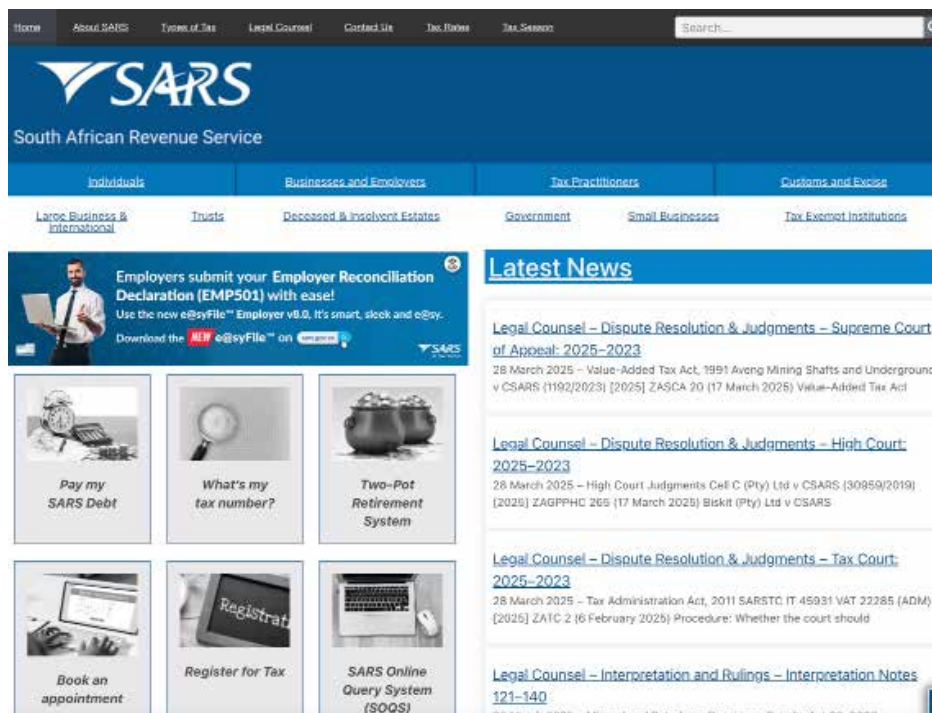
Around 2004, the Filing Season initiative was born and over the years it became one of the biggest, regular annual engagements that an organ of government had with citizens, apart from the national, provincial and local government elections.

As the years went by, SARS saw a "massive growth" in its taxpayer base and an increase in compliance, resulting in the receipt of high volumes of paper returns and supporting documents which still needed to be processed manually.

"As the organisation approached its tenth anniversary in an era of rapid technological advancement, the pressure mounted for a move from manual and paper-based processes to digital transactions," said the revenue service in its book.

In the modernisation years between 2007-2014, some of the key milestones SARS reached include the introduction of eFiling in 2007 which was at first for the submission of personal income tax returns.

It was then rolled out in phases for Company Income Tax, VAT, Dividends Tax and Transfer



Duty amongst others. It was critical to reducing the volume of paper that hampered efficiency, service and compliance.

“Other enhancements introduced in 2007 relating to the submission of Personal Income Tax returns included redesigning the return to two pages, using third party data verification and introducing scanning of returns in branches.”

“In 2008, SARS ramped up the changes, including the pre-population of returns on eFiling, based on third-party data supplied by employers. Employers could submit information to SARS through the new e@syFile channel developed by SARS and provided to employers free of charge,” it said.

The following year, more than three million individual taxpayers used eFiling, experiencing a massive improvement in ease, convenience, and improved turnaround times, especially in the payment of refunds.

The number of taxpayers visiting SARS branches began to drop and the number of printed returns reduced, “which meant a huge saving for SARS and represented a major environmental benefit.

“Today, almost 100% of all returns are filed electronically. The changes introduced in

2007 not only delivered benefits to taxpayers, but improved SARS’s ability to become more effective in detecting and deterring non-compliance and fraud. It allowed SARS to change its approach to monitoring compliance, from gatekeeper to risk manager,” said the revenue service.

The revenue service noted that by the end of the 2010 financial year, there was a significant increase in the use of electronic channels by taxpayers. An 82.6% growth was achieved in the electronic submission of returns as a result of processing efficiencies and automation.

South Africans also benefit from the existence of the Office of the Tax Ombud (OTO) that was established in October 2013 to enhance the tax administration system.

Prior to the establishment of this office, there was no independent channel of independent redress for taxpayers who had exhausted the normal complaints mechanisms. The office is independent of but funded through SARS.

Last year, the OTO celebrated a decade existence.

Indeed, the revenue service forms an important part of our democracy. **-SAnews.gov.za**

Government committed to creating jobs

Minister in The Presidency Khumbudzo Ntshavheni has hailed the various initiatives that were implemented by government to create jobs when many people lost their livelihoods due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLSF), South Africa had 16.4 million people in employment in the first quarter of 2020.

“We lost 2.3 million jobs in the second quarter of that year, down to 14.1 million jobs. Overall, the South African economy rescinded to 2008 levels. It was the government in partnership with business and labour that developed and implemented the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan that enabled us to get the current employment numbers even surpassed to the pre-COVID-19 levels,” Ntshavheni told Parliament, on Tuesday.

Currently, the number of employed persons in South Africa is sitting at 16.7 million, an increase

of 2.6 million jobs from a low of 14.1 million during COVID-19 and 16.4 million pre-COVID-19.

Tabling the Budget Vote for the Presidency, the Minister said in the first quarter of 2024, nine out of 11 industries showed higher employment levels than those recorded during the Covid-19 pandemic.

“Notably, the finance industry has seen the most significant recovery, with 680 000 more jobs compared to the second quarter of 2020. The community and social services sector - which includes government - increased by 547 000, and the trade sector followed with 525 000 more individuals employed than during the pandemic levels, while the transport sector saw an increase of 177 000 employed.

“Private households saw an increase of 173 000 jobs, followed by 150 000 in manufacturing and 149 000 in construction compared to the second quarter of 2020. In addition, agriculture



saw an increase of 142 000 jobs, while mining experienced an increase of 81 000 employed individuals than during pandemic levels,” the Minister said.

She said due to government’s commitment to the eradication of poverty, unemployment and poverty, President Cyril Ramaphosa developed the Presidential Employment Stimulus, which is a special programme focused on coordinating government initiatives towards public and social employment creation.

“The overall performance of this initiative from October 2020 until March 2024 continues to exceed set targets. The initiative created more than 2 million job opportunities with a total budget R42 billion. As the President highlighted, more than 84% of participants in the programme are youth and with 64% being women beneficiaries,” the Minister said.

The largest programme under the Presidential Employment Initiative is the Basic Education Employment Initiative, commonly known as the Teacher Assistant programme, which to date has created over one million opportunities for young people to be placed as assistants in schools across the country.

This has become the largest youth employment programme in South Africa’s history and is serving as a teacher replacement pipeline.

“The Social Employment Fund (SEF), another large-scale programme is aimed at supporting the social economy through the non-profit organisations and coordinated through the Industrial Development Corporation of the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition.

“The SEF supports the work of civil society organisations to create employment by building on the work they already do to enable community-driven solutions to local problems,” the Minister said.

These include frail care, Early Childhood Development, combating gender-based violence, community safety, river cleaning, and support for the creative industry, among others.

Since the start of the programme in April 2022, the SEF has created more than 167 000 job opportunities against a target of 100 000.

Other Presidential Employment Stimulus programmes include subsistence farmers’ support through the subsistence producer relief programme, a revitalised national youth service, public employment programmes for Metros, and placement support for university graduates.

“Another important initiative is the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention, known as PYEI. Appreciating the opportunity that technology provides to bridge access gaps and the rate at which the youth have adopted technology, the PYEI successfully established the SAYouth.mobi platform to create remote access to new opportunities for young people irrespective of their location,” Ntshavheni said.

Through the SAYouth.mobi, job seekers can access the network to find job opportunities, to earn income, and to stay engaged and connected.

The platform provides young people with ongoing recommendations to learning and for support so that they know what they must do to grow their profile and access more opportunities.

“Of the SAYouth.mobi platform registered users, more than 1.3 million earning opportunities were secured by young people since its inception. We will continue to work to ensure SAYouth.mobi becomes a platform of choice for young South Africans looking for opportunities.

“The Presidency, together with development partners and other government departments, will continue to provide strategic oversight and coordination of the Presidential Employment Stimulus and the PYEI and other public employment initiatives,” the Minister said. –

SAnews.gov.za

Patel welcomes VW's R4 billion investment in SA



Thursday, April 18, 2024

Volkswagen South Africa's (VWSA) investment of R4 billion in their assembly plant in Kariega, in the Eastern Cape, has been welcomed by Trade, Industry and Competition Minister, Ebrahim Patel.

The investment will introduce a new SUV model built on the Polo platform.

The move also positions the facility as the sole manufacturer of the Polo brand globally and the new SUV model will be exported to global markets.

Speaking on Wednesday at VWSA's facility in Kariega, Minister Patel said the investment was a testament to the country's industrial policy, and it will not only strengthen the assembly plant but also secure the livelihoods of approximately 3 500 people who are directly employed by VWSA.

"Moreover, this investment has rippled through this part of the Eastern Cape, fostering an ecosystem of prosperity and industrialisation, supporting an estimated 50 000 indirect jobs and livelihoods."

In the last five years, the department said government has undertaken significant work to bolster automotive production in South Africa.

Patel highlighted 10 actions, which have been taken in the sixth administration to support the industry. They are:

- A new Automotive Masterplan crafted together with the industry was implemented in July 2021, setting the policy framework for the next decade.
- The African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) has concluded modalities, including rules of origin for a first list of auto products, opening up a vast market.
- A free-trade agreement with the United Kingdom after Brexit was concluded and implemented, which enabled South Africa to retain access to preferential terms in the United Kingdom market.
- The establishment of the R6 billion Auto Industry Transformation Fund, which VWSA and other Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) contribute to bringing Black component manufacturers into the supply chain.
- A major agreement with tier 1 auto component manufacturers has been concluded that will ensure greater opportunities for Black manufacturers in tier 2 or tier 3 levels.
- R50 billion in investment commitments in the auto sector have been secured.
- A landmark agreement with Stellantis for the construction of a new R3 billion plant in

30 Years of development



the Coega Special Economic Zone has been reached.

- Semi-knocked down (SKD) production by BAIC, also in the Coega Special Economic Zone, has commenced as a first phase toward more value-additive complete knocked down (CKD) production.
- A new Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone has been established, with 10 factories for Ford suppliers already built by March 2024, employing 3 300 workers.
- The Electric Vehicle Policy was finalised by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic), and a new incentive package to assist the transition was announced by the Minister of Finance in the 2024 Budget.

According to the department, the automotive industry plays a crucial role in our economy, contributing significantly to gross domestic product (GDP) and employment.

The manufacturing component of the auto industry contributed 2.9% of South Africa's GDP in 2022.

With over 115 000 direct employees and an additional 240 000 indirect jobs, the department said the auto industry remains a cornerstone of South Africa's manufacturing sector.

"Despite global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and supply chain disruptions, South Africa's automotive industry has continued to grow."

Over the past five calendar years, South African OEMs produced 2.7 million vehicles and exported 1.7 million vehicles.

In 2023, South Africa exported a record 399 594 vehicles, a milestone for its industrial resilience and global competitiveness.

Notably, last year, South Africa exported its six millionth vehicle since the start of the democratic era. – [SAnews.gov.za](https://www.sanews.gov.za)

"The investment was a testament to the country's industrial policy, and it will not only strengthen the assembly plant but also secure the livelihoods of approximately 3 500 people who are directly employed by VWSA."

Collective effort to alleviate poverty, reduce inequality

Thursday, November 28, 2024

As South Africa marks 30 years of democracy, President Cyril Ramaphosa has acknowledged the great progress government has made in lifting millions of South Africans out of absolute poverty.

The President was delivering his annual address to the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) in Parliament, Cape Town, on Thursday.

