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UBUNTU magazine – issue 28
South Africa's Public Diplomacy in action

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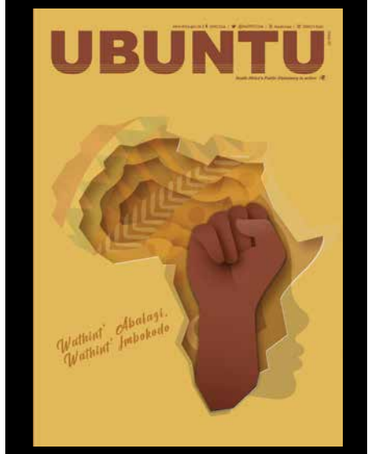
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UBUNTU
a Nguni word meaning humanity
The Department of International Relations and Cooperation's quarterly magazine



ON THE COVER

You Strike a Woman, You Strike a Rock /
Wathint' Abafazi, Wathint' Imbokodo

"Our quest to build a better world will remain unfulfilled as long as people are still discriminated against on the basis of race, gender, sex, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture or language.

"We have a responsibility to make sure that every girl child receives an education and that every woman has an opportunity to work, study, start a business and have choice and control over her life and body.

"We need to end the violence perpetrated against the most vulnerable, most often women and children.

"We have witnessed that women in conflict situations are particularly vulnerable, including women journalists."

Dr Naledi Pandor, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

2030 NDP

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA: MEMBER OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

2023 – 2025

"Together, building back better through human rights"

UBUNTU magazine – issue 28
South Africa's Public Diplomacy in action

contents



12 | Diplomatic Fun Fair 2022 held at the Union Buildings



82 | *The Woman King* is more than an action movie – it shines a light on the women warriors of Benin

In every issue

6 Letter from the Minister
8 Publisher's note

Diplomacy

12 Diplomatic Fun Fair 2022 held at the Union Buildings
14 Forging a world where generations will prosper and thrive
18 Comrade President José Eduardo dos Santos: An anchor of solidarity
20 Walking together, the tiger, dragon, elephant and lion: Asia's rise and its relevance to Africa's development
24 Celebrating women in diplomacy
28 Diplomacy, information technology and partnerships
32 The world's divided future
34 Bio-economy vital for Africa's socio-economic development and sustainability
38 The Indo-Pacific: An emerging paradigm for peace, cooperation, sustainable development and mutual prosperity
44 The Nelson Mandela "Be the Legacy" Internship Programme
48 Blinken's African charm offensive
52 Mikhail Gorbachev: Southern Africans have a special reason to thank him

Features

56 Liberation Heritage: Lillian Masediba Ngoyi
58 Celebrating the legacy of Solomon Linda
60 A South African university publisher makes it to 100. A rare and important event
62 Tourism sector is making significant strides towards recovery
66 Africa's Free Trade Area offers promise for cities



Lifestyle
98
South Africa-Botswana Fashion show



104
Fifth edition of SCULPTX



54 | Dr Esther Mahlangu turns 87 years

68 How African countries coordinated the response to COVID-19: Lessons for public health
70 Rock stars: How a group of scientists in South Africa rescued a rare chunk of human history
74 Africa is a treasure trove of medicinal plants: Here are seven that are popular
78 After landmark UN declaration, hope for cleaner air
80 Climate change: Colonial diaries in South Africa are helping scientists reconstruct weather patterns of the past to protect against future events
82 *The Woman King* is more than an action movie – it shines a light on the women warriors of Benin
84 Footprints take science a step closer to understanding southern Africa's dinosaurs
86 Flipper traces reveal the presence of ancient seals on South Africa's coast
88 Four lessons from Serena Williams for sportswomen in Africa
90 Flying the flag

LIFESTYLE

100 Beyoncé has helped usher in a renaissance for African artists
102 Epitaph for a baobab: Remembering South African poet and activist Don Mattera
104 Fifth edition of SCULPTX presents over 200 works and 80 artists
106 Why the V&A's new Africa Fashion exhibition is important – and long overdue
108 Spiritual traditions fuel South African jazz artist Tumi Mogorosi's new album
110 South African resorts and hotels among the best in the world



The world has been through a time of tremendous change and turmoil in the international system, having emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic, which was an unprecedented setback for most of our countries and economies. We have been confronted by the conflict in Ukraine, the impact of climate change, environmental degradation, the energy crisis, food insecurity, high inflation and an exponential increase in the prices of basic food. For Africa, the combined impact of all these developments is especially severe, given the relatively low levels of development and socio-economic challenges, as well as pockets of instability throughout the continent.

This is a critical juncture in international relations in which the globe's interdependence and interconnectedness have starkly exposed our mutual vulnerability, especially in times of crisis. South Africa has resisted becoming embroiled in the politics of confrontation and aggression that has been advocated by the powerful countries. Together with several developing countries, we have asserted our own independent and non-aligned approach based on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine through dialogue and negotiation.

Multilateralism remains a focal point of our foreign policy, and South Africa's engagements are premised on the need to promote the priorities reflected in the National Development Plan and advance our National Interest and those of Africa and the global South. Strengthening multilateralism is the only means of addressing our global challenges, which are monumental and the building of trust and real cooperation will enable us to succeed in achieving our objectives.

According to the World Economic Forum, the top global risks by severity in the next decade will be climate action failure, extreme weather, biodiversity loss, erosion of social cohesion, infectious diseases, natural resource crises and debt crises.

If we are to effectively address these pressing challenges, we will need to find a way to work together constructively for the good of our planet.

We continue to push for the reform of the United Nations (UN) and the UN Security Council as the premier body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. This body needs to be democratised so that it is reflective of the current world order. We are also committed to the reinvigoration of the Non-Aligned Movement and will continue to work within BRICS to forge greater collaboration between Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. As the only African country within the G20, we will continue to champion the African Agenda and the interests of the global South within that forum, as well as within the G77.

South Africa has devoted considerable effort to promoting equal access for all African countries to COVID-19 vaccines and making the continent and other developing countries better prepared to manage future pandemics.

South Africa and India joined forces to combat "vaccine nationalism" and ensure that vaccines are readily available in the developing world.

Our joint call at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) for the temporary suspension of intellectual property rights so that COVID-19 vaccines and other new technologies are accessible for developing countries, was vitally important. South Africa and India will also be collaborating on genomic sequencing to promote further research on COVID-19 and its mutations.

The leadership of India and South Africa on the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights waiver proposal was an important lesson for the South in securing global support for the development of manufacturing capacity in Africa and other developing regions.

Although the compromise that was reached at the WTO fell short of what was in the original waiver request by South Africa and India, we view this as a big step towards achieving global justice and international solidarity. While the negotiations to include other IP waivers beyond vaccines will continue, countries can now produce COVID-19 vaccines and drugs on a larger scale, at lower prices.

South Africa has been driving regional integration processes, as we need cooperation within the continent to address low levels of industrialisation, weak infrastructure and underdevelopment. Africa's development requires integrating its markets, expanding productive capacity across the continent and developing regional value chains that integrate African economies.

It is a major accomplishment that trading under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) commenced on 1 January 2021. The AfCFTA is a "game changer" and a catalyst for boosting intra-Africa trade.

The AfCFTA aims to build a single integrated African market of over 1.2 billion people with a combined gross domestic product of approximately US$3.3 trillion. It also aims to boost intra-Africa trade that currently stands at approximately 16% and to increase Africa's share of world trade, which is estimated to be at only 3%. The AfCFTA will also reduce tariff and non-tariff trade barriers, which have served as a hindrance to intra-African trade. South Africa is working with partners on the continent to capitalise on the opportunities created by the AfCFTA to address the challenges of high youth unemployment, poverty and inequality.

South Africa has been working towards strengthening Africa's regional and continental peace and security architecture within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU). South Africa is advocating for adequate resourcing for AU-led UN-mandated peace operations and promotes higher levels of gender mainstreaming and responsiveness across the AU and UN architecture. As Chair of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, South Africa continued to work towards bringing peace and stability to the region.

As SADC Facilitator to the Kingdom of Lesotho, we continued our mediation efforts in that country and sought to contribute towards bringing stability to the Democratic Republic of Congo and Mozambique.

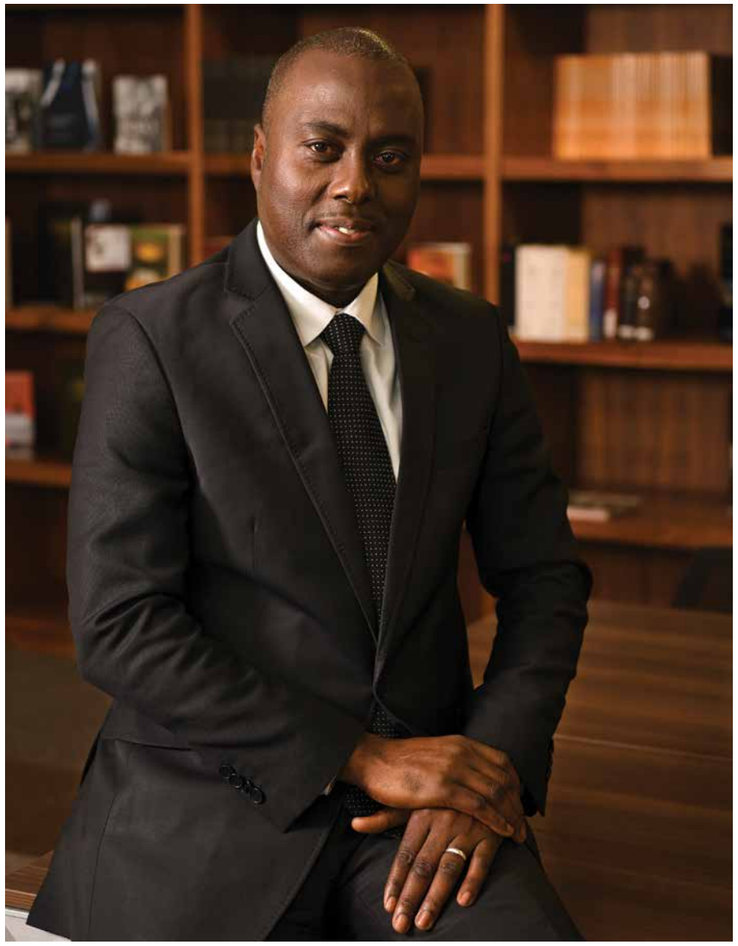
The BRICS ministers of foreign affairs and international relations held the annual meeting on the margins of the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly on 22 September 2022, chaired by South Africa as the incoming BRICS Chair for 2023.

I briefed the ministers on the preparations for South Africa's Chairship of BRICS. My counterparts extended their full support to South Africa for its Chairship and the hosting of the XV BRICS summit.

The ministers also look forward to the Standalone Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs and International Relations in South Africa in 2023.

Dr GNM Pandor, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation

The BRICS ministers of foreign affairs and international relations held the annual meeting on the margins of the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly on 22 September 2022, chaired by South Africa as the incoming BRICS Chair for 2023.



Why is the Brenthurst Foundation obsessed with Ukraine – what about Palestine, Yemen, Libya and Western Sahara?

Like some in the Western world, Greg Mills and Ray Hartley have prioritised the conflict in Ukraine above every other conflict and gross violation of human rights occurring elsewhere on the globe.

One wonders whether the lives that are being lost in conflicts such as in Palestine or Yemen don't matter?

When the South African Government released the *National Interest Framework* document recently, the reaction of the Brenthurst Foundation could only be described as an emotional venting exercise that did not even begin to address the issues in the document. I was very tempted to respond but held back. It can only be deeply etched in the consciousness of one born into privilege not to grasp the urgency and imperative of addressing inequality for a country ranked the most unequal globally, at number one out of 164 countries (according to a report released by the World Bank earlier this year).

The World Bank further lifts "race" as "a key driver of high inequality in South Africa".

How poverty eradication, job creation and addressing inequality in democratic South Africa can be dismissed as minor in the framing of our National Interest to guide our endeavours abroad as South African diplomats, is mind-boggling.

It is the foundation's latest attack on our country's foreign policy and diplomats that provoked me, while at the same time resurrecting my irritation with their National Interest response. I'll deal with both issues.

Greg Mills and Ray Hartley took exception to the country statement at the opening of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, asserting that the global community should "treat all conflicts across the globe with equal indignation, no matter what the colour or creed of the people affected".

In South Africa, we live in a democracy and pride ourselves on our diversity of political views, which are aired freely, encouraging vociferous debate. But attacks like those of Mills and Hartley on our foreign policy cannot go unanswered.

Our non-aligned position on the Russia-Ukraine conflict mirrors that of the global South and developing countries (most states that comprise the Non-Aligned Movement, [NAM]).

South Africa pursues an independent foreign policy, as do members of the NAM, and as a collective, we refuse to be bullied into taking sides in battles of geopolitical contestation, as it is not in our National Interest to do so.

The problem with the perspective elucidated by Mills and Hartley is that their approach is in itself steeped in double standards.

When it comes to a Western state, they accept Ukraine's right to self-defence, but this same right is not recognised when it comes to the Palestinians vis-à-vis the Israeli occupation in line with Article 51 of the UN Charter.

UN General Assembly Resolution 3236/1974 also gives the Palestinians the right to restore their rights by all legitimate means.

It is for this reason that South Africa relentlessly advocates for a rules-based system predicated on international law and adherence to the Charter of the UN.

There cannot be one standard for people of Northern nations, whereby their right to resist attack or occupation is defended, but when it comes to the oppressed in Palestine or elsewhere, their rights are ignored.

The UN Human Rights Chief, Michelle Bachelet, recently expressed alarm at the high number of Palestinians, including children, killed and injured in the occupied Palestinian territories this year.