The address and debate was held under the theme: "Dedicating our Efforts towards Reducing Poverty and Tackling the High Cost of Living".

The President highlighted that in 1993, 71% of South Africans lived in poverty; by 2010 the poverty rate had dropped to 61% and in 2020, it was at 56%.

He further acknowledged that people's lived experiences confirm the persistence of poverty and inequality.

"As we work to rebuild the economy, to create more employment and open opportunities for emerging businesses, we continue to assist the poorest and most vulnerable in our society.

"We provide various forms of support and protection through the 'social wage'. This includes the provision of social grants, free basic services, health care, basic education, higher education, social housing and transport. When debt servicing costs are excluded, around 60% of government's budget is spent on the social wage," the President said.

President Ramaphosa said that while parties in the Government of National Unity differ on certain issues, they have committed themselves to inclusive economic growth and accelerated job creation.

"They have committed themselves to reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living. And, to advance these priorities, the parties to the Government of National Unity have committed

themselves to build a capable, ethical and developmental state.

"The decision by the NCOP to dedicate this debate to focus on our collective efforts to reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living is a worthy and timely response to the mandate of the people," the President said.

President Ramaphosa emphasised that a vital part of the effort to reduce the cost of living is the provision of a free basic minimum of services to indigent households.

Through this programme, millions of people have been able to access basic needs like electricity and water.

He highlighted that social grants remain a lifeline for millions of people, particularly children, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

"The introduction of the Social Relief of Distress Grant during the COVID-19 pandemic has provided much-needed relief to as many as 11 million unemployed people at its peak. Today, around a half of all households in South Africa benefit from social grants.

"Among the measures to ensure that all South Africans have affordable access to sufficient food, government is looking at whether the basket of food items that is exempted from VAT could be expanded to include more basic products," he said. – [SANews.gov.za](https://www.sanews.gov.za)



Chapter 5

Infrastructure
Development

Coega IDZ benefits metro council

Lucky Khumalo : 11 March 2005



Bhisho - The Coega Development Corporation (CDC) has pumped over R118 million in wages into the Nelson Mandela Metro since the construction of the Coega Industrial Development Zone (IDZ) commenced in 2002.

Spokesperson Vuyelwa Qinga-Vika said the multi-billion Rand project is composed of the IDZ and the National Ports Authority's deepwater Port of Ngqura.

"The Coega Project has developed into a major role player in the economic revival of the province with over 11 000 jobs and hundreds of enterprise opportunities being created even before investors were located in the IDZ," Ms Qinga-Vika said.

She said the job and enterprise opportunities had also come with skills development and Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise (SMME) development programmes.

"Currently, the CDC has a total number of 16 learners who are placed in Enterprise Development, Safety Health and Environment (SHE), Information Technology, Corporate Services and Finance," she said.

She said Eastern Cape Premier Nosimo Balindlela recently highlighted the social and economic benefits the project had provided through job creation and enterprise opportunities.

The Premier said both the IDZ and the port of Ngqura were among the key provincial projects designed to generate economic growth and elevate poverty.

"We have about 2 700 people working in various projects on site. This has been made possible through our procurement policy that accentuates a model for small companies to participate in mega construction projects of the kind of the Coega Project.

"Our procurement allows us to break down projects into 'bite size' components that can be handled by small and emerging companies," she explained.

She added that in addition to 100 individuals who had been employed in the infrastructure construction phase, a total of 424 sub-contractors had been awarded contracts, while 43 received financial and other support through facilitation with the local banks.

"We are quite honoured and encouraged to be one of the province's leading local economic development initiatives by the Premier. In the process of creating the infrastructure that will draw investors to the IDZ, the CDC is making sure that its procurement policy is effectively used in making visible socio-economic impact," she added. - **BuaNews**

30 Years of development

Progress made in addressing socio-economic inequalities

Tuesday, April 9, 2024



Government has made significant strides in addressing socio-economic inequalities through social welfare programmes in housing, healthcare, education and social services.

“Over the past few decades, the South African government has taken significant steps to address historical injustices and strive towards

achieving social cohesion and socio-economic empowerment for all its citizens,” said Deputy President Paul Mashatile on Tuesday.

The Deputy President was delivering a special public lecture on the 30th anniversary of South Africa’s democracy at the invitation of the University of Johannesburg’s School of Public

Management, Governance and Public Policy, in partnership with the College of Business and Economics.

He also touched on the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) policies, which he believes have promoted economic transformation and ensured the marginalised become part of the mainstream economy.

To demonstrate government's commitment to building an inclusive and growing economy, he said the state has raised R1.5 trillion in new investment commitments, of which over R500 billion has already flowed into the economy.

"We have made further strides in addressing load shedding, ensuring energy security, enhancing logistics systems, and improving ports and rail networks."

In addition, the country's second-in-command said government was on track to accelerate land redistribution. Black South Africans, he said, now own around 25% of farmland, while the state supported 1 000 industrialists in Black-owned firms.

However, despite these achievements, challenges remain in achieving a more inclusive and equitable society.

"The triple challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality, as well as corruption, continue to pose obstacles to the nation's progress. In addressing these challenges, we are conscious that, as government, we must strengthen social compacts by working together with all sectors of society."

Achievements

Deputy President Mashatile highlighted the achievements that have been made over the past 30 years.

These, according to the Deputy President, include investment in transport infrastructure such as the Gautrain, the Freeway Improvement Project and Bus Rapid Transport, the agricultural sector, the financial services sector as well as a thriving automotive sector.

He said infrastructure investment was key to the country's growth and told guests that

projects worth about R21.4 billion have been completed.

"I would like to see more young people and women-led businesses being involved in these projects because young people are the future of our country and women carry the hardest burden of communities."

The Deputy President also took the time to acknowledge some of the challenges that the youth in the country face. "Hence, over the years, we have been investing in initiatives for the development of our youth and our future."

Water and sanitation

In addition, he said government has decided to move with speed to professionalise the public sector.

"I would like to assure you and the people of our country that, as the government, we are committed to the delivery of quality services to our people."

This includes dealing with increased water and sanitation issues, as well as the energy availability factor.

President Cyril Ramaphosa appointed the Deputy President to lead a task team on the water crisis in the country, and one of the urgent priorities is to fix the ageing infrastructure.

"We have already started this work. Just this evening, we are meeting as the Water Task Team; on Friday we will be visiting eThekweni as well as other regions later on to engage with the province as to how best we can resolve the eminent water challenge."

Since the announcement of the Water Task Team's establishment, his office has received numerous requests from individuals seeking to assist and collaborate with the government.

He said the Department of Water and Sanitation has already allocated R10.1 billion to municipalities through the regional bulk infrastructure grant, R4.6 billion through the water services infrastructure grant, and R1.4 billion through the municipal recovery disaster grant to address water challenges.

- SAnews.gov.za

President Ramaphosa hands over Welisizwe programme bridges

Thursday, February 1, 2024



President Cyril Ramaphosa says the Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme remains one of government's top priorities as these bridges improve the safety, well-being, and access for communities in rural areas.

On Wednesday, the President handed over complete bridges at the rural area of Mkhambathini in KwaZulu-Natal.

The Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme is a result of the objectives announced in the 2023 State of the Nation Address that outlined government's plan to construct at least 96 bridges during the 2023/24 financial year.

Some 11 bridges have been completed in KwaZulu-Natal with at least 58 other bridges currently

under construction throughout the country.

“Because of climate change, extreme weather events like flooding are becoming increasingly common. Communities living along and close to rivers are particularly vulnerable. That is why we see building more Welisizwe rural bridges as a priority.

“The purpose of the programme is to improve safety and well-being for rural communities who have to cross rivers on a daily basis, to boost the local economy by making mobility easier, and to create jobs and support local businesses.

“The bridges that have been handed over today will make it easier for communities to get to the clinic and hospital, to school, to town and to places of work. It will make it easier for them to fetch supplies and to take produce to market,” President Ramaphosa said.

The President said that during the construction of these bridges, community members benefitted through the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

The EPWP is a medium-to long-term government-funded programme that promotes the use of labour-intensive methods to create work opportunities for poor and unemployed South Africans.

“In addition to these workers, each bridge site uses SANDF [South African National Defence Force] engineers and artisans who do work such as welding, groundwork, earth moving and soil retention.

“Since its inception, this programme has supported skills development by appointing graduates to work in bridge assessment, project management and maintenance, as assistant engineers and as candidate construction project managers.

“The bridge components are all locally sourced from South African companies that specialise in the manufacture and supply of steel-modular type bridges. Local suppliers have also benefitted through the supply of materials such as stones, cement, concrete, road sign paint and personal protective equipment,” he said.

Historical mission

The President reflected that since the dawn of democracy some 30 years ago, government has built bridges “as we work to overcome the divisions of the past”.

“Over centuries of colonialism and decades of apartheid, the needs of the majority of South Africans were deliberately neglected, especially in our rural communities. Infrastructure was built for the benefit of a privileged minority.

“The historical lack of infrastructure in black communities contributed to the deep levels of poverty and inequality that we continue to grapple with today. We remain determined to correct the imbalances in infrastructure.”

He urged community members to protect the bridges from vandalism and destruction.

“It is time to build bridges, not to destroy or burn them. It is time to build together a South Africa that we will be proud to leave for future generations.

“Today, the children of these areas can safely cross flooded rivers and attend school. Today, our grandparents can safely travel to health care facilities or to access government services,” President Ramaphosa concluded.

– **SAnews.gov.za**



Newly launched terminal a symbol of resilience

Thursday, April 4, 2024

President Cyril Ramaphosa has hailed the newly opened Newlyn Park Bayhead Rail Terminal as a symbol of South Africa's recovery following the challenging COVID-19 pandemic and the country's resilience in the face of challenges.

The President launched the terminal in Durban on Thursday.

"The completion and launch of the Newlyn Park Bayhead Rail Terminal project at the Port of Durban is not only a much-needed boost to South Africa's logistics infrastructure network; the terminal is also a symbol of recovery and resilience. For the city of Durban, for the eThekweni Metro, for KwaZulu-Natal, and for the country at large," he said.

President Ramaphosa reflected on the "worst public health disaster in modern times in the form of COVID-19" which forced South Africa and the

entire globe into lockdown to contain the spread of the virus.

"As we were just emerging from the pandemic's shadow in 2021, parts of our country, notably KwaZulu-Natal, were the scenes of deadly unrest and an unleashing of violence, arson and mayhem that caused loss of life and cost our economy approximately R50 billion. Then, just a year later, in 2022, KwaZulu-Natal was one of the provinces that experienced devastating floods.

"We all recall seeing the images of the damage to the Port of Durban at the time...especially in and around Bayhead Road, we saw much damage. We know the extensive work and effort it took to restore operations and to get the port and its associated infrastructure up and running again.

"These were all significant setbacks...that could have knocked us down, that could have



prevented us from moving forward and that could have made us to give up.

“We can all be immensely proud of what has been achieved here, and of the persevering, pioneering South African spirit that this new terminal embodies. It also illustrates what can be achieved when government and business work together,” the President said.

Fruition

The Newlyn Park Bayhead Rail Terminal is a fruition of a commitment made during the South African Investment Conference (SAIC) in 2019.

Reflecting on the investment commitment Newlyn has made into South Africa, President Ramaphosa recalled that at SAIC 2023, Newlyn further pledged R4 billion into the “development of a near-zero dust emission manganese back-of-port storage and handling facility project at Coega, as well as in a similar facility for iron ore at Saldanha Bay”.

The President emphasised that the terminal represents a “good model” of what can be developed when government and private sector work together.

Partnership

“The terminal has been built on land leased from Transnet and the partnership with Newlyn will

assist in improving operational efficiency right across the board. This precinct will address some of the challenges we have been experiencing in the logistics, infrastructure and network industries that have had a negative impact on economic growth and the creation of jobs.

“In order for this rail terminal project to deliver full benefits to South Africa for the purpose that it was designed, it has to have trains and slots to be made available to clients. This will lead to a significant increase in revenue for Transnet and Natcor Corridor through the migration of cargo from road to rail,” he said.

The project has injected some R 3.4 billion in investment and created some 4 013 direct construction jobs.