Bachelet said the widespread use of live ammunition by Israeli forces in law-enforcement operations across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, had led to an alarming increase in Palestinian fatalities.

Bachelet said in many incidents, Israeli forces used lethal force in a manner that appeared to be in violation of international human rights law. Rights group Euro-Med Monitor has made similar observations.

Mills and Hartley expose their ignorance of documented history when they ridicule South Africa's support for Palestine and Western Sahara, saying that "South Africa has no role in Western Sahara, and no voice on Palestine".

Also, have they forgotten that countries who supported the anti-apartheid struggle did not do so because they had a role to play, but because it was the right thing to do?

We remain committed to being on the right side of history, and to defend the rights of those fighting for liberation against colonialism and oppression.

When Mills and Hartley criticise our solidarity with the people of Cuba, they turn a blind eye to the egregious injustice of the United States (US) economic embargo imposed against that island nation, which has now gone on for over six decades.

They show their limited understanding of the situation when arguing that it is the Cuban state that impedes the right to development of its people, when in fact it is the US embargo that has impeded the right to development of the Cuban people since 1961.

It is the embargo which has prevented Cuba from having normal trading relations with the world and has prevented it from acquiring necessities, denying Cubans the right to essential medicines and consumer goods.

As for South Africa and the Southern African Development Community's call for the lifting of sanctions against Zimbabwe, here's a point to ponder on.

Have the sanctions been effective in terms of improving good governance in Zimbabwe? What the sanctions have done is to worsen the economic situation in that country, deterring foreign investment and hastening economic collapse.

It is the southern African region that has to bear the consequences of this (most particularly South Africa).

When Zimbabweans have no jobs and cannot feed their families, it is mainly to South Africa that they come to find the means to survive.

Ultimately, economic sanctions on Zimbabwe are indirectly a threat to our National Interest. Perhaps the height of hypocrisy by the Western world and even the Brenthurst Foundation is its failure to expose the suffering of the people of Yemen, and the collusion of the West in the bombing campaign.

In Yemen, more than 19 200 civilians have been killed or maimed by air strikes, including 2 300 children since March 2015.

For seven years, civilians in Yemen have suffered from recurrent war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The conflict has displaced at least four million and created the world's largest humanitarian crisis with 23.4 million Yemenis in need of humanitarian assistance.

Where is the outrage of the Brenthurst Foundation at such crimes against humanity?

The situation in Yemen has been described by the UN as the world's worst humanitarian disaster, with at least 15.6 million people living in extreme poverty.

A UN Development Programme report projects that the number of those killed as a result of Yemen's war could reach 2.3 million by 2030, and that 70% of those killed would be children under the age of five.

The report also projects that extreme poverty could disappear in Yemen within a generation if the conflict were to end immediately.

Yes, the people of Ukraine are suffering immensely and that's why we continue to call for a cessation of hostilities and negotiations.

South Africa has always opposed violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states, in keeping with the UN Charter.

It should be equally the case, for the people of Yemen and Palestine.

It is time to recognise that the lives of brown people are no less valuable than others, and it is time to call out the big powers for their violations of international law and human rights, as well as their double standards.

Let me return to the National Interest debate. In their critique of the *National Interest Framework* document, Hartley and Mills waxed lyrical about democracy.

How many Western countries fail on key aspects of it? The fight against racism must be central to a democracy test. We forget that our late icon and first President of a democratic South Africa, Nelson Mandela, was incarcerated for 27 years for challenging the racism that was at the heart of the apartheid regime. Hector Pieterson was killed for fighting for the right to an education free of racism.

Data on COVID-19 deaths from a rich Western country shows that race was critical to the chances of surviving it, with people of African descent comprising a huge proportion of those who lost their lives.

One minute, the extrajudicial killing of a journalist is condemned with all the sanctimonious piousness in the world; the next minute, the national interests of these very same countries trump human rights.

Most recently, a former senior diplomat of a country shared how he had been involved in the planning of coups in other countries.

Overall, it's not clear whether the two authors are venting on behalf of the Brenthurst Foundation, with Greg Mills as its director and Ray Hartley its research director.

One hopes that the views of Mills are not influenced by his past association with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) regarding what is unfolding in Ukraine.

Greg Mills provided services to NATO in Afghanistan for four months in 2006. On the request of General David Richards (Commander of NATO forces), Mills helped establish and run a civilian think-tank, the Prism Group.

This, however, shouldn't oblige or bind South Africa to adopt the interests of NATO as its National Interest.

Democratic South Africa must, among other factors, consider the constitutional imperatives on socio-economic rights in the Bill of Rights. The indivisibility and interdependence of socio-economic, civil and political rights as anchors of our democracy, are what inform and inspire our diplomats in their work.

Clayson Monyela
Deputy Director-General: Public Diplomacy

In South Africa, we live in a democracy and pride ourselves on our diversity of political views, which are aired freely, encouraging vociferous debate.

Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, Cape Town

Diplomatic Fun Fair 2022 held at the Union Buildings

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) hosted the Diplomatic Fun Fair on 22 October 2022, at the Union Buildings' southern lawns in Pretoria. The event was held under the 2022 African Union theme: "Strengthening Resilience in Nutrition and Food Security on the African Continent".

The event brought together foreign diplomatic missions accredited to South Africa to showcase and promote their respective countries through arts, music and cuisine.

The Diplomatic Fun Fair was held for the first time in 2006 and has since become an important occasion on the diplomatic calendar in Pretoria, serving as a platform to promote and celebrate the unity and diversity of the world.

The line-up included exhibitions and cultural performances.

Speaking at the event, Deputy Director-General of Public Diplomacy and DIRCO spokesperson, Clayson Monyela, said the event was a cultural diplomacy platform where South Africans were given an opportunity to take a trip around the world in one day.

"The Diplomatic Fun Fair is the ideal opportunity to learn more about the work of DIRCO, and the different diplomatic missions that are accredited to South Africa, in a fun and exciting way," he said.

The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Dr Naledi Pandor, said South Africa was the country with the highest number of embassies on the African continent.

"We are thrilled that so many embassies always keenly participate in the Diplomatic Fun Fair. The event is an expression of people-to-people exchange, cultural exchange, the sharing of diversity and the building of unity across borders and boundaries."

The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of the State of Eritrea, Amb Salih Omar Abdu, said the initiative was highly appreciated as it provided diplomatic missions the opportunity to showcase their countries through various displays, cultural events and cuisine.

"The hosting of this fun fair is another example of the level of engagement and collaboration between DIRCO and the diplomatic community in South Africa. We look forward to hosting another fun fair in the coming year," he said.



















Forging a world where generations will prosper and thrive

Building a better world requires peace and stability. South Africa continues to believe that conflict resolution must not come through fuelling conflicts, but through investing in efforts aimed at political dialogue.

By Dr GNM Pandor
Minister of International Relations and Cooperation

The 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) met in September 2022 in New York under the theme: "A Watershed Moment: Unlocking Transformative Solutions to Interlocking Challenges".

It is a time when the UN family is facing its greatest test. Member states have to work with the UN to develop effective responses to the cuurrent challenges. As the theme of the UNGA indicated, these are diverse, immense, yet interconnected challenges and no country can respond alone.

Some have referred to this moment as a key turning point in history.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Eastern Europe shape our attitudes today; however, for South Africa, the real inflection point will be the world attending fully to the needs of the marginalised and forgotten.

Our greatest global challenges are poverty, inequality, joblessness and feeling excluded. Acting on the Common Agenda Vision 2021 of the UN Secretary-General should become the major objective of this time because addressing poverty and underdevelopment will be the beginning of the real inflection point in human history.

The Charter of the UN, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its human rights protocols all commit us to protecting all people without distinction of any kind.

We must acknowledge that we face these crises today because we have not always upheld these foundational principles consistently and fairly.

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided us with a roadmap on what should be done and not done to address global challenges.

We should use the lessons learnt effectively.

There were some noble initiatives such as the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) that was co-chaired by President Cyril Ramaphosa, the African Union Champion for the COVID response, and the Prime Minister of Norway.

This initiative laid the basis for a fairer distribution of vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics.

Global security

Global solidarity is also required to meet other pressing challenges such as energy and food insecurity, climate change and the devastation caused by conflicts, including the existential threat of nuclear weapons.

Instead of working collectively to address these challenges, we have grown further apart as geopolitical tensions and mistrust permeate our relations.

We should, however, move forward in solidarity, united in efforts to address our common global challenges to ensure sustainable peace and development.

Global health architecture

One of the tasks we must successfully implement to ensure developing countries are not left behind when treatments are available is to create and support research and innovation capacity in Africa for vaccine production, invest in strengthened public health systems and produce thousands more professional health workers. This requires sustainable investment in higher education, research institutions and in global research cooperation.

The mobilisation of resources and capabilities to strengthen the pandemic response and preparedness of all nations must be substantially increased. It will be a tragic indictment on all of us as leaders if future pandemics found the poorest as unprepared as many were for COVID-19.

We need to strengthen the global health architecture to ensure that we are better able to meet the challenges of new pandemics and other infectious diseases of concern. South Africa is proud to be part of this solution through the establishment of the first mRNA global technology transfer hubs that will contribute to the security of supply of life-saving medication for African and other developing countries.

Global energy shortages

South Africa, like many other developing countries, faces huge developmental challenges, including in our energy sector. We need to collectively address global energy shortages, including by deploying innovative solutions that are cheaper, cleaner and more accessible.

Working with international partners, we are developing our Just Energy Transition Plan to significantly reduce harmful emissions in South Africa. Work on an expanded green economy is also gaining significant momentum.

Education

We commend the Secretary-General for focussing attention on transforming education. Education remains one of the most important drivers to end poverty and inequality, and we will work towards increasing access to education that is affordable.

South Africa has no-fee schools at primary and secondary school levels for the most vulnerable learners. There is also a state bursary for poor students who qualify for tertiary education.

These measures have over the years served to increase the enrolment of leaners who were previously unable to access education.

In the field of research and innovation, we need more partnerships such as the Square Kilometre Array science infrastructure project hosted in South Africa and Australia, which is an international partnership that is one of the largest scientific endeavours in history.

Partnerships of this nature must be encouraged to leverage scientific breakthroughs for development purposes.

The multilateral trading system must be strengthened so that we genuinely create a conducive environment for fair trade that also provides opportunities for developing economies.

Trade

The multilateral trading system must be strengthened so that we genuinely create a conducive environment for fair trade that also provides opportunities for developing economies.

If actionable steps such as these are not taken, developing countries will remain subject to an imbalanced global financial and trading system.

South Africa's commitment to multilateralism

Using this moment of renewal, South Africa reiterates its commitment to multilateralism as the only means to build a better world.

The UN itself must be transformed so that it serves its role cognisant of current global dynamics. It is unacceptable that 77 years after its establishment, five nations wield disproportionate decision-making power in the UN system as a whole. Transformation of the UN must include more representative, transparent and accountable organs of global governance.

For the UN to be effective, the General Assembly must be revitalised and the Security Council must be reformed. We also cannot have a credible organisation if persistent transgressors of the charter are not held accountable.

Environment

We must act immediately to protect the environment and the world we live in, for ourselves and for future generations. While Africa is the least responsible for the climate crisis, it finds itself at the epicentre of its worst impacts.

The South African Cabinet has approved wide-reaching policies to ensure that we can meet our climate change targets. We have established a Presidential Climate Finance Task Team to lead and coordinate negotiations with the International Partner Group to give effect to the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP). The JETP seeks to address South Africa's investment needs in infrastructure to facilitate our coal phase-down in a manner that ensures that no one is left behind.

Peace and stability

Building a better world requires peace and stability. South Africa continues to believe that conflict resolution must not come through fuelling conflicts, but through investing in efforts aimed at political dialogue. We should aspire to peace as a global public good. There have been no winners of the wars of the past seven decades. Instead, they engendered strife, distrust among nations, divisions, a perpetual misallocation of resources as well as increased poverty and underdevelopment.

While we work to address contemporary conflicts, we should not ignore longstanding ones such as Palestine that has been on the UN agenda throughout the seven decades of the existence of this organisation. We cannot ignore the words of the former Israeli negotiator at the Oslo talks, Daniel Levy, who addressed the UN Security Council recently and referred to: "The increasingly weighty, body of scholarly, legal and public opinion that has designated Israel to be perpetrating apartheid in the territories under its control."

Israel must be held accountable for its destructive actions that have significantly impaired the possibility of a two-state solution. Similarly, we cannot ignore the decades-long struggle for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. We must treat all conflicts across the globe with equal indignation, no matter what the colour or creed of the people affected.

South Africa calls for an end to the embargo against Cuba, which continues to impede the right to development of her people. In the same vein, we call for an end to unilateral coercive measures against Zimbabwe, which have compounded the problems experienced by the people of Zimbabwe and have a detrimental effect on the broader southern African region.

Addressing discrimination

Our quest to build a better world will remain unfulfilled as long as people are still discriminated against on the basis of race,

▸▸

A rules-based international system, predicated on international law and strict adherence to the provisions of the UN Charter, is essential. Such a system must safeguard the interests of all and not only the powerful countries.

gender, sex, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture or language.

We have a responsibility to make sure that every girl child receives an education and that every woman has an opportunity to work, study, start a business and have choice and control over her life and body.

We need to end the violence perpetrated against the most vulnerable, most often women and children.

We have witnessed that women in conflict situations are particularly vulnerable, including women journalists.

The murder of Shireen Abu Akleh and other journalists is a stark reminder of the dangers that women in conflict situations face.

We must do all we can to protect them and hold those accountable for harming them.

We must also strengthen the capacity and draw on the voices of the youth on the African continent. In this regard, we need to harness the demographic dividend by maximising our investment in quality education to address intergenerational poverty, together with inclusive economies.

Africa is laying a firm foundation for a new era of trade, commerce and productivity

Africa is home to more than 1.3 billion people. It is fast emerging from centuries of colonialism, occupation and exploitation, from wilful neglect and underdevelopment.

Through the African Continental Free Trade Area, the countries of Africa are laying a firm foundation for a new era of trade, commerce and productivity.

African countries are establishing the conditions for the seamless flow of goods and services between African markets, for the growth of industry and for the construction of roads, bridges, railway lines, ports and power stations that will support growth.

As we continue our efforts to end war, conflict and insurgency in several parts of our continent and to prevent the unconstitutional seizure of power, we will continue to seek greater alignment between the agendas of the UN and our body, the African Union.

Forge a world where future generations will prosper and thrive

To overcome all these acutely global challenges, we must agree to a common path out of an increasingly polarised world.

A rules-based international system, predicated on international law and strict adherence to the provisions of the UN Charter, is essential. Such a system must safeguard the interests of all and not only the powerful countries.

We acknowledge the efforts of the Secretary-General through his vision contained in the report on “Our Common Agenda”, to provide us with options to be able to put aside our differences, build trust and forge a world where future generations will prosper and thrive.



Agenda 2063

THE AFRICA WE WANT

Our Aspirations for the Africa We Want

- A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development
- An integrated continent, politically united, and based on the ideals of Pan Africanism
- An Africa of good governance, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law
- A peaceful and secure Africa
- An Africa with a strong cultural identity, Common Heritage, values and ethics
- An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential offered by African People, particularly its women and youth, and with well cared for children
- Africa as a strong, united and influential global player and partner

Agenda 2063 is gaining momentum. It is time for action.
Be part of the transformation!

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COMRADE PRESIDENT JOSÉ EDUARDO DOS SANTOS: AN ANCHOR OF SOLIDARITY | DIPLOMACY

Comrade President José Eduardo dos Santos: An anchor of solidarity

Comrade President Josè Eduardo dos Santos died on 8 July 2022, having served as President of Angola from 1979 to 2017. President Cyril Ramaphosa led the South African Government's delegation to Dos Santos' funeral together with Ambassador Oupa Monareng.

By Alvin Botes
Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation



Comrade Jose Eduardo dos Santos became leader of the *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (MPLA) and President of Angola on 20 September 1979, at the age of 37, following the death of Agostinho Neto, "O pai de naçaõ" (Father of the nation).

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Comrade Dos Santos became leader of the *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (MPLA) and President of Angola on 20 September 1979, at the age of 37, following the death of Agostinho Neto, "O pai de naçaõ" (Father of the nation).

President of the African National Congress (ANC), Oliver Tambo, dedicated the inaugural publication of *Sechaba* to the history and struggle of the MPLA.

Tambo stated that "the recent invasion of Angola by South African troops is the most dangerous crisis faced by Africa since the US intervention in the Congo and later invasion of Guinea by fascist Portugal. Then as now, the forces of imperialism intervened to try to turn back the moment for Africa's liberation and the achievement of genuine independence of its people ... we are part and parcel of this struggle for democracy and peace", confirming the ANC and MPLA's struggle to be intertwined and interwoven.

The 1974 military coup in Lisbon set a train of events into motion on the southern African subcontinent. The Alvor Agreement in 1975 granted Angola independence from Portugal, and when the Portuguese withdrew, the white *cordon sanitaire* crumbled.

Apartheid South Africa feared political and security threats that might result from decolonisation in the region. South Africa's détente politics toward Africa at this time was pursued through the Angolan intervention to establish "buffer zones" between Namibia and Angola.

The leadership of MPLA enabled uMkhonto we Sizwe to establish an array of camps, including Nova Katengue, Gabela, Caxito, Quibaxe, Pango, Fazenda and Funda transit camps, such as Benguela and the Engineering Camp.

It was Comrade President Dos Santos who made a personal appeal to Fidel Castro for Cuban support in January 1988.

Inspired by talks

Support was granted to the People's Armed Forces of Liberation of Angola and included the elite Cuban 50th Division, which succeeded in November 1975 in turning back a South African invasion force on the eve of independence.

This political intervention by Cuba formed the bedrock of the victory at Cuito Cuanavale.

Dos Santos presided over the liberation struggle waged in Angola, which made the Namibia agreement in December 1988 possible. A telex from Tambo to Dos Santos expressed optimism, indicating Tambo was inspired by the talks, signalling hope that "the current negotiations be crowned with success for Angola, Namibia, Internationalist Cuba and all of us as well for you in particular, Comrade President. *A luta Continua, A victoria e Certa*".

With the implementation of the New York Peace Accords and United Nations Resolution 435 and after all the foreign troops had withdrawn from Angola, the conventional war between MPLA and National Union for the Total Independence of Angola degenerated into a civil war until 2002. The signing of the peace and national reconciliation agreements brought to a conclusion 27 years of war.

The fifth Angolan presidential and parliamentary elections took place on 24 August 2022, and President Ramaphosa, having had regard for the African Union and Southern African Development Community (SADC) observer missions, together with the SADC Parliamentary Forum and the Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC Countries, sent along his warmest and most sincere congratulations to President João Lourenço and the people of Angola on his re-election.

Comrade President Josè Eduardo dos Santos, the people of Angola today bear the fruits of freedom, and the country is a hallmark of democracy, which has cemented your legacy, as an anchor of solidarity.

With the implementation of the New York Peace Accords and United Nations Resolution 435 and after all the foreign troops had withdrawn from Angola, the conventional war between MPLA and UNITA degenerated into a civil war until 2002. The signing of the peace and national reconciliation agreements brought to a conclusion 27 years of war.





Walking together, the tiger, dragon, elephant and lion: Asia's rise and its relevance to Africa's development

Over the past two decades, the African Union has adopted several policies and programmes that position the continent on a positive development trajectory. This has prompted many analysts to refer to Africa as the last frontier of development.

By Prof. Anil Sooklal
Ambassador-at-Large: Asia and BRICS
Department of International Relations and Cooperation

Asian economies have occupied a major space in the global economy during the last 50 years. This resulted in interesting processes that led to developmental models, which drove macro-economic policy frameworks that became catalysts for Asia's remarkable, and ongoing, economic transformation.

Several East and Southeast Asian economies have transitioned from low-income states to middle-income states. This prompted the World Bank to coin the term "East Asian Miracle" to describe their achievements in overcoming many of the developmental challenges developing countries continue to grapple with.

Since the turn of the 21st century, the rapid transformation has continued and has been reflected in the rise of China as well as the growing prominence of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a regional bloc. The rapid growth of these economies and the factors that propelled economic transformation in Asia may provide valuable insights for the transformation of South Africa and Africa's economic growth and development.

The forces driving Asia's rapid growth are market-oriented reform, globalisation, new technologies and investment in education that have successfully moved hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. Asia's success in building human capital has been a key contributor to rapid growth and transformation.

From 1971 to 2018, the region's electricity generation (including Australia, Japan and New Zealand) increased 16.5 times, compared with a fivefold increase globally. Developing Asia now operates two-thirds of global high-speed rail networks, and access to improved water supply services reached over 90% of the population by 2017 compared with less than 30% in the 1960s in many of these countries.

Progress in telecommunications and ICT infrastructure enabled and positioned Asia to meet 21st century demands in areas such as e-commerce, including mobile payments, which increased opportunities for greater financial inclusion, as well as e-public services, including better access to health and education.

Asia's remarkable ability to adapt rapidly to changing environments is also reflected in the active role played in endorsing climate- and environment-related initiatives. Nearly all countries in the region are party to the three major conventions and agreements on climate change: the 1992 United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change, the 1997 Kyoto Protocol and the 2015 Paris Agreement. Already, the Asia Development Bank and other multilateral development banks (MDBs) are helping countries to achieve their nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement, through financing climate mitigation and adaptation and supporting capacity-building.

Focussing on the Republic of Korea (RoK), India and China, there were a series of seminal events that created the environment for important policy choices that unleashed economic growth and development.

Republic of Korea

On 27 July 1953, the RoK emerged from a devastating civil war as the poorest country in the world with almost no scope for economic revival. The country had very few natural resources and was completely bankrupt, depending on foreign aid for more than 90% of its budget. The southern regions of the Korean peninsula were historically designated for agriculture. Most industries were located in the northern regions with less than 25% of the available land in the RoK considered suitable for agriculture. The Korean Office of Planning was established as far back as 1948 and this office duly prepared a number of five-year plans that were never implemented. It was not until 1961 that the Korean Government put economic development unambiguously at the top of its priorities. The most important policy intervention was to focus on the enhancement of human resources and productivity through education.

The Confucian work ethic that Korea has entrenched as a world view stresses the value of education, productivity, commitment to duty and ethics. It provided an avenue for upward mobility based on increased productivity. This enabled the other policy interventions like appointing people on merit to ensure effective management and stability in developmental processes.

It also enabled the implementation of a high-growth, outward-looking development strategy, rapid transformation of the economic structure from domination by the agricultural sector into manufacturing, while modernising agriculture and ensuring rural equity to avoid a big income gap developing between city dwellers and the rural population.

Importantly, the Korean Government entrenched their commitment to economic development, by fostering a perception that policies, adopted in the nation's interest, will be implemented.

Working in the RoK's favour was the prevailing international environment. Maintaining a strong commercial relationship with Japan despite the deep wounds inflicted by Japanese imperialism up to World War II and maintaining a strategic relationship with the United States during the Cold War contributed to the success story that Korea has become.

The RoK is the first former aid recipient to become a member of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development in 2009. During the UN Conference on Trade and Development's 68th Session of the Trade and Development Board from 21 June to 2 July 2021, the RoK was reclassified as a developed economy. This was the first time the UN agency had upgraded a member state's development status since its establishment in 1964.

According to the Brookings Institution, in the 40 years between 1978 and 2018, China's economy managed to grow at an annual rate of 9.44%. As a result, in real terms, the Chinese economy in 2018 was 37 times as large as it was in 1978.

India

India's policy approach, especially in the terrain of economic policy after independence, was influenced by the colonial experience. India saw the need to allow the homegrown industry to flourish and develop strategic sectors along the lines of socialist style planning. This resulted in India being focussed on protectionist policy positions, import substitution, industrialisation, state intervention at the micro level in all businesses, especially in labour and financial markets, a large public sector, business regulation and central planning resembling socialist style central planning.

By 1966, the Indian Government was forced to seek monetary support from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank to cope with rapid inflation and an increasing budget deficit.

By 1991, India again faced a balance of payment problem and by then was facing a serious economic crisis, close to default, with foreign exchange reserves having dwindled to the point that India could barely finance two weeks' worth of imports. The Government, under the bold leadership of Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao, implemented major economic policy shifts by abolishing the so-called "License raj".

This, together with allowing up to 51% of foreign equity participation, incentivised foreign investment, which also facilitated technology transfer and modernisation of industry.

Allowance was also made for the privatisation of many public-sector companies, reducing subsidies, liberalising interest rates, allowing the Rupee to float freely and the removal of import controls in favour of the promotion of exports. Successive governments post-1991 continued to implement reforms in various sectors and these progressive steps have positioned India as an economic success story that continues to yield dividends.

In more recent times, India, under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has seen the further liberalisation of the Indian economy, which has led to accelerated growth with India now being the fastest-growing major economy.

In the IMF July 2022 report, India is the fifth-largest global economy having overtaken the United Kingdom with a gross domestic product (GDP) of US$3.5 trillion.

The reforms led to the achievement of recognisable increases in international competitiveness in a number of sectors, including auto components, telecommunications, computer software, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, research and development and professional services provided by scientists, technologists, doctors, nurses, teachers, management professionals and similar professions.

Foreign investment in the country (including foreign direct investment, portfolio investment, and investment raised on international capital markets) increased from US$132 million in 1991/92 to US$83.57 billion in 2021/22, according to the Press Information Bureau of the Government of India – a 20-fold increase over the last 20 years. Poverty reduced from

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> Over the next three decades, the global population is set to grow by about two billion people, with half of that increase in sub-Saharan – today, there are almost two Africans for every European.

36% of the population in 1993/94 to 10.2% in 2019 and the decline in rural areas was much higher than in urban areas, according to a World Bank policy research working paper published in April 2022.

The People's Republic of China

With regard to China, the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, adopted a new economic development strategy on 18 December 1978, ushering in the "Three Reforms": reform of state-owned enterprises, reform of the financial system and reform of administrative organisations, thereby abandoning the ideological strictures of the past and embracing policies founded on practicality, which unleashed the creative and entrepreneurial potential of the Chinese people.

China's GDP per capita in 1979, when the reform started, was US$184; GDP per capita in 2022 is estimated to be around US$16 300.

According to the Brookings Institution, in the 40 years between 1978 and 2018, China's economy managed to grow at an annual rate of 9.44%.

As a result, in real terms, the Chinese economy in 2018 was 37 times as large as it was in 1978. According to figures published in the *South China Morning Post* of 18 January 2022, China was the world's second-largest economy in 2021, with a GDP of approximately US$18 trillion and according to the World Bank, the value of China's stock market ranked second globally in 2020.

Foreign investment in the country (including foreign direct investment, portfolio investment, and investment raised on international capital markets) was negligible in 1978. It increased to an estimated US$1,35 trillion by the end of 2016 – according to a study by the Australian National University.

Over the past 40 years, the number of people in China with incomes below US$1.90 per day – the International Poverty Line as defined by the World Bank to track global extreme poverty – has fallen by close to 800 million. With this, China has contributed close to three-quarters of the global reduction in the number of people living in extreme poverty – according to a joint study, "Four Decades of Poverty Reduction in China: Drivers, Insights for the World, and the Way Ahead", which was undertaken by China's Ministry of Finance, the Development Research Centre of the State Council and the World Bank, with the China Centre for International Knowledge on Development.