“More than 1000 employees are currently employed full time in this facility and this number is expected to grow as the facility handles more cargo. Much of the material that has gone into [building the terminal] has been sourced locally and many of those who participated in setting this facility up were also local providers.

“Upgrading local port infrastructure is critical to the success of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area and this new terminal will facilitate the swift movement of goods from South Africa to the rest of the continent and, indeed, beyond,” President Ramaphosa said. – **SAnews.gov.za**

Policy to improve water, sanitation services on privately-owned land

Sunday, March 3, 2024

Minister of Water and Sanitation Senzo Mchunu has launched a landmark policy aimed at improving the delivery of water and sanitation services on privately-owned land.

The launch took place on Friday at Cool Air Sport Grounds in Dalton under the uMshwathi Local Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal. The launch was part of activities planned for National Water Month, which is observed annually in March.

The Water and Sanitation Services on Privately Owned Land Policy was propelled by a court case in 2019, which sought to enforce the provision of basic services to farm dwellers and others who reside on privately-owned land in different parts of the country.

Following this, the department developed a policy, which underwent extensive nationwide consultative processes for 90 days from December 2022 to March 2023. It was subsequently approved by Cabinet on 29 November 2023 for implementation.

Addressing hundreds of farm dwellers attending the policy launch held collaboratively

with uMngeni-uThukela Water, the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA), uMgungundlovu District and uMshwathi Municipality, Mchunu reiterated the department's commitment to ensure equitable provision of water and sanitation services.

"The purpose of the policy is to outline government's intentions regarding water and sanitation services provision to residents living on privately-owned land.

"It establishes a framework for enhancing water and sanitation services provision in such areas, with specific strategies to be developed at provincial, district and local municipal levels. We are not here to just say we are launching the policy and then leave it there.

"We have measures put in place to ensure the effective and successful implementation of this policy, working collaboratively with other sister departments, civil society organisations and all spheres of government," he said.

A comprehensive status quo analysis has been done by uMgungundlovu District Municipality in



response to the 2019 court judgment.

Thus far, four boreholes in uMngeni, two in iMpendle, one in uMshwathi, nine in Mkhambathini and two in Richmond have been developed to ensure access to clean water.

A total of 231 basic sanitation facilities have been provided within the uMngungundlovu District Municipality.

Added to this, uMsunduzi Local Municipality has started with the planning process and has conducted a census of all farms under their jurisdiction needing clean water and safe sanitation services. This will enable them to allocate resources and start with the implementation of the policy.

Mchunu emphasised the commitment to implement the policy nationwide, not only in KwaZulu-Natal.

“As much as the policy is being launched under the uMngungundlovu District, its implementation will cover all corners of South Africa. We are calling upon all stakeholders to avail their resources and work alongside the department to

ensure the full implementation of the policy.

“This policy is not just a document, but a programme of action to provide basic services to people living on privately-owned land,” Mchunu said.

The launch of the policy marked the beginning of a transformative journey for the Department of Water and Sanitation and the sector as a whole.

It is a commitment to a shared future where communities thrive, the environment flourishes, and every individual experiences the dignity that comes with access to basic water supply and sanitation services.

The launch provided residents, stakeholders and duty-bearers with a comprehensive understanding of the policy’s key features and benefits, which includes improved access to reliable and safe water sources, enhanced service delivery and increased transparency and accountability. – **SAnews.gov.za**

Gautrain marks 14 years of operations

Sunday, June 9, 2024

As Gautrain marks 14 years of operations, Gautrain Management Agency Chief Executive Officer, Tshepo Kgobe has described the high-speed rail network as a trailblazer in the South African rail and public transport sector.

In June 2010, the Gautrain saw the first ride for commuters leave the Sandton Station for O.R. Tambo International Airport, just in time for the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Highlighting some of the Gautrain project successes, Kgobe said since it started operating on 08 June 2010, the project has successfully completed approximately 192.8 million passenger trips.

“The idea of a high-speed rail network with an 80-kilometre route between the North, South, and East of the Gauteng province, sounded like a pipe dream to many when the Gauteng Provincial

Government announced it. Fourteen years later, 1 500 staff are employed across operations and administration of the Gautrain project and we have managed to maintain an average of more than 90% availability and punctuality across all Gautrain services.

“The Gautrain’s transport network includes 10 stations that connect Johannesburg, Pretoria, Ekurhuleni, and O.R. Tambo International Airport, 96 rail cars (24 x4 electric multiple units), a fleet of 125 heavy haul buses, and 29 midibuses. In many ways, the Gautrain is a trailblazer in the South African rail and public transport sector... it is the first and only rapid rail network in the country, and it was the first Public-Private Partnership (PPP) of its scale in South Africa when it was launched,” Kgobe said.

On the 14th anniversary of Gautrain’s launch,



and in a year that South Africa marks 30 years of democracy and freedom, Kgobe maintained the Gautrain has proven to be more than just a transport project saying it “it is playing a bigger role in transforming spaces, people, and the economy through mobility.”

“The Gautrain has brought jobs, new skills, the easing of mobility for ordinary people, and major economic developments around stations. It is estimated that R46 million total GDP [gross domestic product] impact has been added to the Gauteng Provincial Government economy and a total of 245 000 jobs have been created due to property development induced by the Gautrain.

“The Gautrain is a strategic national asset valued at R45 billion, and once the current concession expires at the end of its 19.5-year term, the costs of establishing this long-term asset will have been

paid off, allowing the Post 2026 Gautrain Project to reap the economic benefits. With a shared vision and strong team effort, a dream of a world-class public transport system became a reality,”Kgobe said.

Kgobe also announced that the current concession agreement between the Gauteng Provincial Government and the Bombela Concession Company comes to an end in 2026, and the Gautrain Management Agency has already gone to market to invite bids for the next concessionaire.

He added that the new delivery partner will operate, maintain, modernise, innovate, and upgrade the current Gautrain system so that it continues to provide a safe and efficient public transport service. – **SAnews.gov.za**



30 years of democracy: The electrification of South African households

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

Despite a myriad of challenges – both present and past – along the way, the South African government through Eskom and municipalities has made great strides towards achieving universal access to electricity in the country.

This came out during a roundtable on the electrification programme since 1994, hosted by the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS).

According to the Eskom website, in 1987, fewer than 13 million people had access to electricity with the vast majority of that access servicing white households – leaving other population groups reeling in the dark.

At the dawn of democracy in 1994, Parliament endorsed a plan to create universal access to electricity – defined at some 97% due to population growth and challenges related to the

formalisation of informal settlements.

This charged government's wholesale plan to electrify homes. Now, access to electricity in South Africa today is at least 94% according to Statistics South Africa.

Director Project Monitoring and Intergovernmental Relations at the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, Lufuno Madzhie, said the electrification programme has thus far, been a success.

"[During 1994 to 1998] Eskom and municipalities only electrified 2.5 million households. In 2001, then government decided this [electrification] programme needs to reside within the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy [DMRE]. Through us as the department, working with different stakeholders, we have achieved a lot with regard to this electrification programme.

"Through this programme, the department has achieved a huge milestone. Currently, we have electrified over 8.3 million households," he said.

Eskom's Pozisa Njezula emphasised how access to electricity improves the welfare of households and explained how Eskom contributes to facilitating access for hard-to-reach rural areas.

"[It allows for the] improving on safety where we no longer have to use candles and paraffin stoves. It improves on convenience where we no longer have to collect wood to cook and also, in terms of improving on education where kids can study at night.

"With...us now pushing towards universal access, the challenge that we are now faced with is that we now have to reach the far-flung areas. The far corners in all the rural areas. With the support from the DMRE, as Eskom we have started and embarked on the rolling out of micro grids for those far-flung areas where you may not be able to get grid electricity because of losses as well as the amount of money that you would have to spend to get to those areas.

"The [micro grid] is just a container, it has solar panels, it has got batteries and then you've got the reticulation network. When you get to a certain area, you electrify it off grid and those people benefit," she said.

Challenges and solutions

Njezula bemoaned that although the

electrification programme is going full steam ahead, the power utility faces serious and dangerous challenges when going into communities.

"We are not immune as Eskom to the crime [and] extortion in our project sites. In South Africa, with almost all the projects that are being undertaken, there's reports of these extortions and these demands for certain amounts of money, for protection fees and so forth.

"That delays the progress in our projects, and it really puts the lives of our employees as well as our contractors in danger. In some instances, we have to leave site, we need to be escorted, we need protection," she said.

Head of energy and electricity distribution at the South African Local Government Association, Nhlanhla Ngidi, described South Africa's electrification plan as a "moving target".

"In terms of access itself, at 94%, I think it's very important that people understand because this is a moving target. In a year's time, you could find this being below 94% and it's because of all these challenges...people moving towards where the economy is more active.

"Municipalities have done quite well but with the capacity challenges we have, we still need municipalities to be assisted and government needs to put in place agencies that can come in and be catalysts in terms of the implementation of the programme," he said.

Energy expert, Chris Yelland, agreed that access to electricity has improved but warned that affordability remains a blockage to some households.

"[There] are some technology developments that require that we look at these distant rural customers. The first thing of course is renewable energy. The price of renewable energy...has come down dramatically over the last ten years. This is now opening the doors to renewable energy for remote households that never existed ten years ago.

"There's a lot to celebrate in electrification [but] there's a lot to do about affordability. We are not there yet. We need to understand where we come from, where we are and where we're going and for that we need data...so that we know where we are and where we're going" he said.

- SAnews.gov.za

Chapter 6

Public Service
& Governance

30 years of service delivery

Dr Namane Masemola : Thursday, August 15, 2024



On the 29th of May this year, South Africans went to polls to renew our constitutional democracy based on the will of the people and rule of law.

For the first time since 1994, there was no outright winner in the national elections and this situation required political parties to negotiate amongst themselves on the formation of the 7th

Administration.

The Government of National Unity (GNU) presents a unique opportunity to build on the gains made since 1994 by ensuring collaboration across diverse political parties. This unity allows for a more inclusive approach to governance and multiple perspectives are considered in decision making informed by the statement of intent,

which finds its expression in the State of the Nation address, a profound government policy statement that sets the trajectory for socio-economic development.

Working through the GNU, South Africa will be working to, for example, expand services to meet the basic needs of all the people, particularly the majority of those who had been deliberately denied by the apartheid government.

In the past, basic services were provided based on race and black people were excluded. In 1994, 12 million people had no access to safe drinking water, 17 million lived below the poverty line while 21 million had no adequate sanitation. About 2 million were subjected to using the bucket system which was a stark violation of the right to dignity and unhygienic. The urban housing backlog in 1990 was conservatively estimated at 1.3 million units. Including hostels and rural areas, the backlog rose to approximately three million units.

Our villages and townships were almost pitch dark at night as there was non-existent or inadequate street lighting. Most people also used open fires and coal stoves and that led to high levels of sulphur dioxide, which adversely affected the health of many people.

To uplift the material condition of all South Africans, the democratically elected government implemented the Reconstruction and Development Programme aimed at addressing and prioritising the provision of the basic needs of people such as water, electricity, housing, sanitation, refuse and waste removal.

Thirty years into our democracy, South Africa is a vastly different place compared to what it was when the government took over in 1994. Key progress is reflected in the Census 2022, with the number of households in the country having almost doubled from 9,1 million in 1996 to 17,8 million in 2022. In 2022, almost 29,9 percent of households reside in a government-subsidised dwelling or RDP house while over 82,4 percent of households had access to piped water either inside their dwelling or inside their yard.

In 2022, approximately 66,3 percent of households in the country had their refuse

removed by a local authority once a week, as opposed to 52 percent in 1996. About 13,7 million people have been provided with homes through various social housing programmes from 1994 to 2022. In 2022, 83.2 percent of households had access to improved sanitation services while those using electricity as the main source of energy for lighting increased from 58,1 percent in 1996 to 94,7 percent in 2022.

Another important intervention was to allow households who cannot afford municipal services access to free basic services through the municipal indigent policy. Through this policy, every poor household is guaranteed to receive at least a minimum standard of basic services such as 6 kilolitres of water and 50 kilowatts of electricity monthly.