Asia's experience has taught us that it is possible to realise our goals. Although there is no panacea for getting economies growing, there are certain factors that tend to lead to growth, development, human security and quality of life.

These include pragmatism, long-term thinking and planning with consistent implementation, investments in human capital and innovation, strengthening the necessary institutions that helped improve government effectiveness – professional civil service that is directed at a capable state – and ensuring a conducive environment for private-sector development.

Africa

The rapid rise of Asia over the past five decades demonstrates that Asia provides several economic and developmental modules, which Africa could emulate in its socio-economic rejuvenation. Over the past two decades, the African Union has adopted several policies and programmes that position the continent on a positive development trajectory. This has prompted many analysts to refer to Africa as the last frontier of development.

Agenda 2063 is Africa's development blueprint to achieve inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development over a 50-year period. The continent aims to achieve this objective through the realisation of five 10-year implementation plans.

The 2021 second continental-level report consolidated progress reports and analyses progress made on the implementation of Agenda 2063 against 2021 targets.

During 2021, growth was highest in North Africa at 11.7% mainly due to increased oil exports and prospects of stability in Libya. Southern Africa's estimated growth for 2021/22 was 4.2%, as opposed to a pre-pandemic estimate of 6.0%. There were, however, strong signs of recovery in Botswana at 12.5%, Zimbabwe at 6.3%, and South Africa at 4.9%.

African countries rank low on several other factors that influence investment, such as the overall cost of doing business affected by the quality of roads and ports, the reliability of electricity infrastructure, the degree of political stability and the level of excessive bureaucracy and corruption.

Sub-Saharan Africa's population is growing at 2.7% a year, and GDP needs to grow at least as fast. The good news is that the region's economy is expected to grow by 3.8% in 2022 and projected to grow at 4.0% in 2023. Demographics will fuel the continent's rise in a world of shrinking working-age populations.

Over the next three decades, the global population is set to grow by about two billion people, with half of that increase in sub-Saharan – today, there are almost two Africans for every European.

A capable, developmental state is often highlighted as the basis of a successful state. For Africa to realise its full potential, the following are key:



- specific knowledge and acquired skills that can be translated into overall management skills and capabilities
- adherence to good governance and accountability
- the efficient and effective utilisation of resources – human and financial
- strengthening democratic institutions and the capability of the State to fight corruption.

The Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) holds major economic promise. The AfCFTA is the largest free trade area in the world, both by area and by the number of countries.

The AfCFTA comprises 55 countries with a population of 1.3 billion and combined GDP of about US$3.4 trillion.

Technological advances, including in artificial intelligence and automation, i.e. "4IR", has the potential to unlock a new future for Africa's estimated 700 million young people, but it demands of governments to urgently step up investment in human resources and other infrastructure to take advantage of opportunities presented (as opposed to be disadvantaged) by these developments.

However, the Russia-Ukraine conflict has triggered a set of processes that will hinder projected growth for years to come – the average inflation is now projected to accelerate to 13.5% across the continent. The rising costs of food and energy due to the conflict will have implications on Africa's development trajectory.

Conclusion

The Korean, Indian and Chinese development models took shape over time. The Korean model was largely free market-oriented with a state-centred approach to managing the economy in the early years.

The "developmental state" became the framework through which to explain the Korean model. State-supported (and directed) enterprises called *chaebols* drove industrialisation and growth, and have proven to be both successful and resilient.

In the Indian model, socialist style planning was adopted almost immediately after independence.

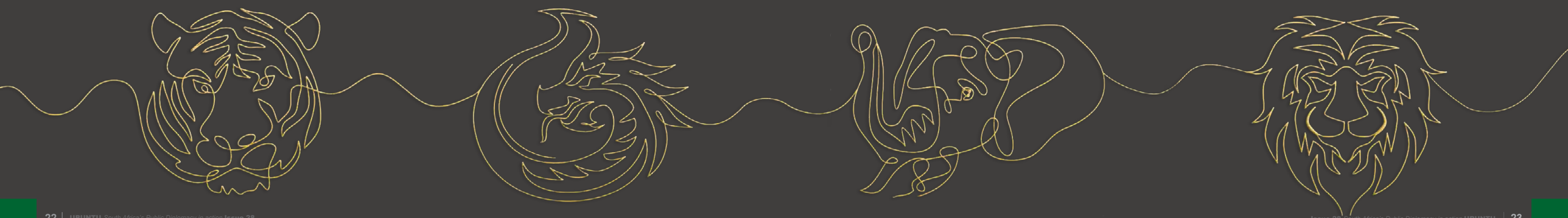
This led to serious market failures within 20 years of liberation and resulted in incremental reform that moved India to a globally competitive and growing free-market economy. The economic benefits have impacted on the country's increasing global footprint as a leading major economy of the 21st century.

China presents a unique case, where the post-1978 era resulted in China adopting a state-led market-driven economy that maintained socialist principles, which were the basis of China's 1949 revolution.

China's approach to balancing market forces with state-controlled systems has proven successful and continues to fuel the rise of China, which today is the second-largest global economy.

It will be useful and could perhaps add value to engage in a detailed comparative study of South Africa's National Development Plan, with the policies and programmes that guided the economic and social development of the RoK, India and China, and to determine whether some of those policies and programmes could be useful to South Africa's growth and development.

> The Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) holds major economic promise. The AfCFTA is the largest free trade area in the world, both by area and by the number of countries.



Celebrating women in diplomacy

The Women's March is one of the most heralded historic events in the struggle for freedom and women's rights in South Africa. As a result, 9 August has been declared National Women's Day in recognition of the political activism by women in the liberation struggle. The march was a turning point in the role of women in the struggle for freedom and society at large.

By Charlotte Lobe
High Commissioner of South Africa to Singapore

In August every year, South Africa celebrates the iconic march in 1956 when 20 000 women from all backgrounds marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest against legislation aimed at tightening the apartheid government's control over the movement of black women in urban areas.

The Women's March is one of the most heralded historic events in the struggle for freedom and women's rights in South Africa. As a result, 9 August has been declared National Women's Day in recognition of the political activism by women in the liberation struggle. The march was a turning point in the role of women in the struggle for freedom and society at large.

Since then, great strides have been made in improving the status of women and creating a conducive environment for them to thrive in. However, women have not advanced as rapidly as government would have wished. This is compounded by the reality that the field of international relations is traditionally dominated by men.

As a traditional male domain, existing power structures within the diplomatic infrastructure reinforce blatant discriminatory practices, making it difficult for women to enter diplomacy, particularly at the highest echelons. According to a British politician and diplomat, Sir Harold George Nicholson, who served in the Diplomatic Corps between 1901 and 1929: "Women are prone to qualities of zeal, sympathy and intuition which, unless kept under the firmest control, are dangerous qualities in international affairs."

This opinion implies that women should continue to be subsidiary to international politics and diplomacy. Signs of change appeared in the 1930s when 13 countries, which included Nicaragua and Turkey, appointed women diplomats. A few decades later in 1996, Madeleine Albright declared: "Today, women are engaged in every facet of global affairs, from policymaking to deal-making, from arms control to trade, from the courtroom of the War Crimes Tribunal to the far-flung operations of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees."

As a woman diplomat, I know that women are prolific negotiators; they are good communicators, strategic thinkers and good in public relations. There can never be an excuse to continue excluding women from this sphere. The small number of women in diplomatic positions globally reflects the same challenges faced by women in the political, civil, private or judicial sectors.

The main challenge for women in diplomacy is often associated with making "tough choices between family life and their careers". Like many career women, female diplomats face similar challenges in balancing family and work. For women diplomats, however, the obstacles they face are often greater, given the nature of their work.

South Africa has made significant progress in narrowing the gender gap in decision-making structures, including strides made in increasing the number of women in its envoys abroad. We have gradually moved from only three women heads of mission (HoM) that was equivalent to 1% of the overall number of HoM before the dawn of democracy to 43% women as ambassadors, high commissioners and consuls general. We are not yet at 50%, but we celebrate this achievement because our efforts of mainstreaming gender are yielding positive results.

Despite our progressive gender equality normative framework in South Africa, women diplomats face a layer of challenges to survive and rise to the top.

On the one hand, married women must bear the burden of the traditional expectation of being responsible for nurturing their families, while on the other hand, those who are single must break conservative presumptions about a woman's limits.

Either way, women are confined to gender stereotypical roles defined by narrow cultural and religious traditions.







South Africa has made significant progress in narrowing the gender gap in decision-making structures, including strides made in increasing the number of women in its envoys abroad. We are not yet at 50%, but we celebrate this achievement because our efforts of mainstreaming gender are yielding positive results.

As the tide of democracy, equality and justice sweeps the globe, women are becoming a growing force to be reckoned with. Globally, we are seeing a new voice of activism emerging, which is speaking out to defend freedom and advance civil liberties and human rights.

The notion of women in diplomacy and political leadership is not a new phenomenon, particularly in Africa. As African female diplomats, we stand on the shoulders of giants. We stand on the shoulders of phenomenal women who created streams in the desert.

There are African women from the pre-Colonial era who played major roles in diplomacy and in nation-building. The following are just a few examples and the reason why we celebrate the achievements of women before us in addition to the women of 1956:

- In Angola, we celebrate Queen Ann Nzinga who, in the 17th century, formed alliances with other kingdoms to fend off the Portuguese. She declared the lands she ruled over "free country" and promised freedom to all slaves who reached her land. She was not one to ignore responsibility. She oversaw mighty armies that strategically kept her lands free throughout her four-decade rule.
- The Egyptian Queen, Hatshepsut, is renowned for expanding foreign trade and improving diplomatic relations. She also initiated the development of construction programmes and a naval fleet.
- Queen Amina Sukhera is a Hausa Muslim Warrior Queen of the Zazzau, now city of Zaria, Kaduna State in Nigeria, who fought heroic battles using her military skills to expand the Zazzau territory. Amina is also credited with the introduction of the cultivation of kola nuts in her region. This went a long way in developing farming and agriculture in her region.
- Ghana's Ashanti Empire gave us Yaa Asantewaa, the brave Queen Mother of Ejisu. Nana was a leader and Commander-in-Chief of the Fifth and final Anglo-Ashanti War of 1900 – 1901. No woman in history is known to have accomplished what she had achieved as the leader of what is now known as the "Yaa Asantewaa War" between the Asante and the British during which she became known as the Jean D 'Arc of Africa. She inspired the fight against colonial invaders by declaring: "Is it true that the bravery of the Ashanti is no more? I cannot believe it. It cannot be! I must say this, if you the men of Ashanti will not go forward, then we will. We the women will, I shall call upon my fellow women. We will fight the white men. We will fight till the last of us falls in the battlefields."
- Nehanda Chware Nyakasikana is the Zimbabwean warrior who joined her compatriots in fending off the English invasion of Zimbabwe prior to the 1890s. She declared, as she faced death by hanging, that, "my bones will rise again", a prophecy evidenced by the mass exodus of the population who voluntarily left the country for the east and returned on the attainment of independence in 1979 following decades of Chimurenga (war of liberation).
- Manthatisi, the warrior queen of Batlokwa, came to power as the regent for her son, Sekonyela, following the death of her husband, Kgosi Mokotjo. She reigned in the 1820s, during the time of King Shaka. As a warrior, she commanded troops of over 40 000 warriors during the Difaqane wars. Queen Manthatisi was one of the best known, and most feared, women military and political leaders of the early 19th century. Her troops seized the crops and cattle of the people they attacked, leaving a trail of destruction and devastation. Queen Manthatisi was strong in times of war and in peace. She used her diplomatic skills to negotiate land for her people when she lost the war.

The lives of these women remind me of the words of Maya Angelou: "You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it."









The United Nations, New York, United States of America

DIPLOMACY, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND PARTNERSHIPS | DIPLOMACY

Diplomacy, information technology and partnerships

Diplomats must embrace technological advancement and use it in such a way that they can advance the National Interest of their respective countries. They must also change the way they think, and how they respond to the challenges facing their profession.

By Dr Bobby J Moroe
Consul General of South Africa in Lagos, the Federal Republic of Nigeria

I write this piece from my apartment in Lagos – trying to think of means to make a small contribution on how "unorthodox" or "unconventional" diplomacy can be used by diplomats to advance their countries' foreign policy objectives.

I am at pains to encourage diplomats to evolve – move with the times – in a quest to contribute to building a capable cadre of diplomats who possess the ability to build an innovative diplomatic environment in their respective spaces.

An innovative diplomatic environment is one in which you find efficient and catalytic diplomats who are talented. It is an environment where you find a pool of new ideas, sharp enough to contribute to responding to the challenges facing modern diplomacy.

In the publication, *Civil Service World*, Alex Starritt writes that in order to succeed, a modern civil servant should be tech savvy, confident, an internationalist, have common touch, be capable of storytelling and networking and have an appetite for risk and optimism.

Although Starritt's selection of traits may be said to be more relevant to the private sector, they are also linked to what diplomats ought to embrace in their modern-day diplomatic careers.

The success of government is measured through performance, and people who conduct government work must perform, enabling government to meet its obligations. However, governments should also create an enabling environment in which employees can adapt and embrace new ways of doing their work.

These traits fit well with the attributes required to ensure that government delivers on its mandate. "Government can only be effective if the people in government are fully equipped with requisite skills, thoroughly motivated and capable of implementing its mandate." Since governments are not in the business of making profits, their investments lie in building efficient and innovative human capital.

Modern diplomats must be creative, agile and catalytic to be responsive to the challenges of modern-day diplomacy. A diplomat's ability to foster sound bilateral and multilateral cooperation with other nations is drawn from good grounding on the fundamentals of diplomacy

Similarly, the extent to which a modern diplomat can contribute in responding to modern-day challenges in diplomacy will largely depend on the conviction of their courage to take a step forward and "disrupt" traditional diplomatic practice. This is just what we might need to create a capable state.

A modern-day diplomat can learn lessons from the disruptions caused by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and understand how this has changed the present-day world of life and work alike. Similarly, "unconventional" or "unorthodox" diplomatic practice can open up a whole new world of creativity for the modern-day diplomat; "new diplomacy" in international relations in which citizens play a greater role.

Under old diplomacy, global policymaking was more strictly the purview of governments. In essence, secrecy was the hallmark of old diplomacy, but the evolution of technology has led to a gradual and forceful shift in which nation-states are left with no choice but to adapt.

Drawing a parallel link between "disruptive diplomacy" and the 4IR, one must attempt to respond to this critical question: how has the 4IR changed the world?

The advent of the 4IR has created an inextricable link between humans and technology and enabled the two to co-exist and cooperate to provide solutions to the challenges we face. This is the type of synergy that must co-exist between "disruptive diplomacy" and the 4IR. Here, I am trying to make a case for the creation of new methods of doing things in diplomacy, making use of technology, among others. These new ways will be characterised by discomfort, resistance and confusion before they can be embraced.

> According to Lovisa Williams: "Social media or digital diplomacy does not just provide governments with the ability to be more successful in providing information, services and opportunities for collaboration with the public, but it begins to build new relationships and communications channels between governments. It is the creation of a truly global diplomatic community."

Just recall how we all reacted to various phases of technological advancement until such time that we became receptive to innovations of different types in the technological space we fully enjoy today.

Now, how can modern diplomats leverage the use of an advanced technological system that has so much changed the world to find solutions to problems facing their craft?

One Saturday in October 2022, I started off my morning by attending an innovative programme, the MultiChoice Talent Factory (MTF), hosted by MultiChoice Nigeria in Lagos.

In diplomacy, talent management has become more critical than before – innovation is a by-product of talent. Therefore, talent is necessary to innovate. Over the years, the diplomatic practice has evolved from "old to new diplomacy", and so did the challenges facing it.

In this piece, I am using the MTF project as a case study of an innovative programme that seeks to embrace the use of technology to promote social cohesion through visual arts. I also argue that, unless diplomats adapt to such innovative models, interrupting the diplomatic scene will be a utopia for many years to come.

The MTF is an education programme that develops emerging TV and film talent in Africa, through an accredited 12-month immersion programme, including both theory and hands-on experience in cinematography, editing, audio production and storytelling.

It is the first academy of its kind, spanning three regions and 13 countries across Africa. Sixty deserving young and talented candidates who want to work – and innovate – in film and television production get the chance to hone their skills alongside industry greats.

This year-long funded programme is offered through accredited regional MTF academies based in Kenya (for East Africa), Nigeria (for West Africa) and Zambia (for southern Africa) in partnership with respected local academic institutions.

For many of these young creative minds, this is not only a great opportunity in their careers but the beginning of a chapter that will change their lives forever.

As an unorthodox diplomat based in Nigeria, I believe in the power of this programme to transform lives, give hope, create partnerships, shape perceptions and drive a positive narrative about South Africa and Nigeria through visual arts.

I believe that the South African Mission in Nigeria should use this existing platform to leverage various projects envisaged within the context of its bilateral relations with Nigeria.

The MTF, therefore, presents a great opportunity for collaboration between diplomats, the private sector and social activists of both countries to get together and share ideas about how technology can be used to create our own stories the best way we know.



South Africa and Nigeria both have beautiful stories to share. This is our time to break barriers and interrupt the falsified narrative. In our unorthodox and unconventional approach, we must be intentional in what we do – be brave enough to cultivate new ideas. Let fear not deters us from finding new paths.

With strong partnerships, the MTF can multiply the number of qualified visual artists from both countries. This is the new way of conducting diplomacy.

This partnership will be the beginning of illuminating the untold stories of success, and resilience between the people of both countries, and how similar their aspirations are in the face of adversity. Shaping the narrative will give us an edge, not only to shine the spotlight, but to demonstrate our love for each other as a people of the continent.

South Africa and Nigeria both have beautiful stories to share. This is our time to break barriers and interrupt the falsified narrative. In our unorthodox and unconventional approach, we must be intentional in what we do – be brave enough to cultivate new ideas. Let fear not deters us from finding new paths.

The fusion of diplomacy and technology has become a social craft that requires mastery of social technologies and a "knack for relationship-building".

Diplomats can no longer do it alone without strategic partnerships.

Through partnerships, diplomats can change conversations among people from all walks of life. With the MTF, information and stories can be shared through collaboration – writing scripts about our own stories – the people of South Africa and Nigeria. Good untold stories await us.

Understandably, some of the challenges facing diplomats today include possible resistance by "some governments to embrace changes that technology has brought about", thus creating scepticism among them about the use of technology in their work.

At times, diplomats resist the temptation of expressing their views out of fear that their views are not sanctioned by their governments. Therefore, social media policies have been developed by some governments to guide diplomats on how they can manage the use of these platforms.

Essentially, changes that come with technology are considered disruptive and uncomfortable.

Thus, they require circumspect. It is a matter of creating a fine balance between innovative diplomacy using technology, and the diplomats' ability to preserve and protect the integrity of their governments.

Lovisa Williams, who serves on the Leadership Team of the Digital Diplomacy Coalition in Washington, contends that: "One of the greatest challenges we all face as we evolve into more social organisations, is how do we prepare to become more social? Social and government haven't usually co-existed well in a formal sense nor are they normally considered to be easy partners.

"We may intellectually understand the changes these social technologies herald. We may be able to master the tools to make us successful. But real success comes from embracing the ideas of how to be social. How do we have an official conversation? How do we provide opportunities for collaboration? How do we build trust with the public? How can we be more transparent in our dealings with the public?"

All these will require diplomats to "embrace new ways of thinking, flexible processes, creation of an innovative environment, and extensive training". While "some formal approaches to diplomatic practice are still important, they must be supplemented by new innovations that are capable of responding to present-day realities".

For example – the use of diplomatic notes, otherwise known as "Notes Verbale" is still important in transmitting information between any two governments. However, the method of transmission is slowly, if not rapidly, changing the world over. This was evident during the heightened period of COVID-19. Many diplomats found themselves transmitting Notes Verbale through social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Telegram.

Furthermore, during that period, diplomats used the same medium to create group chats for the swift transmission of messages and feedback. They even convened their meetings not only virtually via Teams or Zoom, among other platforms, but through WhatsApp video calls. This is "disruptive diplomacy" powered by the 4IR.

According to Lovisa Williams: "Social media or digital diplomacy does not just provide governments with the ability to be more successful in providing information, services and opportunities for collaboration with the public, but it begins to build new relationships and communications channels between governments. It is the creation of a truly global diplomatic community."

Diplomats must embrace technological advancement and use it in such a way that they can advance the National Interest of their respective countries. They must also change the way they think, and how they respond to the challenges facing their profession.

The traditional overreliance on textbook diplomacy will forever haunt humanity in a world immersed with an abundance of solutions, readily available at our disposal at either a click of a button or just by way of a decent conversation with a social partner.



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THE WORLD'S DIVIDED FUTURE

As global upheavals change the world as we know it, four scenarios reveal the impacts on our long-term future.

Jakkie Cilliers
Head of African Futures and Innovation, Institute for Security Studies

The world has entered uncharted waters as changes forecast over the next decade could have more impact than the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Just think of the past 15 years. COVID-19 struck as the world was recovering from the 2008/09 financial crisis.

When the pandemic started easing, Russia invaded Ukraine and upended energy security in Europe and food security in Africa. Africa now faces a hunger and fertiliser emergency on top of a debt crisis.

The result is widespread instability and a general decline in democracy, including a rash of coups in West and Central Africa. Africa isn't worse off than other regions, though. Western Europe and the United States (US) are engaged in a proxy war with Russia, their former Cold War adversary.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) recently added China to its perceived threat environment, and China and the US are at odds over Taiwan.

But Africa is rapidly emerging as a battlefield between China, the US and the European Union (EU) that could make the bipolar era of competition between East and West look tame by comparison. All of this is happening while the impact of climate change accelerates year on year.

To explore the impact of the different worlds that could emerge from these upheavals, the African Futures and Innovation Programme at the Institute for Security Studies is undertaking a wide-ranging assessment of alternative futures.

Two dimensions frame the possible futures: the extent of international cooperation/fracturing and the pursuit of more or less sustainability.

The results are four broad scenarios: a Sustainable World, a Divided World, a World at War and a Growth World.

The impact is modelled using the International Futures forecasting platform from the University of Denver and is currently being presented for discussion and validation in a series of public events.

On the current trajectory, the Divided World scenario appears most likely. This would see a more fragmented global order and the retreat from a rules-based system over time.

Powerful countries, including the US and China, alternate between efforts to frame a favourable global agenda and isolationism. The likelihood of this scenario will accelerate if Donald Trump is re-elected as US President in 2024, to the detriment of the West and ultimately, itself.

In a world where the US and EU don't act as one, China could overtake the EU in power potential in 2027 and the US in 2031.



On the current trajectory, the Divided World scenario appears most likely. This would see a more fragmented global order and the retreat from a rules-based system over time. Powerful countries, including the US and China, alternate between efforts to frame a favourable global agenda and isolationism.

On this trajectory, the steady loss in legitimacy, influence and salience of the United Nations proceeds apace, and Africa suffers. Peacekeeping and support for peacemaking in Africa decline.

Hard power competition dominates in the World at War scenario. Three triggers could realise this scenario.

The first is the escalation of Russia's war on Ukraine into a broader military confrontation with NATO. Or China could invade Taiwan with military intervention from the US and others.

A third trigger – less likely given the large disparities in their material power capabilities – could be border conflict and eventually a war between India and China. Although India will continue to have significantly fewer power capabilities than China, the two are increasingly regional and global power competitors that share a long border.

The rivalry between Chinese-supported, nuclear-armed Pakistan and India over Kashmir could be a trigger, particularly if the two look to balance their relations with Washington and Beijing.

In the World at War scenario, Russia and China enter into a formal military alliance in direct opposition to NATO. Others eventually join the China-Russia treaty, including Iran, which has a long-standing aggrievement with the West.

Africa becomes a key area of competition for control of its strategic mineral resources in the World at War scenario. China has been a first mover in securing a supply of the minerals required for the transition to a renewables-based future, including lithium, nickel, cobalt, manganese and palladium. Now, the West aggressively plays catch-up.

Neoliberal, trickle-down economics characterise the Growth World, with little care for the environment. This high-growth, unequal world would see slow reductions in extreme poverty. Efforts to introduce minimum tax rates for corporates don't get off the ground. Large digital companies, particularly from the US, continue to increase their profits without a physical presence in the countries where they operate.

The practice of tax avoidance through profit shifting to low-tax jurisdictions effectively leads to a race to the bottom as countries compete to attract foreign direct investment.

Developing countries suffer, and the licit and illicit financial outflows from Africa's 46 low- and lower-middle-income countries accelerate.

The Sustainable World scenario is the most difficult to achieve. Unlike the other three paths, it requires deliberate choices and bold leadership to achieve a better world against inevitable domestic resistance.

In this scenario, the international community balances growth and distribution by reducing overall consumption and constraining greenhouse gas emissions. Collaboration and norm development extend across multiple sectors.

The Sustainable World is the only forecast in which Africa achieves its Agenda 2063 ambitions for an integrated, prosperous and peaceful continent.

Three developments could unlock this sustainable future. The first is democratisation in China and Russia, as unlikely as that may seem.

The second is a global push to reverse the corrosion of the rules-based system through a determined process of democratisation and structural evolution.

Third, a reluctant world community is forced into a collective response due to the rapid acceleration of the impact of climate change and global pandemics.

These scenarios are being tested and refined with global experts.

The workshops and their outcomes can be viewed on the *African Futures and Innovation* website, which forecasts Africa's future two decades into the future.



BIO-ECONOMY VITAL for Africa's socio-economic development and sustainability

African policymakers, scientists and other social actors need to urgently understand and embrace the importance of bio-economy for Africa's socio-economic development and sustainability.

By Dr Blade Nzimande
Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation

The fifth BIO Africa Convention 2022 was held at the end of August in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. The 2020 and 2021 BIO Africa conventions were virtual because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite this, the 2021 convention attracted a staggering 1 308 attendees from at least 39 countries.

The fifth convention was held under the theme: "Africa Resilient: Life Sciences Innovation for Achieving Health and Food Security" and was part of the response to the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063, which is the continent's strategic framework that aims to deliver on its goal for inclusive and sustainable development.

The organisers of this year's convention could not have chosen a more apt theme, intended to inspire Africa's policymakers, scientists and social actors to steer our continent away from being only a knowledge-consuming region and turning it into a self-reliant, knowledge-generating and innovating one.

As a country, the objectives of the convention perfectly aligned with the 2019 *White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation* (STI) and our Science, Technology and Innovation Decadal Plan 2021 – 2031, whose key objectives include accelerating the implementation of the Pan-African STI agenda and focussing on inclusivity, transformation, SMME support and job creation, among others.

The Decadal Plan is premised on advancing a whole-of-government approach and ultimately a whole-of-society approach to innovation in South Africa. We have begun with our work to establish a standing ministerial-level STI committee, involving key ministries, and President Cyril Ramaphosa will be hosting an annual STI Plenary, which will include business, government, academia and civil society.

Our goal is to ensure a "just transition" in both our traditional economic sectors, as well as to lay the foundation for the emergence of new economic sectors, including in the spheres of biodiversity and the digital economy.

To come close to achieving the overarching objective of the convention, as articulated in its theme, there are several things that we must focus on. As we collectively responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, Africa also must deal with the wider set of crises, which are global in nature, but have a specific manifestation and impact on our continent; that of social inequality, climate change, technological disruption, and linked to all the above: a crisis of the global capitalist system.