This free basic services programme currently supports more than 3.5 million indigent households and reduces the burden of household labour and brings about relief to poor households who experience a lower quality of life. It also ensures that no citizen is denied the right to basic services, regardless of their ability to pay.

As we reflect on the progress we've made since 1994, it's equally important to acknowledge the challenges we face, including the lingering issues inherited from our past, even 30 years into our democracy.

To build on our achievements, we must unite as a nation. Every South African has a role to play in shaping our future. In line with the District Development Model, we need collaboration across all sectors—government, business, and civil society—to drive economic growth, create jobs, and foster hope for a better tomorrow.

****Dr Namane is the CoGTA Deputy Minister.***

A look into the Public Service: 30 years into democracy

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

Despite regularly receiving some tongue-lashing in the court of public opinion, many public servants have made an indelible mark in moving the country forward.

They do this with the recognition that an effective public service is a key cog in delivering services that improve the lives of citizens.

The Principal of the National School of Government (NSG), Professor Busani Ngcaweni said despite the many challenges facing the Public Service, public administration “is on an upward trajectory”.

As the country moves towards 30 years of democracy, Ngcaweni noted that despite some negative public sentiment on its efficacy, the Public Service has evolved a lot over the past 29-years. In the early years of democracy, government had a mammoth task of putting in place an inclusive public service to serve all South Africans, including setting up democratic institutions.

The journey

Ngcaweni described the first public service, under former President Nelson Mandela, as “characterised by phenomenal growth and achievement,” adding that it was an intense period with rapid transformation. “We had to transform the character of the Public Service,

to serve more citizens. We had to transform and create one administration.” He said the second generation (from 2008 to 2004) in public administration was that of both elected and appointed officials who worked to consolidate the gains of the first administration.

Government, through public servants, worked hard to come up with programmes that continue to benefit South Africans. “So, for example, during that first 10 years of democracy, you see the consolidation and expansion of the social security system. They did not hire consulting firms to create that system, it was created by public administrators,” he added.

It was during this time that the country hosted major conferences, including like the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) conference that led to the transformation of the then OAU into the African Union, and the World Racism Conference.

“This redefined South Africa in the eyes of the global community and of course there were laws that were legislated and implemented such as the Employment Equity Act, [1998 (Act 55 of 1998)] and the BEE [Black Economic Empowerment] and we were beginning to see a major growth as well in terms of black people who were working formally in the labour market,” he said.

30 Years of development



Highlights from the third administration, led by former President Thabo Mbeki, include preparations for the country to host the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup – backed by a growing economy. Public servants continued to offer innovative ways of delivering service to South Africans.

“We even launched the indigent project where those who were residing in municipalities [and] could not pay could be placed on the indigent register,” explained Ngcaweni.

The fourth administration, under former President Jacob Zuma’s leadership, saw the world cup being hosted on African soil for the first time.

“This world cup was prepared for by public servants. They worked on it, set up new institutions like the [National] Planning Commission, set up departments like [The Department of Performance] Monitoring and Evaluation”.

In 2009, government introduced a new approach to the treatment and management of HIV and AIDS, saving lives of many South Africans and paving way for better approaches in fighting the scourge.

Today, HIV positive South Africans have access to anti-retroviral drugs irrespective of their CD4 count.

Stumbling block

The global financial crisis in 2008 had a negative impact on the country’s economy. Ngcaweni

noted that the country has still not fully recovered from the crisis.

“There was a major reversal we entered the period of care and maintenance for most of the problems of government,” said the head of the NSG.

The fifth administration continued with care and maintenance and there “was a kind of turmoil in public administration during that period”.

“We ended up having state capture and we had instability in many institutions of state and that took away the ability of public administrators to perform diligently.”

“But there was still some good things that were happening, like Operation Phakisa during that period but the focus just changed, there was major disruption in terms of people being focused and we didn’t do as much to recover the lost ground in terms of the economy,” he said.

An initiative of government, Operation Phakisa was designed to fast-track the implementation of solutions on critical development issues highlighted in the country’s National Development Plan (NDP).

The NDP is the country’s long-term plan for national development. It provides guidance for all Government policy formulation and implementation.

According to Ngcaweni the sixth administration is “more about rebuilding”.

Professionalisation of the public service
Ngcaweni’s assessment of the Public

Service comes on the heels of the NSG having celebrated a decade of existence in October 2023. The milestone comes after the approval of the National Framework towards the Professionalisation of the Public Service.

The institution is an essential part of the professionalisation of the Public Service.

"In 2020/21, the NSG was training 12 000 people, today we are training 85 000 people and that change is because there is a national movement to build state capacity and everyone in the Public Service must return to school," said Ngcaweni.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the NSG built an e-learning platform to allow public servants to access training remotely.

Political principals are also benefiting from programmes offered by the NSG and according to Ngcaweni, Ministers are the school's "big clients" while the President and Deputy President attend their courses virtually.

Training also extends across political parties and traditional leaders.

He reiterated the importance of continuous learning among public servants.

"Public servants must see themselves as pilots and cabin crew. For you to retain your license as a crew member or to be in the cockpit, you must constantly return to the simulator because flight conditions are changing all the time," he added.

Another project that the school is focusing on in order to strengthen the Public Service is the the Nyukela Public Service SMS Pre-entry Programme. Ngcaweni revealed that plans are underway to extend the programme to Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors.

He noted that there were some aspects of the National Framework towards the Professionalisation of the Public Service that required the amendment of legislation.

"Three pieces of legislation are currently in Parliament for amendment to give effect to the framework – the Public Service Commission Bill, the Public Administration Management Amendment Bill and the Public Service Amendment Bill."

Ethics and good governance

On what constitutes good governance, Ngcaweni said "It is about doing the right thing that serves the public even when no one is watching you. It must have an impact on those you are serving".

He added that it is unethical for public servants to fail to deliver services when they have the means and resources. He is of the view that ethics can be taught and has emphasised the need for a national campaign.

"What teaching ethics means is that you make people aware of what is unethical. You give them the tools and the confidence of making decisions that are correct".

Time at the NSG

Appointed to the top position in March 2020, Ngcaweni said his time in office has been a "roller-coaster with designing new programmes and implementing them".

He is a hands-on leader.

"I made a decision that I am not going to demand from my colleagues what I am not going to be doing. I spend a lot of time in classrooms, boardrooms and in workshops leading from the front".

The future of the public service

Almost 30 years into democracy, what does the future hold for the public service? Ngcaweni believes the future is bright. He urged public servants to use available information like the Census 2022 results to reflect on what has been achieved since 1994 and what needs to be done.

"The bigger question is whether we will be able to sustain the momentum as public servants. "We cannot continue to bask in the glory of those who have achieved what is contained in the Census [2022 report] and not think about what will we, as a generation of public administrators, achieve. "If we mess up institutions and if we squander public administration, 30 years later we will be in a different shape," he concluded. - **SAnews.gov.za**

Chapter 7

Education
& Youth
Empowerment



SA delivers on Goal 3 of MDGs

13 August 2010

Pretoria – South Africa has delivered on Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals calling for the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2015.

According to Engendering Statistics, 2009: 2, the primary enrolment rates of girls about doubled in South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa, rising faster than boys' enrolment rates. This substantially reduced large gender gaps in schooling.

Reflecting on the country and department's successes during an Inaugural Women's Legacy Dialogue on Friday, Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga said research has shown that 98 percent of young people aged 7 to 15 are involved in education programmes.

"Youth literacy in South Africa is at 90 percent, which is above the average of developing countries. The adult literacy rate has reached 77 percent, bringing South Africa in line with the average for developing countries," the minister said.

"Clearly, South Africa is committed to transforming gender relations and to women's

empowerment," Motshekga said, adding that the country has a progressive constitution that guarantees the right to education.

The department has also developed a comprehensive Action Plan for improving basic education – Action Plan to 2014, Towards the realisation of Schooling 2025.

She told delegates that the country has introduced gender-sensitive legislation, like the Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act.

Motshekga acknowledged that despite these successes, the country also had challenges, including the implementation of Outcomes Based Education (OBE).

Many teachers believe that the way the curriculum is organised places too many burdens and too great a workload on them, she said.

Therefore, a review committee, which aims to reduce these burdens by making the curriculum easier to read and understand and by reducing the marking and reporting requirements, was established. – **BuaNews**

30 Years of

Number of SA graduates increase

Zibonele Ntuli : 22 November 2004

Education Minister Naledi Pandor has hailed an increase in the number of black and women graduates in the country - saying they represent achievements in widening access and encouraging equity in institutions of higher learning.

As a result, the minister will deliver a keynote address at the launch of "Trends in Higher Education in South Africa since 1992 to 2001", an analysis of the National Learner's Records Database in Pretoria on Wednesday.

According to the Education Department, the number of graduates produced by the country's universities had doubled from over 400 000 in 1992 to over 900 000 in 2001.

And according to South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) statistics undertaken recently,

there had been an increase in the number of qualifications awarded to African, Indian and Coloured students and women.

"The proportion of qualifications awarded by the universities to these students increased from 37.1 percent in 1992 to 53.7 percent in 2001 while those awarded by technikons increased even more rapidly from 24.7 percent in 1992 to 74.8 percent in 2001," said the department.

It further explained that by 2001 at least 56 percent of university qualifications were obtained by women, although they remained under-represented in the fields of engineering sciences and technology.

SAQA had developed a database to capture and store information on both qualifications and educational achievements.



The database holds records of all citizens who have educational achievements from senior certificate level upwards.

At present, there are 823 000 records on the database and this is about to increase to almost 6 million when the senior certificate data since 1992 is uploaded.

Currently 8 400 qualifications and 8 480 unit standards have been registered and captured on the database. - BuaNews

Democracy has paved the way for access to education for all

Monday, January 15, 2024

President Cyril Ramaphosa says that as the nation commemorates 30 years of democracy, South Africa has made strides in “advancing access to education” for previously marginalised groups.

He made this assertion in his weekly newsletter to the nation on Monday.

South Africa will celebrate 30 years of democracy this year as the country’s first democratic election was held in April 1994 – marking an end to the racist apartheid regime.

“We must consider just how far we have come from an era where the educational prospects of young black men and women were greatly diminished, and where the inferior education they received was deliberately designed to prepare them to be “hewers of wood and drawers of water”.

“Much has changed. From the results of Census 2022, we can glean insight into the gains we have made as a country in advancing access to education, the most critical area of any nation’s development,” the President said.

Census 2022, according to the Presidency, was the fourth population and housing count in post-apartheid South Africa, with the first conducted in 1996, with subsequent censuses being conducted in 2001 and 2011.

Pressing further on the results of Census 2022, the President added that at least three quarters of youth aged between five and 24 are attending school with the “percentage of people aged 20 and older who have completed secondary education” doubling since the first democratic Census in 1996.

“The first census showed that some 62% of white South Africans had a matric or higher

qualification compared to 18% of blacks. Today, 38% of all South Africans have completed secondary education.

“At the time Census 1996 was conducted, 1.5 million South Africans had post-school qualifications. In 2022, this figure stood at approximately 4.6 million. Much of this progress has been made possible by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, which continues to play an invaluable role in supporting access to higher education,” President Ramaphosa said.

Expanding access to education

He acknowledged that the education sector is facing challenges “as it works to meet the needs of our growing population [and] we are working to overcome them”.

“However, given our country’s history of marginalisation and exclusion, that we have made such substantial progress in expanding access to education over the past three decades is significant.

“In South Africa today, basic and higher education is accessible to the children and grandchildren of farmworkers, mineworkers and domestic workers, many of whom were denied such opportunities in the not-too-distant apartheid past. We will continue to build on our gains in our quest to leave no-one behind.”

Matric results

President Ramaphosa highlighted that matric results over the past few years has recorded the strides that young females are now making.

“In 2022, the matric cohort achieved an 80.1% pass rate, and last year more than a million candidates sat for the exam. More than half of the successful matriculants were female. There are also more women studying at tertiary institutions in South Africa, including in the once male-dominated science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields.