In fact, we cannot speak of a sustainable, let alone equal society, unless and until we fundamentally change the nature of the global economic and social order.

Across the world, the concept of a bio-economy is being embraced as a sustainable model that brings together all commercial activity surrounding the use of renewable biological resources such as crops, forests, animals and micro-organisms, agricultural waste and residual materials.

The importance of bio-economy

African policymakers, scientists and other social actors need to urgently understand and embrace the importance of bio-economy for Africa's socio-economic development and sustainability.

Across the world, the concept of a bio-economy is being embraced as a sustainable model that brings together all commercial activity surrounding the use of renewable biological resources such as crops, forests, animals and micro-organisms, agricultural waste and residual material.

This is being done to address challenges related to food security, health, biodiversity and environmental protection, energy and industrial processes. It is therefore no exaggeration to state that the very survival of humanity is dependent on how we manage the Earth's resources. The second important challenge relates to inequality on our continent. According to Oxfam: "Africa is the second most unequal continent in the world, and home to seven of the most unequal countries. The richest 0.0001% own 40% of the wealth of the entire continent. Africa's three richest billionaire men have more wealth than the bottom 50% of the population of Africa, approximately 650 million people."

As policymakers, scientists and social actors, we must take well-thought, collaborative and decisive action on how to turn Africa into an innovative and self-reliant continent. To our advantage, we have an incredibly rich biodiversity and a relatively large proportion of arable land. All this puts us in a favourable position to translate our biodiversity into a viable, competitive and sustainable bio-economy.

We are therefore duty-bound to use our biodiversity and arable land to take Africa and her people out of the trap of grinding and debilitating poverty. It is vital to identify and mobilise sources to fund research development and innovation in Africa in line with the priorities and challenges facing our continent.

We cannot be able to advance most of our research, science, technology and innovation goals unless we have our own resources to fund research and be less dependent on donor-driven funding.

African countries embrace bio-economy

The third issue we must focus on is to encourage and support more African countries to not just embrace the importance of the bio-economy, but for them to proactively develop the necessary policy and institutional and scientific capacity to build a viable bio-economy in Africa.

This is linked to the fundamental task of a research funding regime that is based on advancing the African Agenda.

This task is particularly urgent if we consider the observations by the United Nations (UN) on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security. The UN states that "in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, world hunger increased substantially – estimates from the State of Food Security and Nutrition around the World reveal that as many as 161 million people fell into hunger between 2019 and 2020, bringing the world´s total to 811 million people facing food insufficiency.

"In other words, about one in 10 people in the world went to bed without enough nutrition in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic."

The UN further observes that "Africa has been particularly vulnerable: about 21% of people on the continent suffered from hunger in 2020, a total of 282 million people.

"Between 2019 and 2020, in the aftermath of the pandemic, 46 million people became hungry in Africa.

"No other region on the world presents a higher share of its population suffering from food insecurity."

In this respect, while we recognise the work that is done by South Africa, as a continent, we must commend the work that is being done by other African countries such as Namibia, Uganda, Ghana and Kenya that have implemented several policy and institutional measures to promote the sustainable management and use of their biodiversity.

Those African countries that are yet to implement these measures can learn from the experiences of these countries, such as:

- the importance of identifying gateway sectors through which to initiate the development of transition to a bio-economy
- strengthening links to research and development and markets for new bio-products and bio-solutions
- developing demand for bio-products and bio-solutions
- regulating sustainability incentives and managing trade-offs
- setting up independent national advisory boards to inform and guide the development of bio-economies.

▶▶

Government reallocated substantial financial resources to fund COVID-19 projects, including epidemiological studies and genomic surveillance that placed South African scientists on the international map, working with other countries to find solutions to the pandemic.

Impact of COVID-19 on livelihoods

The fourth issue relates to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on livelihoods.

A 2021 study by Kenya's Daystar University reveals that: "The negative effect of COVID-19 on the world economy is estimated to be US$12 trillion by 2021.

"During the same period, over 400 million full-time jobs were lost globally by the second quarter of 2020. In Africa, the pandemic led to a negative growth of -5.1% by 2020, thereby plunging the continent into the worst recession in 25 years."

The study further states that: "For small and medium enterprises (SMEs) which employ between 70% and 90% of the population, the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic has been even more severe with 87% of business owners uncertain about the future of their businesses. The biggest challenges to business survival were associated inadequate financing support, uncertainty, lack of government support and numerous measures meant to curb COVID-19 such as lockdowns".

In terms of lessons learnt from COVID-19, the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) coordinated a package of responses across the National System of Innovation to address South Africa's readiness for the impact of COVID-19. The response has been centred on four pillars namely:

- analytics and modelling
- research and innovation
- manufacturing
- international cooperation initiatives in support of the global response to the pandemic.

Government reallocated substantial financial resources to fund COVID-19 projects, including epidemiological studies and genomic surveillance that placed South African scientists on the international map, working with other countries to find solutions to the pandemic.

The KwaZulu-Natal Research Innovation and Sequencing Platform (KRISP) identified the Coronavirus Beta variant.

The KRISP team's genome sequencing demonstrated South Africa's leadership in this area on the world stage and contributed to the understanding of emerging variants and their effect on the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines.

This work informed government decision-making on which vaccines to procure, with genomic surveillance becoming a critical component of a targeted response to the epidemic throughout the country. KRISP's research has been used to inform the planning and responses of other countries as well.

South Africa also developed its own diagnostics and reagents needed to diagnose COVID-19 cases.

The awarding of the Global mRNA technology transfer hub to South Africa is also acknowledgement of the abilities of South African scientists.

The DSI's African Natural Medicines Platform worked closely with the World Health Organisation-Regional Office for Africa (WHO-AFRO), through its Advisory and Expect Committee on African Medicines, which visited South Africa to monitor the country's capability in terms of research, innovation, manufacturing and clinical utilisation of African natural medicines.

Supported by the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, the AU Commission and the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership, the WHO-AFRO affirmed that South Africa was best placed to provide continental leadership in research and manufacturing of these health products, including the role of traditional health practitioners.

Food security

Regarding food security resilience, some of the lessons learnt in relation to agriculture were in nutrition security, supply chains and the digital agriculture system.

Collaborative work among government departments, the business sector and active involvement of communities and SMMEs demonstrated the importance of inclusivity for a resilient food and nutrition sector.

South Africa is promoting the inclusion of all forms of food products, especially underutilised indigenous crops, which are readily available across the continent. It must be remembered that the AU declared 2022 the "Year of Nutrition". There have been increased efforts and commitment to prioritise and invest in nutrition at continental level.

Therefore, upholding the cultural heritage and practices of Africans includes the consumption of staple and indigenous African foods given their nutritional value and potential to contribute towards food security and health of the African population.

Through its Indigenous Knowledge-Based Nutraceutical Platform and the Agricultural Biotechnology Innovation Programme, the DSI supported various communities and SMMEs with technologies that added value to their crops and products across provinces.

Some of our flagship programmes are in soya, maize, moringa, Bambara nuts, amadumbe, cowpea, numerous green leafy vegetables and health infusions.

For Africa to be resilient, especially in cases of disasters and pandemics, it is essential to deliberately foster an interface of indigenous knowledge and modernisation through digitisation.

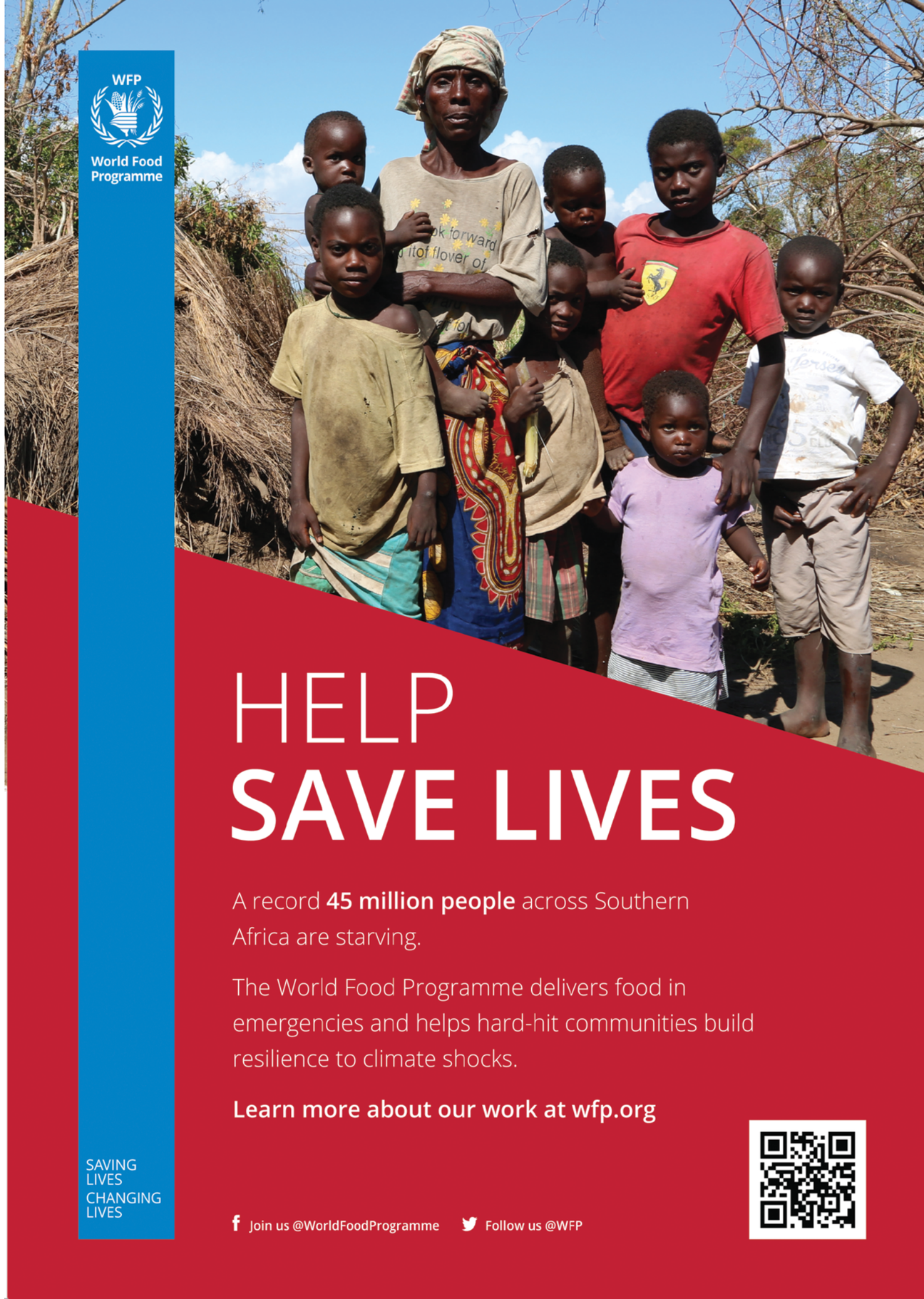
Working with the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, we will co-launch a National Biosecurity Research Hub later this year.

This hub will prioritise both the generation of digital scientific information hubs, coupled with development of digitisation platforms, to support disease management, surveillance and monitoring for both domestic and international trade.

These models are being shared with other African countries and will contribute a great deal to continental resilience against natural disasters, pandemics and wars.

It is vital to come up with concrete policy actions that must be undertaken by African governments to enable small businesses, especially in the Indigenous Knowledge System sector, to recover from the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This will give them an opportunity to increase their output and gain easy access to local and international markets.





The Indo-Pacific: An emerging paradigm for peace, cooperation, sustainable development and mutual prosperity

> The direction in which the Indo-Pacific evolves will depend on the decisions and choices we make as architects and custodians of one of the most dynamic and vibrant regions of the world.

By Prof. Anil Sooklal
Ambassador-at-Large: Asia and BRICS
Department of International Relations and Cooperation

The Indo-Pacific (IP) is increasingly replacing the Asia Pacific (AP) as a geopolitical construct. Even though the phrase AP has been used widely since the early 1960s, its usage is often imprecise and elusive and has tendered to change over the years in line with shifts in global geo-economics.

The IP has firmly established itself on the global geopolitical agenda. Its time has come. It has supplanted the term AP because the world has evolved drastically since the dawn of the new millennium. In the 21st-century globalised cyber-connected world, the economic engine is the centre, and that centre of gravity is the IP.

The IP is an expanded vision that encompasses both the Pacific and Indian oceans. Increasingly, it is being viewed as a single geopolitical construct stretching from the eastern shores of Africa to the western shores of the Americas. However, this inclusive view of the IP is not shared by all. There are varying interpretations of what constitutes the IP.

Of the numerous visions, strategies and discussion papers on the IP, which are increasing in volume with accelerated speed, many omit the inclusion of the east coast of Africa as part of the IP architecture.

However, it is important to note the vision of Prime Minster Narendra Modi of the IP region being all embracing and inclusive.

Speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore in June 2018, he noted: “India’s own engagement in the IP region is from the shores of Africa to that of the Americas – it will be inclusive”. He further stated: “We will promote a rule-based international order in which all nations, small and large, thrive as equal and sovereign.”

India and Africa have a long-shared history of colonialism, subjugation and our common struggle for freedom, democracy and a just and inclusive world order. The evolving IP construct provides an opportunity to work together in shaping the IP as per the vision of Prime Minister Modi.

The rules-based international order

The phrase “rules-based international order” is today etched in the speeches of almost every head of state on global platforms.

The rules-based international order that pooled the collective wisdom of world leaders following the devastation of World War II is today a shadow of what it was originally envisaged. It was an order constructed mainly by democratic allies and expanded by many countries over time.