“While the task of ensuring that our economy grows at a scale and pace to absorb graduates and those seeking formal employment is a daunting one, let us not lose sight of how far we have come in this critical developmental indicator.

“We wish the matriculants eagerly awaiting their results later this week good luck. We have no doubt they will make us proud, making it an auspicious start to an auspicious year,” President Ramaphosa concluded. - **SAnews.gov.za**

30 Years of development

Significant gains in access to education

Thursday, October 12, 2023

Government's policies geared at tackling school dropouts and increasing the completion of secondary schooling are producing positive results - as persons aged 20 years and older with no formal education reduced from 19.1% in 1996 to 6.9% in 2022.

This is according to South Africa's Census 2022 national results, which was handed over to President Cyril Ramaphosa by Statistician-General Risenga Maluleke at the Union Buildings in Pretoria on Tuesday.

"Furthermore, persons aged 20 years and older with some primary education decreased from 16.6% in 1996 to 7.4% in 2022. Over the period, there has been a noteworthy increase in the number of persons completing secondary education (16.3% in 1996 to 37.6% in 2022) and post-school education (7.1% in 1996 to 12.2% in 2022).

"In 2011 and 2022, business, economics and management sciences and education were dominated by females, while males continue to dominate in engineering as well as electrical infrastructure studies," Maluleke said.

He said post-apartheid South Africa has experienced an expansion in the completion of secondary schooling for previously disadvantaged population groups.

"South Africa has geared up to intensify its measures through policy reforms to tackle school dropouts and increase completion of secondary schooling. However, race disparity in educational attainment intersects with other forms of

disadvantage, including poverty and the urban-rural divide," Maluleke said.

Considering the relatively high children and youth population due to the demographic dividends of the country, concerted efforts have been made by government to expand the education system.

This had been done through establishing more institutions, especially in the early childhood development (ECD) sector, giving much-required attention to remote and rural areas, introducing new and skill-based programmes in institutions and providing funding such as the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) for disadvantaged learners planning to undertake higher education.

"The period between 1996 to 2001 showed a large increase in the percentage of young children under the age of compulsory education participating in education (23.1 percentage points among 5-year-olds and 21.2 percentage points among 6-year-olds).

"However, it is the decade between 2001 and 2011 that showed an unprecedented increase in participation among 5-year-olds with a rise of 35.5 percentage points in participation from 45.6% to 81.1%. Furthermore, nearly nine out of ten (92.4%) children of this age were attending educational institutions in 2022, which is a nearly 70 percentage points increase from 1996," Maluleke said.

He said among 6-year-olds, less than half (49.1%) were attending educational institutions

in 1996 but subsequently increased by 21.2 percentage points in 2001.

“The data also show high attendance rates among 6 to 7-year-olds in 2022, who would most likely be attending Grade R. However, the attendance rate starts to decline by age 15, with only six out of ten (59.9%) 18-year-olds attending educational institutions in 2022; a reduction from 75.7% in 1996,” Maluleke said.

In 1996, more than half (54.6%) of the 20-year-olds were in education, which reduced to 37.0% in 2022.

ECD programme

In South Africa, 3.4 million children aged 0 - 4 years attended ECD programmes in 2022, of which 2.5 million attended a crèche/educare centre or pre-school/nursery school/Grade 00/Grade 000/Grade R.

“About 570 000 children had parents who preferred that they stay with day mothers/gogos/childminders. The majority of children attending ECD programmes were attending a crèche/educare centre (59.8%) while 12.2% attended pre-school/nursery school/Grade 00/Grade 000/Grade R.

“Close to 27.0% of children stayed either with day mothers/gogos/childminders or participated in home/community playgroups. While more than 3 million black African children attended ECD programmes, seven out of ten (72,3%) attended

ECD facilities, with 60,7% attending a crèche/educare centre and 11,6% attending pre-school/nursery school/Grade 00/Grade 000/Grade R.

“By contrast, among white children 83.4% attended ECD facilities with one-third (32.5%) attending pre-school/nursery school/Grade 00/Grade 000/Grade R and the rest attending a crèche/educare centre (50.9%). Close to 17.0% of black African children stayed with day mothers/gogos/childminders,” he said.

Maluleke also noted the use of day mothers/gogos/childminders for childcare was also high among Indians/Asians (19.6%).

Among coloured children, close to 19.0% participated in home/community playgroups. Results showed that there were slight differences between sexes.

An analysis of persons aged 5–24 shows that overall, the percentage of individuals attending an educational institution increased by three percentage points between 1996 and 2022.

“Attendance increased to almost universal level between 1996 and 2022 for children aged 5 years and 6 years, while the attendance rate starts to decline by age 15–24 over the same period. Attendance also increased for black Africans, coloureds and whites over the period, while Indians/Asians showed little change,” he said. – **SAnews.gov.za**



President Ramaphosa hails democracy's role in uplifting youth

Friday, February 16, 2024



President Cyril Ramaphosa says individuals born after the advent of democracy embody the essence of Tintswalo, as they have gone on to record commendable achievements in their lives and careers.

The President was responding to this week's two-day debate on his State of the Nation Address (SONA) by Members of Parliament. The SONA was delivered a week ago in Cape Town.

A number of young people, who have benefited from government over the last 30 years, were

present in the National Assembly to listen to the President's response to the debate.

"Today I am really honoured to have a number of Tintswalos who have come to join us. Among these young people are aeronautical engineers, pilots, civil engineers, police officers, doctors, and a naval captain. They are qualified in a number of ways, all of whom have pursued their careers with the support of government departments and entities.

In his State of the Nation Address last week,

President Ramaphosa introduced South Africa to Tintswalo, a child of democracy.

He said that for millions of South Africans, Tintswalo's story resonated deeply with their own, which prompted young people to post images online of themselves in their graduation gowns or at their workplaces, saying "#IamTintswalo".

"There are countless stories of young people who were born into abject poverty, but are now engineers, doctors, teachers, managers, tourism guides and operators, and entrepreneurs, thanks to the support and opportunities provided to them under democracy.

"They have spoken not only of how democracy has improved their lives, but of their gratitude to those who fought and strived to achieve that democracy. Many have paid tribute to their parents and grandparents – and to all the generations that came before – for the struggle and sacrifice that brought down apartheid and ushered in a new era of freedom," he said.

Responding to those who greeted Tintswalo's story with derision, the President said that these were people who sought to diminish the achievements of democracy.

"To them, it doesn't matter that nine out of 10 households are now living in a formal dwelling, or that a similar number has access to clean drinking water and electricity.

"To them, it doesn't matter that more South African adults have completed matric or earned a degree, or that more learners from poor communities are achieving Bachelor passes. It doesn't matter to these people that South Africans now have a higher life expectancy or that maternal and child health have improved dramatically.

"It doesn't matter to them that millions of people have been lifted out of poverty through the provision of houses, land, social grants, free basic services, expanded access to health care and education and the introduction of a national minimum wage.

"All of these great achievements of human development do not matter to them, because Tintswalo doesn't matter to them. They are prepared to dismiss all of this progress because it does not serve their narrative of a failed nation. It does not serve their political aspirations. It does not serve their narrow interests."

The President said the journey to a brighter future continues. "We have travelled far and we have achieved much, but we have much further to go. We are clear about the progress that we have made, the challenges that we face, and the actions that we must now take," the President said. – SAnews.gov.za

Chapter 8

Inclusivity &
Language



Reflections on SA's 12th official language

Monday, September 30, 2024

There's an old adage that states that the pen is mightier than the sword and the passage of time is proving this to be true.

President Cyril Ramaphosa enacted the South African Sign Language as the country's 12th official language at a ceremony held at the Union Buildings in July 2023.

And yes, while there's still a long way to travel to ensure all out inclusivity for South Africa's deaf community, the signing of the South African Sign Language Bill into law was a key step taken.

Ahead of the 19 July ceremony, the Presidency said the recognition of South African Sign Language (SASL) was "an important step towards the realisation of the rights of persons who are

deaf or hard of hearing."

Prior to the President inking the bill into law, the National Assembly of the sixth administration in May 2023 approved the amending of Section 6 of the Constitution to include SASL as an official language.

Fast forward to August 2024 and South Africa crowned its first Miss South Africa with a hearing impairment. There has been change.

"Recently we had Mia le Roux, a deaf model, win the Miss South Africa pageant. The significance of me mentioning this is that finally, ever since the establishment of the pageant, the deaf community had access to it because there was interpretation services provided," says Nhlanhla

Simelane, a Language Practice student at the University of the Free State (UFS).

Le Roux, who is deaf, became the first Miss South Africa and differently abled finalist in the history of the pageant. Held in August, the competition also featured a sign language interpreter for the first time.

“And now that she won, it means an even greater feat for not just the deaf community but also for the country as well.

“For the deaf community, it means that we have someone who will actively represent us and help in achieving inclusion for the deaf in society. With that, there will be unity amongst the deaf and non-deaf. This also puts South Africa on the map, and with that [comes] more recognition for deaf people internationally and it definitely opens up a bigger world of opportunities,” added Simelane.

The student assistant for South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies at the UFS was born to deaf parents.

He added that there have been other changes since the President’s proclamation.

“Besides that [Le Roux’s win], there have been developments all around the country. More and more people are learning SASL, and more companies, organisations and institutions are even looking at having their employees and members educated in basic SASL. So yes, there is an improved involvement and active interest from more people, and it is really lovely to see,” he told SAnews.

Asked about whether the deaf community feels seen and heard, Simelane said that this is true to a certain extent.

“So yes, we do get seen – sometimes even stared at, which is quite rude, so I would kindly advise against doing so. But the latter then falls on deaf ears, figuratively speaking, as access for deaf individuals still remains a huge problem despite being seen and it being common knowledge.

“For deaf people to be able to use services, let alone public services, either the service providers need to know how to sign or there needs to be the provision of an interpreter. I know for sure that it is only a lucky few deaf individuals that may encounter service providers that at least know basic sign to be able to assist the deaf person,” he explained.

In an opinion article he wrote for the university earlier, Simelane pointed out that with the one-year anniversary since the signing of the law, one “must not overlook the fact that despite being a minority language, SASL already enjoyed significant language rights.”

“For example, the South African Schools Act recognised it as an official language in 1996. The Use of Official Languages Act of 2012 provided another benefit that was not even enjoyed by the other 11 official languages; with this act, state entities had to establish a language policy outlining the use of official languages for public communication, specifically if a member of the public chose SASL as their preferred language,” he said in the article.

In September, the country joined the global community in commemorating International Month of Deaf People with government having encouraged South Africans to learn SASL.

In celebrating Deaf Awareness Month, the Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Sindisiwe Chikunga, called on South Africans to learn Sign Language, as “it is the most effective way to communicate with and connect with deaf individuals”.

“The year 2024 stands out as a significant year in South Africa, as Mia Le Roux made history by becoming the first individual with a hearing impairment to be crowned Miss South Africa. This month-long celebration aims to encourage inclusivity, advance Sign Language education, and cultivate a deeper understanding of deaf culture,” the Minister said.

Observed annually in September, International Month for Deaf People is observed to promote awareness of the rights of deaf people around the world. It also brings to the fore challenges that are faced by deaf people.

Improving lives

Simelane is of the opinion that government departments could do better in improving how they engage members of the deaf community.

“At government institutions, SASL interpreters are supposed to readily be available to assist deaf people when they go to these places. However, throughout my life I have always had to accompany my parents whenever they go to the police station, or the hospital and even to

court. And this is the case even now post the officialisation of SASL. So, the government needs to put what they say into action and make these provisions,” he said.

According to the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB), an estimated 600,000 people in the country are deaf.

“The number of people who use South African Sign Language is currently uncertain and requires extensive research to accurately depict the demographics. It is estimated that there are 600,000 deaf and 1.4 million people with hearing loss in South Africa. However, not all deaf people use South African Sign Language,” said PanSALB Chief Executive Officer Lance Schultz.

Schultz adds that academic researchers estimate the number of people who communicate in SASL ranges from 700,000 to two million users.

“However, according to Stats SA [Statistics South Africa], the officially reported number of South African Sign Language users is only 12,400 whereas the 2011 statistics indicated around 255,000 SASL users,” he explained.

Promoting inclusion and awareness

The PanSALB said the officialising of SASL is a progressive step towards promoting inclusion and quality access to information.

“The officialisation of SASL has certainly played a crucial part in providing recognition and validating that SASL is a language in its own right and has helped raise awareness regarding deaf culture and embracing linguistic diversity. Because our languages are so intrinsically linked to who we are, the move to officialise the language actively promotes social cohesion and has created a sense of belonging for the deaf community,” said the CEO.

However, a lot more work still needs to be done with the country needing “cross-sectoral policies that must be developed and implemented to address the myriad of challenges that affect deaf people.”

“All government departments in various portfolios have a critical role to play in making information and services accessible to the deaf community,” he explained.

In an earlier article, Simelane points to many deaf people having to rely on untrained or unqualified individuals and family members to act as interpreters.

“This was mostly the case in my life, being a CODA (Child of a Deaf Adult) and having to interpret for my parents. Besides my proficiency in SASL, there was still the matter of a breach of confidentiality. This is a common problem for many people. Therefore, more SASL interpreters (SASLi) are needed,” he said in that article.

Meanwhile, the language board said that deaf people face various challenges with the main ones being access to education and quality information and services.

“In South Africa, there are only 44 deaf schools, creating a challenge of access, especially for poor families who have to travel great distances and incur significant costs for their children to receive an education. The major issue within our education system is that most teachers in deaf schools are hearing and many struggle to communicate in SASL, which creates a barrier to learning. Currently, there is no requirement for teachers to know SASL to be placed at a deaf school. Although some do pick up the language from the learners, this is not an ideal situation and places undue pressure on students, ultimately hindering their learning potential. Many deaf learners leave school with much lower comprehension compared to their hearing counterparts due to these barriers,” said Schultz.

Additionally, the language board found that during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, many deaf learners felt out of place as they had to spend a lot of time at home with people who cannot communicate in SASL.

“Given that 95% of deaf children are born to hearing parents who are not familiar with South African Sign Language or deaf culture, it’s crucial to provide support to these families to enable effective communication with their deaf children or siblings. Many deaf learners expressed the desire to go to school purely for the opportunity to communicate with their peers. This highlights the urgent need to provide support to families of deaf children.”

Representation matters

Schultz said that while there are challenges, Le Roux’s win is a positive step for raising awareness of the diverse and complex nature of South Africa.

“The win by Ms Mia Le Roux represents an often-marginalised group in our society. This is a

positive step in raising awareness of the diverse and complex nature that makes up the beautiful tapestry of our nation.

“Representation matters, and the positive response from the disability sector on the crowning of the new Miss SA shows just how impactful that can be. We hope that she will be a beacon of hope to the many little deaf girls who undoubtedly can see themselves in her. We’re excited that she has chosen to use her platform to promote the values of inclusivity, which form the cornerstone of our constitutional democracy. This is certainly a historic moment for the country, and we should all be proud of as a society and recognise the importance of building a society that is inclusive, just, and fair,” said Schultz.

Simelane who is also a former chairperson of Signals, a student association that is aimed at promoting SASL and deaf awareness, is often asked what life is like as a child of deaf parents.

“I actually get asked this a lot. I learned SASL much like most children learn how to speak their parents’ languages. It’s an odd response, but I get away with it most of the time. Really, it makes more sense on a psychological level. Both my parents are deaf, and I learn’t SASL from them. Also, I view this as a gift from my parents as I have really grown to love SASL and being part of the deaf community. It is truly a beautiful honour,” he explained.

Looking to the future

Simelane is of the view that there has been more interest from locals in learning SASL.

“It is commendable. I would just like to warn people not to assume that sign language is universal, most especially because it’s what I note a lot. There is South African Sign Language, which is used by most signers here in South Africa. Zimbabwe has its own sign language. America has its own sign language, so does Britain, Australia and so forth.

“Therefore, it is important to notify locals to learn the right sign language. Unfortunately,

some people learn a random sign language, then communicate, or try to, with a deaf person from South Africa and that deaf person may not even understand the particular sign language. The conversation then becomes awkward,” he remarks.

Simelane who initially planned to become a South African Sign Language Interpreter once he finished his studies, now aims to become an academic.

“However, coming to university has opened up a bigger world of possibilities. I am looking at a career as an academic, with the hope of conducting research for SASL as there is definitely a lack in this field. I hope to also keep interpreting on the side,” he said.

In the year that South Africa commemorates 30 years of freedom and democracy, there are ways to advance the language rights of the deaf community.

“There are several ways to make life easier for the deaf community. It is important to include SASL in any campaigns or events, and to conduct SASL awareness workshops for internal staff members, especially front-line workers who provide access to government services and information for deaf individuals.

“PanSALB is available to provide support in this regard. It’s crucial to understand that SASL is a visual language that is distinct from any other official language, as it is not written or spoken. Therefore, subtitles and texts in English or any other language do not constitute SASL. Announcements and information displayed on screens in service offices should be in SASL. Additionally, it’s important to make socio-economic opportunities accessible to the deaf community,” explained Schultz.

While some will say that the stroke of the President’s pen was a ceremonial gesture, what it has done is place the spotlight on issues faced by parts of the South African population that requires all of society to work together to enhance our shared fabric of society.

- SAnews.gov.za

SA's G20 Presidency to focus on inclusivity

Tuesday, December 3, 2024



G20

SOUTH AFRICA 2025

South Africa will use its Group of Twenty (G20) Presidency to build a more inclusive and prosperous Africa and a better world, ensuring no one is left behind.

This is according to President Cyril Ramaphosa who was speaking during the official launch of South Africa's G20 Presidency in Cape Town, on Tuesday.

On 01 December 2024, South Africa assumed the Presidency of the G20, marking a historic milestone as the first African country to lead this influential group of the world's largest economies.

President Ramaphosa outlined South Africa's ambitious agenda under the theme "Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability."

"The G20 Presidency is a valuable opportunity for South Africa to advance efforts towards greater global economic growth and sustainable development. It is an opportunity to place the needs of Africa and the rest of the Global South

more firmly on the international development agenda.

"Through South Africa's G20 Presidency, we will work to build a better Africa and a better world, and to ensure that no one is left behind," the President said.

He announced that the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) Minister Ronald Lamola, Treasury Minister Enoch Godongwana and The Presidency led by Director-General Phindile Baleni will be tasked with leading and making the G20 process a success.

The President acknowledged the enormous responsibility of leading the G20 group which includes the world's major economies, representing 85% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), over 75% of international trade, and about two-thirds of the world population.

"The grouping therefore plays a critical role in influencing global policy making and fostering global economic stability. Decisions taken by the G20 have a direct impact on the lives of all members of the global community.

"It has a wide agenda that now includes trade, sustainable development, health, agriculture, energy, the environment, climate change and anti-corruption," the President said.

The G20 is an international forum of both developing and developed countries which seek to find solutions to global economic and financial issues.

It comprises 19 countries including: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Türkiye, United Kingdom, and United States and two regional bodies, namely the European Union and the African Union.

30 Years of development



G20
SOUTH AFRICA 2025



South Africa's Presidency will be the first time an African country has presided over the G20.

We will use this moment to bring the development priorities of the African Continent and the Global South more firmly onto the agenda of the G20.

PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA

SOUTH AFRICA'S G20 PRESIDENCY LAUNCH

3 DECEMBER 2024

#BetterAfricaBetterWorld

#G20SouthAfrica

| www.g20.org



G20

**SOUTH
AFRICA
2025**

Benefits and addressing challenges

The G20 is expected to have significant economic benefits for South Africa, notably for the tourism, transport, restaurant, entertainment and hospitality industries, with global visibility in all nine provinces.

South Africa will host approximately 130 meetings (both virtual and in-person) from 01 December 2024 - 30 November 2025, across the country, and on the margins of major international conferences and meetings.

The President noted that South Africa's Presidency comes at a challenging time, with global crises ranging from climate change to inequality, poverty, geopolitical conflicts, and sluggish economic growth.

President Ramaphosa underscored the need for collective action to tackle these pressing issues, ensuring that solutions are inclusive and equitable.

"While the challenges we face are common, their causes and consequences are unevenly distributed across and between countries.

"Working together with G20 members, and building partnerships across society, South Africa will seek to harness global will and capabilities to confront these challenges. The G20 provides us with a platform to pursue these collective goals."

Key priorities

President Ramaphosa outlined four key priorities for South Africa's G20 Presidency - namely: strengthening disaster resilience; ensuring debt sustainability; mobilising finance for a just energy transition and harnessing critical minerals for inclusive growth.

The country's G20 Presidency aims to escalate discussions on climate-induced disasters, advocating for enhanced global support for post-disaster reconstruction, particularly for vulnerable nations.

Debt solutions and inclusive growth

President Ramaphosa stressed the need for

sustainable debt solutions for low-income countries, highlighting Africa's struggle with high debt levels that hinder development. The G20 will explore extending debt relief and ensuring fair and transparent sovereign credit ratings.

"Building on G20 initiatives undertaken in recent years, we will seek to advance sustainable solutions to tackle high structural deficits and liquidity challenges and extend debt relief to developing economies.

"We will also seek to ensure that the sovereign credit ratings are fair and transparent and to address high risk premiums for developing economies," the President said.

The Presidency also seeks to mobilise finance for a just energy transition by securing agreement on increasing the quality and quantity of climate finance flows to developing countries.

"This would include strengthening multilateral development banks, enhancing and streamlining support for country platforms such as the Just Energy Transition Partnership and more effectively leveraging private capital," the President said.

Lastly, the G20 Presidency seeks to harness critical minerals for inclusive growth and development.

South Africa plans to champion the responsible use of critical minerals, ensuring that local communities and resource-rich countries benefit equitably.

"As minerals extraction accelerates to match the needs of the energy transition, it is crucial to ensure that the countries and local communities endowed with these resources are the ones to benefit the most. We will use this G20 to champion the use of critical minerals as an engine for growth and development in Africa," the President said.

The G20 Presidency will culminate in the Leaders' Summit in Johannesburg in November 2025, where world leaders will adopt a declaration outlining collective actions to address critical global challenges. - [SAnews.gov.za](https://www.sanews.gov.za)

Bara's burns unit gets a much-needed upgrade

Wednesday, August 28, 2024

The upgrading of the Wits Roy McAlpine Burns Unit at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital (CHBAH) will go a long way in positioning the facility as one of the leading centres in Africa, focusing on the treatment of burns.

This is according to Gauteng MEC for Health and Wellness, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko, who opened the new extended wing, together with Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Wits University, Professor Zebon Vilakazi, and the Roy McAlpine Charitable Foundation.

The additional wing is expected to enhance critical care and specialist training.

Since its establishment 33 years ago, the burns unit at the hospital has admitted over 30 000 patients and performed more than 40 000 burn-related surgical procedures.

"The opening of this new wing is more than just an expansion of physical space; it represents a crucial step forward in our ability to provide lifesaving world-class care to the hundreds of patients who depend on the public health system.

"This centre of excellence will go a long way in ensuring that more patients, both adults and children, can be counted among those whose dignity was restored post severe burns," explained Nkomo-Ralehoko.

According to the CHBAH Head of Burns Unit, Professor Adelin Muganza, the facility's expansion includes 12 newly- equipped intensive care unit (ICU) beds and a new operating theatre to reduce delays in surgical procedures - a critical factor in treating severe burns.

The unit also boasts office space, a large





outpatient service area ensuring that more patients receive timely follow-up care, and rehabilitation spaces for occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech therapy, and recreational activities.

According to Muganza, all these are essential for the holistic recovery of burn victims, including a skin substitute laboratory to improve the training of specialists and patient outcomes through cutting-edge research.

The impact of this expansion is already being felt by patients such as 29-year-old Nontleko Sithole from George Goch in Johannesburg who suffered burns to her body and face.

She was admitted to the Wits Roy McAlpine Burns Unit earlier this month after a devastating fire at her home, which sadly claimed her grandmother.