It is a system predicated by a set of norms, principles and values that speak to global security, economy and governance. It subscribes to a set of rules committed to peaceful, predictable and collaborative behaviour among states that is consistent with the values of democracy, freedom and the sovereign equality of all states, large or small, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations (UN).

How do we ensure that the IP will be underpinned by a rules-based order with international law at its centre? Is it merely an aspirational goal or can we collectively commit to ensuring that the IP is indeed a region of peaceful co-existence and common prosperity?

India and South Africa as champions of democracy must work together with like-minded countries within the region to be catalysts in actively mobilising support for the IP to be free, open, inclusive and responsive to the needs of especially the developing world.

Many in the developed world and more recently, countries from the global South, style themselves as defenders of an international rules-based order, with the UN at the centre, defenders of human rights and fundamental freedoms, defenders of multilateralism and defenders of the UN Charter and its purposes and principles.

We must ensure that the IP is underpinned by multipolarity and does not become the domain of a few hegemons.

We have witnessed in recent times the undermining of international law as well as the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the UN Arbitral Tribunal pertaining to territorial disputes in the IP.

Within the maritime domain, we notice that multilateralism is being deliberately weakened amid attempts to change the agendas of international organisations to serve the interests of the few. It is important for us to entrench the core principles of UNCLOS as one of the foundational pillars ▸▸

> Is it merely an aspirational goal or can we collectively commit to ensuring that the Indo-Pacific is indeed a region of peaceful co-existence and common prosperity?

The increased pace of militarisation of the Indo-Pacific is a matter of deep concern as it undermines developing an architecture of peace cooperation and mutual coexistence. The region is increasingly vulnerable to the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons with emerging cybersecurity threats.

of the IP. It is noteworthy to recall the primary objectives of UNCLOS, namely, to:

- promote the peaceful use of the seas and oceans
- facilitate international communications
- enable equitable and efficient utilisation of ocean resources
- protect and preserve the marine environment
- promote maritime safety.

These are noble principles to which all 117 member states committed to upon signing the convention in 1982 in ensuring a regime of law and order in the world's oceans and seas. Today, there are 168 state parties to UNCLOS.

In 1971, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 2832, declaring the Indian Ocean a zone of peace. It will be appropriate for the provisions of this declaration to also extend to the IP as a whole. Perhaps, such an initiative warrants our serious attention given the increased militarisation and weaponisation of the IP.

Traditional and non-traditional security threats

In looking at the security challenges in the IP, it is important to recognise the indivisibility and interconnectedness of global security. Security challenges in the IP mirror the security challenges we experience within our countries and regions as well as globally. Resolution 2832 called upon the major powers to enter into consultation with the littoral states of the Indian Ocean to halt the further escalation of the military presence there and to eliminate all the bases, military installations and logistical supply facilities, nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Furthermore, it called upon the littoral and hinterland states, the permanent members of the UN Security Council and other major maritime users of the Indian Ocean to enter into consultation aimed at the implementation of the declaration, whereby:

- warships and military aircrafts would not use the Indian Ocean for any threat or use of force against any littoral and hinterland state
- the right to free and unimpeded use of the zone by the vessels of all nations would be ensured
- international agreement would be reached for the maintenance of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.

Some 50 years since the declaration was adopted, it remains aspirational as the major provisions of the declaration still have to be implemented by the very powers who adopted this landmark declaration.

The IP is today the most militarised region in the world. The number of military bases, installations and facilities is leading to increased maritime competition and contestation in the IP among both major and emerging powers, each seeking to establish its hegemony and spheres of influence in the region. The increased pace of militarisation of the IP is a matter of deep concern as it undermines developing an architecture of peace cooperation and mutual coexistence. The region is increasingly vulnerable to the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons with emerging cybersecurity threats.

Equally concerning is the continued spread of extremism and terrorism in the region. In Africa, the devastation caused by the rise of terrorism is most evident in East Africa, the Horn of Africa, the Sahel and more recently, in Mozambique, in southern Africa. According to the latest *Global Terrorism Index* (GTI), composed by the Australian-based Institute for Economics and Peace, sub-Saharan Africa is becoming the locus of terrorism, spearheaded by the expansion of the Islamic State (IS). In terms of terrorist groups, the GTI singled out IS as the deadliest, underlining its expansion via affiliates in Africa's Sahel that has made the region the core of terrorist resurgence. The failure of UN member states to have an agreed-upon definition of terrorism continues to be a major obstacle to meaningful counter measures in combatting terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. It is important that like-minded countries collaborate in combatting the scourge of terrorism within the IP as it seriously undermines the security of the region. Further security challenges warranting collaborative action include maritime piracy; human and narco-trafficking; proliferation of small arms; illegal migration; illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; corruption; and money laundering, all of which undermine the rule of law and democracy.

Free and open trade, including connectivity and digitalisation

The IP is the most populous region in the world, accounting for 60% of the global population and is also the fastest-growing and most economically vibrant part of the world contributing to over 60% of global gross domestic product (GDP).

It is also home to the largest middle-class population. Despite the increasing levels of competition and contestation in the region, intra-regional trade serves as a catalyst in linking countries of the IP in multiple trade arrangements both at bilateral and multilateral levels.

The region is home to several mega trade agreements underlining the vast potential for cooperation and mutual benefits.

Despite the proliferation of several mega free trade agreements in the region, including the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, a large part of the trade potential of the IP remains untapped.

We are yet to obtain the details of the recently launched Indo-Pacific Economic Framework. Improved trade facilitation could harness greater gains for the region. A further barrier to fully realise the economic potential of the IP is the need for enhanced infrastructure and connectivity leading to reduced trade transportation costs.

Maritime transport is the backbone of international trade and the global economy. Around 90% of traded goods are transported by sea. As such, the oceans provide the main transport arteries for global trade. The IP is home to some of the most strategic choke points, including the Malacca Strait, Gulf of Hormuz, Suez Canal and the Bab-el-Mandeb. Despite the vulnerabilities associated with the structural and geopolitical risks, these choke points are critical waterways in facilitating international trade. It is important for these choke points to remain free and accessible to all equally and not become political pawns in major power rivalry. For Africa and the global trading community, the Suez Canal is a vital artery in connecting with the world. Approximately 12% of global trade and some 17 000 ships transit annually through the Suez Canal. In March 2022, the six-day blockage of the canal by the stranded *Ever Given*, among the world's largest ships, demonstrated how vital the global choke points are to global trade.

The Malacca Strait linking the Indian and Pacific oceans is another strategic shipping lane. It carries about 40% of the world's trade with over 24 000 container ships traversing the waterway annually. At least 15 million barrels of oil per day flow through the strait from the Gulf states and West Africa, comparable to the 17 million barrel per day that flow via the Strait of Hormuz.

Digitalisation and connectivity are equally important in advancing and enhancing trade in the IP. It is the world's fastest-growing region for Internet usage and digital connectivity between people and businesses. The digital transformation has the potential to spur rapid economic growth. It is important to advance an open digital economy and the expansion of secure, market-driven and rules-based Internet use. However, to date, few laws exist to guard against cybercrime, e-commerce and e-governance. Advancing an open, interoperable and secure communications network in the region will play an important role in assisting to realise the vast economic, social and developmental benefits of the digital economy.

The e-commerce market has also spiked in recent times, driven in the main by the impact of "lockdowns" as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. The IP is the fastest-growing region in the global e-commerce marketplace. However, the sector continues to be dominated by a few countries. Africa's share of the global e-commerce market was a mere 2% in 2017. The e-commerce market is an important platform for small and medium enterprises in the endeavour to reach global markets and compete internationally. E-commerce has improved economic efficacy and created thousands of new jobs in developing economies, offering a chance to narrow the development gaps and increase inclusiveness. It has also helped to narrow the rural-urban divide.

Environmental security and climate change

Maritime environmental security, including climate change, biodiversity loss, food security as well as human-made and natural disasters have a profound impact on the livelihoods of the people of the IP.

The recently released *Sixth Assessment Report* of the International Panel on Climate Change emphasises the urgency of adapting to and mitigating climate change in coastal regions. Climate change is likely to have significant implications on maritime security in the IP.

It is critical for countries of the region as well as regional bodies to scale up efforts to meet the multitude of challenges of the economic, political, social, security, humanitarian and development arenas arising from climate change.

The impact of climate change on developing countries, especially least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDs) in the IP is most acute. It is important for developed countries of the region to scale up its climate finance commitments, including technology-sharing to help countries of the region tackle climate change and its devastating impact on their livelihoods.

The Blue Economy is vital to the food security and livelihoods for millions of people throughout the region. It is also an important and significant contributor to the GDP of many countries, including LDCs and SIDs.

Aquaculture and fisheries are a vital source of food and livelihood for a large number of countries. The protection and sustainability of this sector from the devastating impact of climate change are vital. Human interference of the seas also has a direct impact on climate change. The destruction of habitats through overfishing, pollution and acidification, among others, have serious impacts on the livelihoods of the people. The Indian and Pacific oceans together with the other water bodies of the world are a global common good that is a vital asset for the preservation for our planet and the future of humanity and all forms of life.

Sustainable development and a people-centred IP

Over the past four decades, the IP region has lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty and underdevelopment. The accelerated economic growth, specifically of emerging market and developing countries in the region, especially over the past two decades, has seen the rapid rise of the largest middle-class population globally. Many countries have successfully pushed back the frontiers of poverty, inequality and underdevelopment, leading to decent livelihoods for millions previously living as outliers of society.

To preserve and ensure the sustainable development of the region, it is imperative that we act as a collective in advancing the rich and diverse human and natural assets and preserving the history, culture and heritage of the IP. The region has the largest youth population globally, which is both a challenge and an opportunity. Youth and women development and advancement must be a priority for all countries of the region. Equipping our youth and women with the appropriate education and skills is necessary to ensure decent employment for all. We need to encourage entrepreneurship by introducing appropriate incentives and support programmes.

Women and youth face distinct challenges in participating in the productive sectors of the economy. Large and growing youth unemployment threatens sustainable development and social stability. Women continue to experience barriers in every aspect of economic life.

An inclusive IP must ensure all its peoples prosper together. This inclusive approach is at the core of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As the ▸▸

The Indian and Pacific oceans together with the other water bodies of the world are a global common good that is a vital asset for the preservation for our planet and the future of humanity and all forms of life.

Africa and the Indo-Pacific (IP) must build a mutually interdependent and cooperative relationship for common prosperity. For this to materialise, it is important for the continent to take a serious view of the IP and become an active contributor to the evolving IP architecture and not remain an onlooker on the margins.

preamble notes, "The Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom". Paragraph 4 of the declaration further notes: "As we embark on this great collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind".

The future of the IP will be further strengthened and enhanced through stronger and more resilient and sustainable people-to-people partnerships. Deepening partnerships and cooperation between countries, subregions and its peoples will contribute to enhancing and strengthening the foundations of the IP architecture, underpinned by peace, interdependence and mutual prosperity.

Africa and the IP

For South Africa and Africa, the IP must be viewed within the context of partnerships, cooperation, mutual prosperity and development in a human-centred IP that is open, inclusive and underpinned by peace and security.

To date, no African country, Regional Economic Community or the African Union (AU) have developed a strategy, position or foreign policy outlook on the IP.

Africa risks being marginalised and becoming an outlier in the fast-evolving IP construct.

It is critical that a serious focus at national, regional and continental level is brought to the fore by policymakers within the continent, with the AU taking the lead in evolving an IP vision for Africa.

Africa's 13 littoral and small island states in the western IP are an integral part of the region.

The IP is critical in advancing the AU's economic regeneration and its development agenda as articulated in Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. It is Africa's blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into a global powerhouse of the future.

Africa is often referred to as the last frontier of global growth. The continent is home to 1.3 billion people and its population is projected to almost double by 2050 to 2.5 billion. According to the UN, Africa is home to about 30% of the world's mineral resources. The continent also holds 40% of the world's gold and up to 90% of its chromium and platinum as well as significant deposits of rare earth.

With over 30 000 km² of coastline and over 1.5 million km² of exclusive economic zones, African countries, both on the continent and adjacent island states, are highly dependent on the oceans for its rich resources.

The oceans underpin coastal livelihoods and food security and protect vulnerable zones against extreme weather and climate events.

For Africa, the IP will be viewed within the vision of the AU's Decade of African Seas and Oceans, 2015 – 2025, as well as Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS) 2050.

The overarching vision of the AIMS is to foster increased wealth creation from Africa's oceans and seas by developing the Blue Economy in a secure and environmentally sustainable manner. The strategy provides a broad framework for the protection and sustainable exploitation of the oceans and seas.

The AU's Agenda 2063 as well as the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, while focussed on Africa's development and economic prosperity, are integrally linked to the global economy as well as the global peace and security architecture.

The security, development and economic growth of Africa is linked to the IP as an integral part of the region. Africa's major trade, investment and development partners are in the region.

It is the main conduit through which the continent conducts the majority of its geopolitical and geo-economic relations. Africa and the IP must build a mutually interdependent and cooperative relationship for common prosperity.

For this to materialise, it is important for the continent to take a serious view of the IP and become an active contributor to the evolving IP architecture and not remain an onlooker on the margins.

A good building block in developing an African IP vision will be the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), together with the AU's Agenda 2063 and AIMS. Nine countries from South and East Africa, including the small island states of the Indian Ocean are full members of IORA. As the IORA finalises its vision/outlook on the IP in 2022, this could serve as a catalyst towards developing an African perspective on the IP.

Conclusion

The IP has emerged as a major geopolitical and geo-economic construct and is today at the epicentre of the emerging international order. It is a region rich with possibilities for the future shared prosperity of all its peoples.

However, it is also a region fraught with many challenges, which must be collectively addressed in an inclusive and cooperative spirit.