"I am impressed and happy with how the hospital treated my wounds and amazed about the progress I am making so far. I never thought I was going to recover so quickly, but now I am positive because of the work done on me by the healthcare workers," she said.

Another patient, Bafana Alex Ntombela from

Pimville, Soweto, was severely burned after collapsing onto a hotplate stove, causing significant injuries to the lower part of his body.

"I thought my life was over after seeing how badly I was burned. I underestimated Bara and its staff, but they surprised me with the treatment they gave me. They counselled me, and I have hope that I will recover. The progress of my healing is amazing."

The facility is set to recruit additional specialists, medical officers, and nurses, further strengthening its capacity to meet the growing healthcare needs of the community.

This milestone underlines the Gauteng Department of Health's commitment to enhancing healthcare infrastructure and preparing for the National Health Insurance (NHI) by expanding and upgrading facilities to meet the increasing demand for healthcare services.

The facility will also significantly improve burns services not only in Gauteng but also across South Africa and the broader Southern African Development Community region.

– **SAnews.gov.za**

30 Year

Hop aboard the health train

Thursday, August 22, 2024



Residents of Tembisa and surrounding areas turned up in their numbers today for free health services offered by the Phelophepha Train.

Thulo Letsoalo, a mother of three, told SAnews that she felt she should take advantage of the train services, as she cannot afford to go to specialists.

Letsoalo said over the past few years, she has been unwell, suffering from various ailments.

"I came here this morning just before 6am and I am confident that I am going to be assisted. I thank our government for bringing the Phelophepha services to us, as some of us

cannot afford to pay for specialists," Letsoalo told SAnews on Thursday.

Clive Tsheka, who has been having problems with his eye sight, commended the services provided by the healthcare train.

"I have been struggling with my eyes for years. I last visited an optometrist when I was still working and after that, I could not afford it anymore. I am happy that our government has brought free services to us," Tsheka said.

The Phelophepha Train, which is currently stationed at Oakmoor train station in Gauteng, is Transnet's flagship Corporate Social Investment

project, which started in 1994 as a three-coach eye clinic. It operated successfully between 1995 and 2009.

Due to its reach and success around the country in providing eye care to the country's most vulnerable communities in rural areas, Transnet decided to add other critical services to the first train, such as nursing, dentistry and an on-board pharmacy.

Over the years, Phelophepha Trains have expanded their service offering to include education/awareness/testing and screening for cancer (cervical, prostate and breast), and wellness for chronic conditions such as hypertension and diabetes.

The Department of Public Enterprises Acting Director-General, Jacky Molisane, told SAnews that the provision of healthcare is a crucial element to development at community level.

"We are bringing services at grassroots level, providing comprehensive services free of charge. People are given services such as dentistry and other services, free of charge. This shows that government cares for its people," Molisane said.

She commended the hard working men and

women, who provide healthcare on the train in a professional manner.

"This shows that our government is responsive and caring," she said.

Senior Manager responsible for Health Initiatives at Transnet Foundation, Shamona Kandia, said through the Phelophepha Train, the Transnet Foundation is able to give back to communities.

"The Phelophepha Train has, for the past 30 years, been providing healthcare services to communities. Today, we here in Tembisa as part of Transnet's schedule of bringing healthcare services to the people," Kandia said.

She said Transnet has been supporting government to provide healthcare services to communities.

The Transnet Foundation's two healthcare trains, Phelophepha I and II, are designed to provide basic medical help and education.

Each train has a permanent staff of 22 healthcare professionals, including nurses, healthcare educators, opticians and dentists. The trains also carry managers, translators and security staff. Local workers are hired on a temporary basis.

Since the beginning of the Phelophepha programme, the trains have reached many people, changing lives and bringing healing and healthcare education to communities in great need of care.

The Phelophepha Train healthcare services form part of build-up events for the District Development Model Presidential Imbizo, which is taking place on Friday, 23 August, in the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality at Tsakane Stadium. President Cyril Ramaphosa is expected to interact with communities and stakeholders in the metro.

Themed: "Leave No One Behind", the Presidential Imbizo promotes participatory democracy and inclusive development by allowing community members and stakeholders to voice proposals and express any concerns or dissatisfaction they may have about conditions in the district or province.

At an event at a community hall, locals, especially those in need, were given wheelchairs, walking sticks and hygiene packs.

- SAnews.gov.za



Chapter 10

Sport &
National Pride

15 African Heads of State to grace World Cup finale

Pretoria – At least 15 African Heads of State are expected to grace Sunday's World Cup final between the Netherlands and Spain and the closing ceremony of the biggest ever football spectacle.

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki, Mozambican President Armando Guebuz, Gabon President Ali Bongo Ondimba, Comoros President Ahmed Abdullah Mohamed Sambi, King Letsie of Lesotho, King Mswati of Swaziland are all believed to have confirmed their attendance, to mark the closure of the tournament, the first ever on African soil.

The Presidents of Malawi, Burundi, Ghana, Togo, Burkina Faso and Djibouti are also expected to be present.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, on a state visit to South Africa, as well as delegates from both Spain and the Netherlands, are also expected to attend.

According to International Relations Director General, Ayanda Ntsaluba, many of the Heads of State are also expected to attend the 1Goal Education Summit, to be hosted by President Jacob Zuma and FIFA President Sepp Blatter, ahead of the final match on Sunday.

However, no decision has yet been reached on whether former Nobel Prize winner Nelson Mandela will attend.

If the 91-year-old statesman does, he would likely be the one handing the trophy to the World Cup winner.

Ntsaluba told a media briefing on Thursday, a further 17 "eminent persons", including former Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda and

Zimbabwean Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai are expected to be among the dignitaries who will grace the event.

Responding to criticism from some human rights groups surrounding Mugabe's invitation,

Ntsaluba said the Zimbabwean leader was invited as he was a recognised head of the unity government in that country.

"He is the head of the government and is recognised by the United Nations, African Union and SADC...he is not under any sanctions," said Ntsaluba.

Ntsaluba said all logistical arrangements were being finalised for the visiting dignitaries. "All arrangements are being finalised to ensure the successful attendance of the Heads of State and Government and other VIPs to the closing ceremony, including accommodation, seating arrangements, security, transport, logistics and protocol arrangements.

"All our guests and soccer lovers should expect an African feast of all times, and will treasure the memories of this World Cup for many years to come," said Ntsaluba.

He said government was encouraged by the success of the tournament, adding that visitors will go back home with "fond memories" of the country.

Spain will take on Netherlands in the final match. Organisers say the closing ceremony to precede it will be "more youthful and a bit more technologically advanced" than the traditionally African ceremony which opened the tournament on 11 June. – **BuaNews**

30 Years of development

Closing ceremony dazzles

11 July 2010

Pretoria- After much anticipation, the 2010 FIFA World Cup Closing Ceremony opened at 18:40 at Johannesburg's Soccer City Stadium with all the colour and splendour it promised.

Former South African President Nelson Mandela graced the event, even going onto the pitch with his wife, Graca Machel, besides him - much to the delight of the many soccer lovers gathered at Soccer City stadium.

The sound of vuvuzelas echoed through the stadium when Colombian singer Shakira and local group Freshlyground sung their hit song Waka Waka.

The large crowd at Soccer City stadium, as well as viewers from all over the world, were entertained by artists from different parts of the continent in true African style and the 3D effects captured the crowd's excitement.

The audience revelled to the sounds of Grammy Award winners Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Jozi, Stiaan Seate, Slikour, Zuluboy, Abigail Kubeka, Theo Kgosinkwe, Afrikaans artists Nianell and flutist Wouter, Nigeria's 2Face, Ghana's Samini and popular local traditional group Ihashi Elimhlophe.

Marimba players dazzled when they played on the 3D impressions displayed on the grounds of the stadium and the gumboot dancers, Pantsula and contemporary dancers, showed what they were made of.

A sea of soccer fans clad in orange filled the

magnificent calabash-shaped stadium.

The crowd and fans from all over the world are now anxiously awaiting the historic Final Match of the football tournament, between Spain and the Netherlands. The match will kick-off at 20:30. –

BuaNews



Stronger, together! Cabinet praises Boks victory

Monday, November 6, 2023

Cabinet has sent its congratulations to the record breaking Springboks team on their victory at the Rugby World Cup in Paris.

Minister in the Presidency Khumbudzo Ntshavheni congratulated the Boks on their second back-to-back World Cup win during a post Cabinet media briefing on Monday.

The team clinched the Webb Ellis Cup following a tough encounter against New Zealand. The Boks are the only national team who have won the Rugby World Cup four times.

Ntshavheni paid special homage to the diverse make-up of the Springboks team that took on and conquered the world.

“In the history of rugby in South Africa, this Springboks team is the most diverse in terms of the demographic representation of South Africa. The composition of such a diverse team was not an act of coincidence, but a deliberate effort by the management and coaching staff of the Springboks to select an inclusive team.

“That bold decision by then coach Rassie Erasmus and his team continues to demonstrate to South Africans and the rest of the world, that everyone with skill, if given a chance and support, can become great – an affirmation that we are Stronger Together,” she said.

Ntshavheni said the “resilience and determination” of the Springboks throughout a challenging World Cup – in which they had to face some of the top 5 ranked teams in the world – “is

an embodiment of the true essence of being a South African”.

“[It is] that which makes this great nation rise against all odds and adversities to emerge victorious. Some of the best players of this Springboks team have had to overcome personal adversities on their path to greatness.

“Cabinet expressed its congratulations to Siyamthanda “Siya” Kolisi, the Springboks double World Cup-winning captain, for leading the team to the ‘Greatest of All Time (GOAT)’ status and the celebrations must go on,” she said.

– **SAnews.gov.za**



Kolisi dedicates World Cup win to all South Africans

Tuesday, October 31, 2023

With a melting pot of different cultures in the Springbok team, Captain Siya Kolisi has attributed winning the 2023 Rugby World Cup to the champions working together in pursuit of inspiring the nation.

Addressing a media briefing upon their arrival at OR Tambo International Airport from France, Kolisi thanked South Africans for supporting the team during the tournament and dedicated the win to people who want to achieve their dreams regardless of their circumstances.

“We wanted to make sure that this win was for the people of South Africa because of the diversity in our team. We all come from different walks of life and different races. This trophy is for people who come from tough circumstances

and disadvantaged areas... who want to make something out of their lives. This is for you because we also come from those environments. We want people to get a reference point to see how they can make it from their situation. It is also for people who come from rich homes,” Kolisi said on Tuesday.

The national team was welcomed at the airport by scores of jubilant South Africans donning the Springbok colours with hopes of getting a glimpse of the world champions. This is after they triumphed over New Zealand in the final match of the 2023 Rugby World Cup tournament, beating New Zealand 12-11 on Saturday to lift the Webb Ellis Cup once more.

“As a team we had to learn [to work together]. We knew our cultures were different and that comes with differences amongst ourselves. We had a coaching staff who knew how to align us as a group; who knew





how to put us together so we can focus towards a common goal, which was the Springboks and the people of South Africa.

“Our coaches taught us about taking care of each other and reminded us about our painful past, which some people have not healed from. We speak about it honestly amongst our team and talk about transformation. It is important to talk about healing from our past. We need to know the way forward; how do get better as South Africa,” he said.

Kolisi said transformation is about people changing internally; understanding each other’s cultures and taking care of each other.

“I know this win is going to inspire the country but it will not change people’s circumstances. For us as players, it will give us a platform that can open opportunities through the work that we do with our foundations,” he said.

Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture Zizi Kodwa said the victory paid homage to President Nelson Mandela who had the vision that sport has the ability to unite.

“Your performance both on and off the field has represented you well as ambassadors of the country of our dreams, united as defined in the preamble of our Constitution,” he said.

South Africans will get the opportunity to see the 2023 Rugby World Cup trophy in person when

the Springboks embark on a four-day tour from Thursday.

The tour has been meticulously planned to convey the team’s appreciation and proudly showcase the trophy as it embarks on another four-year journey in South Africa.

The tour will start in Pretoria, Johannesburg and Soweto – concluding at FNB Stadium – on Thursday, 2 November. It will then continue in Cape Town (Friday, 3 November) and Durban (Saturday, 4 November) before concluding in the Eastern Cape (East London) on Sunday, 5 November.

“The locations have been selected for population size in the first three instances and because of the Eastern Cape’s rugby significance in the fourth. Satellite tours to Bloemfontein, Nelson Mandela Bay and other centres will be scheduled for 2024. Such tours following the 2019 victory had to be abandoned because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The route for each tour has been prepared in consultation with the respective local authorities and the South African Police Service,” SA Rugby said on Sunday.

Route maps and timings will be published at www.springboks.rugby and on SA Rugby’s social media channels and by local authorities. –

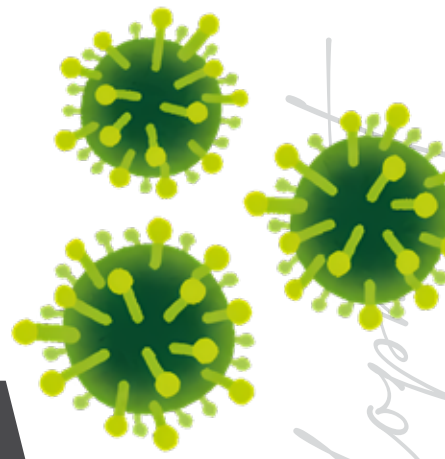
SAnews.gov.za

Chapter 11

COVID-19 &
National Response

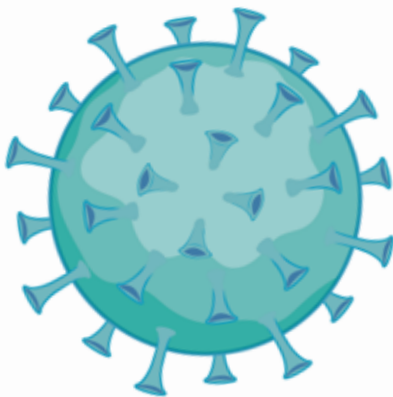


First case of Coronavirus reported in SA



Thursday, March 5, 2020

ALERT



CORONAVIRUS

The Minister of Health, Dr Zweli Mkhize, has confirmed the first case of Coronavirus in South Africa on Thursday afternoon.

The Minister took to Twitter to make the announcement just moments before a Parliamentary debate on South Africa's readiness to deal with Coronavirus (COVID-19).

"This morning, Thursday, March 5, the National

Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) confirmed that a suspected case of COVID-19 has tested positive.

"The patient is a 38-year-old male, who travelled to Italy with his wife. They were part of a group of 10 people and they arrived back in South Africa on 1 March 2020," tweeted the Minister on his official account.

According to the Minister, the patient consulted a private general practitioner on 3 March with symptoms of fever, headache, malaise, a sore throat and a cough. The practice nurse took swabs and delivered it to the lab.

The patient has been self-isolating since 3 March. The couple also has two children.

"The tracer team has been deployed to KwaZulu-Natal with epidemiologists and clinicians from NICD. The doctor has been self-isolating as well.

"The Emergency Operating Centre (EOC) has identified the contacts by interviewing the patient and doctor," said Mkhize.

Following the Parliamentary debate, the Minister will hold a media briefing to ensure that the public is immediately kept abreast.

"A press briefing will be held later after the parliamentary debate this evening, to shed more light on this issue," said Mkhize. – **SAnews.gov.za**

30 Years of development

How to access **R350** COVID-19 grant

Wednesday, April 29, 2020



Government has outlined the process for the application of the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant for individuals who are currently unemployed.

Addressing a media briefing on Wednesday in Pretoria, Social Development Minister Lindiwe Zulu said the qualifying applicants will be paid R350 per month from May – October 2020.

The grant forms part of the R500 billion economic and social relief measures announced by the President last week, as part of the national

response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The Special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant will be implemented in terms of the existing avenue provided for by the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) channel, which is administered in accordance with the provisions as set in the Social Assistance Act, 2004,” the Minister said.

In terms of Regulation 9 (6), social relief may be provided to South African citizens, permanent residents and refugees who have been affected by a disaster.

This framework is currently administered through the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) - however with limitations.

“The new special COVID-19 SRD grant requires a rather more complex approach, as the beneficiaries are not on the SASSA database or other government grant support programmes. It was therefore necessary to introduce new systems and new qualification criteria, and amend some regulations,” the Minister said.

The Department of Social Development will publicize the directions which will provide details on how this grant will be implemented.

“The system will go live immediately when the regulations are published and we envisage to start making payments by the 15th of May 2020. Those who have applied during the trial run will be contacted to provide further information,” the Minister said.

Qualifying criteria

The qualifying criteria for the special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress of R350 per month for distressed individuals is as follows:

1. The grant will be available to South African Citizens, Permanent Residents or Refugees registered on the Home Affairs system; who are resident within the borders of the Republic of South Africa;
2. Applicants must be:
 - ✓ Above the age of 18;
 - ✓ Unemployed;
 - ✓ Not receiving any income;
 - ✓ Not receiving any social grant;
 - ✓ Not receiving any unemployment insurance benefit and does not qualify to receive unemployment insurance benefits;
 - ✓ Not receiving a stipend from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme; and
 - ✓ Not a resident in a government funded or subsidised institution.

Prospective Applicants will need to provide the following compulsory information for processing of their applications:

- ✓ Identity Number/Department of Home permit;
- ✓ Name and Surname as captured in the ID (and initials);

- ✓ Gender and Disability;
- ✓ Banking details - Bank Name and Account Number;
- ✓ Contact details - Cell phone number;
- ✓ Proof of Residential Address;

Application process

An application for social relief of distress or a social grant may be lodged electronically over and above any other available means of lodging such applications.

The measures applicable include sending a WhatsApp message to 0600 123 456 and selecting SASSA or an E-mail to SRD@sassa.gov.za.

“We are still finalising additional access channels and including SMS, self-help desks and an online application process. We will give information on these soon.

“For people with no access to technology, volunteers will be trained to assist applicants who cannot use technology and will be provided with gadgets to capture details on behalf of applicants,” the Minister said.

Notification of the outcome for an application for the Special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant will be provided in the same manner in which the application was made.

Payment of grant

Payment of the grant will be made mainly through bank accounts of the applicants and through cash send measures through banks.

“The benefit/grant will be paid from the date of approval up to the end of October 2020 provided the qualifying criteria listed continues to be met. So if applicants apply in June, their payments will be from June and there will be no back pay,” the Minister said.

Applicants should note that by virtue of application, all applicants grant consent to SASSA to verify their residency, sources of income and/or social security benefits with government departments and financial institutions; including - all ID/ Permits will be cross checked against other data sources.

“False applications will give rise to possible prosecution,” the Minister said. - **SAnews.gov.za**

State of Disaster regulations gazetted

Thursday, March 19, 2020



With government having declared a national state of disaster amid the COVID-19 virus outbreak, Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma has gazetted regulations aimed at containing the spread.

This comes after the Minister in recent days consulted her colleagues in Cabinet and the relevant stakeholders, in terms of section 3 of the Disaster Management Act.

The regulations will outline rules that need to be adhered to by the general public.

The regulations pertaining to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) deal, among others, with the release of resources and the prevention and prohibition of gatherings.

They also deal with the release of resources such as human resources, stores, equipment, ships, aircraft platforms, vehicles and facilities when available.

“[This is to ensure] the delivery of essential services, as may be required, to prevent, limit, contain, combat and manage the spread of the virus,” the regulations state.

Gatherings of more than 100 people are prohibited and prevented in order to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the regulations state.

According to the regulations, people suspected of having contracted the virus, or who has been in contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, may not refuse consent for a medical examination, prophylaxis, treatment, isolation and quarantine.

The Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure is expected to identify and make available sites to be used as isolation and quarantine facilities as the need arises.

The regulations reiterate that schools and partial care facilities have to be closed by 18 March 2020 until 15 April 2020, after which, the period may be extended for the duration of the national state of disaster.

The regulations also include the suspensions of all visits by members of the public to Correctional Centres, Remand Detention Facilities, Holding Cells, Military Detention Facilities, and

Department of Social Development facilities, including Child and Youth Care Centres, shelters, One Stop Centres, and Treatment Centres.

These visits are suspended for a period of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, which period may be extended up to the duration of the national state of disaster.

The regulations also set a limit on the sale, dispensing or transportation of alcoholic beverages.

“All registered or licensed on-consumption liquor premises which can accommodate, including taverns, restaurants and clubs, must be closed with immediate effect, or must be limited to accommodate no more than 50 persons: Provided that adequate space is available and that all directions in respect of hygienic conditions and limitation of exposure of persons with the COVID-19 virus are adhered to,” the regulations state.

Regarding Emergency Procurement Procedures, the Minister in the regulations says these should be subject to the Public Finance Management Act and the Municipal Finance Management Act, regulations.

According to the regulations, people could be imprisoned six months or fined for spreading fake news about the COVID-19 virus. – **SAnews.gov.za**

Chapter 12

Embracing a new
era of growth and
prosperity

Embracing the winds of change

Wednesday, August 7, 2024



It is often said that the more things change, the more they stay the same - and to some extent this is true.

In an evolving world, change is a necessity and is accompanied sometimes by pangs of anxiety and the eternal “what if” questions that take up residence rent-free in our minds.

As South Africans, we went through a period of transition with July 30 2024 marking exactly a month since President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the Cabinet of the seventh administration under the Government of National Unity (GNU).

The journey to the seventh administration began at the ballot box at the May 29 2024 elections that resulted in no outright winner at the polls for the political parties.

While citizens wanted their voices to be heard through the ballot, all of us were wondering what the future would hold for a democratic dispensation that was not run by a political party that had obtained an outright majority at the polls. In the immediate future, fears of possible mayhem and violence post the elections have not materialised.

Setting the ball in motion in the proverbial winds of change, was the holding of the first Cabinet Lekgotla where the Ministers, the Deputy President and President sat down to map out the programme of action of government.

A few days later on 18 July, the President delivered the Opening of Parliament Address (OPA) where he outlined the new administration’s key priority areas. These are: driving inclusive

growth and job creation, reducing poverty and tackling the high cost of living as well as building a capable, ethical and developmental state.

In announcing these priority areas, the President appealed to the larger South African family to behave as weaver birds who give their all to build and cooperate. He has called on all South Africans to remain committed to pursuing the path of cooperation, growth and inclusion.

The new and returning Ministers and Deputy Ministers have hit the ground running in their respective portfolios having tabled their respective Budget Votes that concluded with the President's reply to The Presidency vote on July 24.

And while we all continue to learn the names and faces of the new executive, what is clear is that the work of government continues unhindered, despite having some new captains at the helm of government departments.

The changes have not brought about angst and instability among our people. Instead, the period between the elections up until the setting up of the seventh administration to date, has been characterised by stability we should not take for granted.

And perhaps quite fittingly the changes are taking place in a year that the country celebrates 30 years of freedom and democracy. The change not only tests the strength of our hard-won democracy, but also cements our freedom of choice in who we want to represent

us in government and other areas of everyday life.

That freedom of choice has not been muffled or tampered with but has been taken seriously by the government of the day.

Attesting to this, the first citizen in replying to the Presidency Budget Vote said: "Above all, let us show that government will work for the people and that we can create a new era of growth and prosperity in our country."

While it is still early days for the GNU, what has been clear for all to see is that there has been a sense of continuity in the operations of government, which is crucial in the creation of a better life for all as well as moving the country forward.

Just as human beings are constantly growing and evolving, change is constant but what remains is that the founding provisions of the Constitution of the republic founded on universal adult suffrage, a national common voters roll, regular elections and a multi-party system of democratic government, to ensure accountability, responsiveness and openness among some of its values, still rings true, albeit the speed bumps along the way.

The Constitution as the supreme law of the land which cannot be superseded by any other law or government action, still lives and breathes for all of South Africa's people.

Its supremacy has not changed and in an era of change, may its tenets to put South Africa's people first, never fall. - **SAnews.gov.za**



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