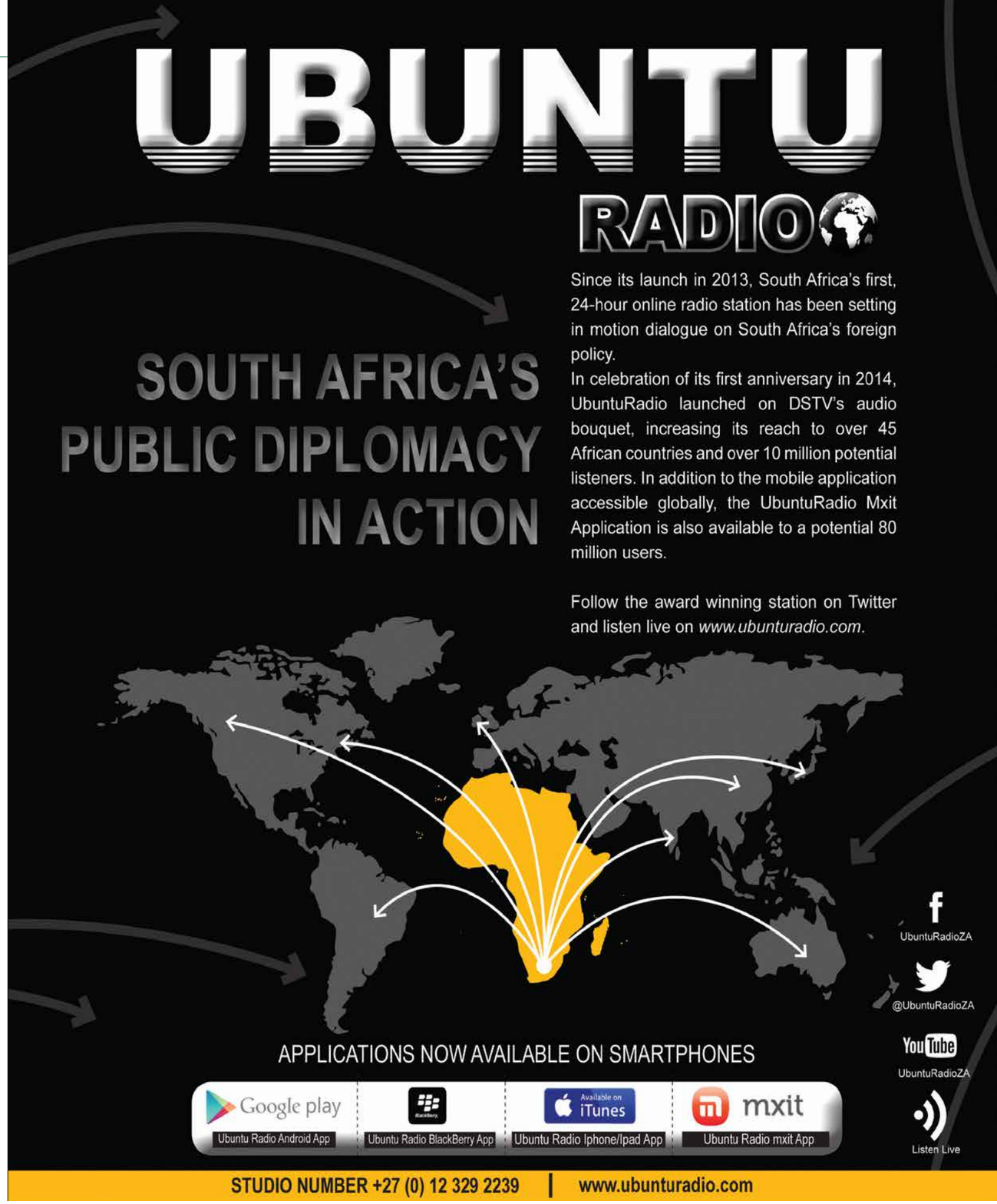
The region is characterised by increased competition and contestation with the possibility of major power conflict.

As a global common good and invaluable heritage and asset to all to who reside within its shores and beyond, the Indian and Pacific oceans must be the harbingers of the future prosperity and progress of humanity.

The direction in which the IP evolves will depend on the decisions and choices we make as architects and custodians of one of the most dynamic and vibrant regions of the world.

It is important that we commit to building a free, open and inclusive IP wherein we all benefit from the rich opportunities that the IP provides while collectively addressing the numerous challenges, some of which have been cited above.

Together, we must endeavour to build an IP community underpinned by peace, stability, cooperation, sustainable development and mutual prosperity in contributing to creating a better world for all its inhabitants.



international relations & cooperation
Department:
International Relations and Cooperation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

2030 NDP



The Nelson Mandela "BE THE LEGACY" Internship Programme

The Nelson Mandela Internship Programme (NMIP) was launched in 2018 during South Africa's Chair of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) (2017 – 2019) and the commemoration of the centenary of the birth of the former late South African President Nelson Mandela. The programme is a befitting tribute to the legacy of former President Mandela whose vision led to IORA's establishment in 1997.

By Letlhogonolo Mashilo
Department of International Relations and Cooperation

The IORA Secretariat in Mauritius hosted four junior diplomats from IORA member states (Bangladesh, Madagascar, South Africa and Sri Lanka) under the inaugural IORA-Nelson Mandela "Be the Legacy" Internship Programme from 1 September to 30 November 2022.

The interns were nominated for secondment to the programme through their respective IORA member state capitals.

The NMIP was launched in 2018 during South Africa's Chair of IORA (2017 – 2019) and the commemoration of the centenary of the birth of the former late South African President Nelson Mandela. The programme is a befitting tribute to the legacy of former President Mandela whose vision led to IORA's establishment in 1997.

The commencement of the programme in 2020, however, was delayed due to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

As one of the flagship projects of IORA, the NMIP solidifies IORA's link with the global icon by contributing to one of his many visions of changing the world for the better through continuous learning, capacity-building and raising of an individual's awareness, development and understanding. As Madiba previously stated: "The power of education extends beyond the development of skills we need for economic success".

The long-term objective of the NMIP is to create a strong and growing base of young people in the Indian Ocean region who understand and support the need to create an Indian Ocean region that is safe and secure and develops sustainably.

To this end, the interns gained valuable exposure to the inner workings of IORA and the rich diversity of work experience at the Secretariat.

In this regard, extensive knowledge has been acquired on how the IORA Secretariat coordinates and collaborates with all the 23 IORA member states and the 10 dialogue partners, respectively.

Additionally, practical skills were gained through participating in IORA meetings and assisting in collation, dissemination of information, maintenance of extensive archival, depository and registry of IORA documentation and research materials.

Furthermore, skills were developed through the drafting of concept notes, project proposals, articles for possible publication and undertaking in-depth research on IORA-related matters such as the sustainable exploitation of deep seabed mineral resources and state of cooperation of IORA member states on renewable energy, to mention just a few.

Concrete project management skills were enhanced during the research of IORA projects and its priority areas in addition to the sourcing, development and monitoring of social media content for publishing across all IORA media platforms.

The presence of seconded interns at the IORA offices further inculcated the Secretariat's value system and corporate culture of Respect, Integrity and Excellence. This, will in turn, strengthen the Secretariat as called for in the IORA action plans by creating a pool of junior diplomats in the region with the requisite skills and expertise for placement abroad in addition to creating a valuable resource for their respective ministries as the officials will act as conduits to facilitate enhanced cooperation between their respective IORA desks and the Secretariat.

Furthermore, the "on-the-job training" provided opportunities for the junior diplomats to engage as accredited members of the IORA Secretariat with the relevant stakeholders of the host country, the Republic of Mauritius.

Practical experience included diplomacy and professional networking; attending high-level official events and developing social media content in raising awareness towards IORA activities; writing high-quality content for internal online publishing; drafting high-quality outcome reports and speaking notes for principals in the prescribed IORA format in addition to contributing to effective team-building and co-steering the IORA delegation at official meetings with senior government officials of the host country.

This also included technical hosting of virtual meetings of no less than 20 attendees, organising and planning educational excursions to local historical sites such as the Aapravasi Ghat, a United Nations (UN) Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation World Heritage Site, and the beach and biodiverse wetlands clean-up initiative in Mauritius as part of the out-of-the-office extracurricular activities.

During official visits to ministries (Local Government and Disaster Risk Management, Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, Tourism, Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade), pertinent issues aligning with topical issues under the aegis of the IORA priority areas and functional bodies were discussed such as climate change, disaster risk and crisis management, plastic pollution, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and support of maritime governance in the Indian Ocean, Blue Economy as a future driver of growth, tourism as a key engine of growth, the role of South Africa and Mauritius in IORA and the outlook of IORA on the Indo-Pacific. Debates on the abovementioned topical issues, accompanied by responses from government specialists and experts, provided an exclusive perspective on the thinking of the host government regarding the comparative valuation of IORA in contrast to other regional organisations such as the Indian Ocean Commission, whose Secretariat is also hosted by Mauritius and their perceived impact and achievement in addressing their regional objectives.

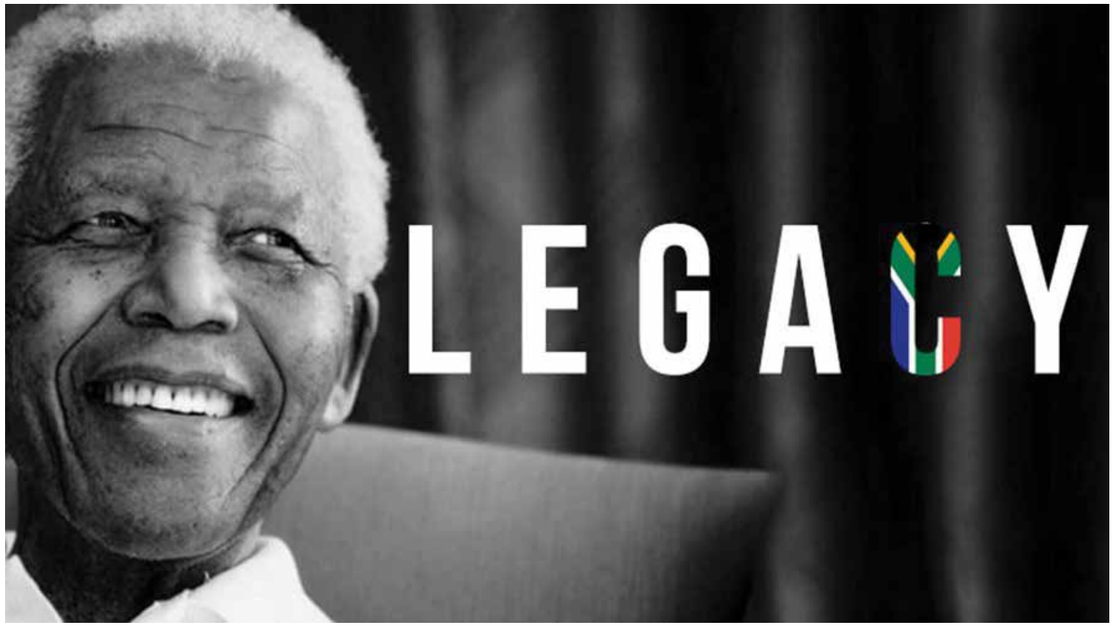
Consequently, the strategic value of the programme is two-sided as it simultaneously addresses the issue of skills shortage at the Secretariat and capacity-building for respective ministries of IORA member states.

The programme will further act as a catalyst of IORA's soft diplomacy to its immediate region, which spans several continents. The NMIP also coincided with IORA's 25th anniversary celebration, and therefore, the programme is expected to not only nurture the knowledge and skills-set of its first recipients but also of upcoming generations of junior diplomats and future leaders of the IORA until the achievement of the golden jubilee is reached (50-year anniversary) in the year 2047.

In this regard, the potential of the inaugural programme to build a firm foundation in developing the calibre of exceptional junior diplomats of the Indian Ocean region is a long-term investment, which augurs well with the values and legacy of the programme's namesake, the late former President Nelson Mandela, whose memory will continue to inspire past, present and future leaders of the world, but particularly, those of the Indian Ocean region.

Former President Nelson Mandela's memory will continue to inspire past, present and future leaders of the world, but particularly, those of the Indian Ocean region.

As one of the flagship projects of IORA, the NMIP solidifies IORA's link with the global icon by contributing to one of his many visions of changing the world for the better through continuous learning, capacity-building and raising of an individual's awareness, development and understanding. As Madiba previously stated: "The power of education extends beyond the development of skills we need for economic success".



Slangkop Lighthouse, Kommetjie, Western Cape



Blinken's African charm offensive

The US Secretary of State's candid and constructive messages suggest an overdue recalibration in US-Africa relations.

By Ronak Gopaldas
Institute for Security Studies Consultant, Director at Signal Risk and CAMM Fellow at the Gordon Institute of Business Science

United States (US) Secretary of State Antony Blinken's whistle-stop tour of Africa recently was interesting for various reasons – not least its timing. It followed hot on the heels of Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's visit – ostensibly to cement strategic relations and support for the ongoing Ukraine war.

The US charm offensive – involving visits to South Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda – came as great powers ramp up their engagement in Africa amid increasing geopolitical and geo-economic competition globally. So, the trip's subtext was around a new Cold War and Africa's role and relevance in that equation.

Blinken faced numerous immediate challenges: counter the lingering resentment towards the US and restore its lost credibility; convey a shift in attitude and intent; and build relationships with some strategically important, but frosty, African allies.

The visit stands out for three reasons – its candour, messaging and strategy. First, the engagements contrasted with the banalities that typically characterise such visits. In Rwanda, Blinken didn't shy away from the controversial issues of human rights abuses and the trial of Hotel Rwanda dissident Paul Rusesabagina.

Meanwhile in South Africa, International Relations Minister Naledi Pandor and Blinken broached numerous controversial matters, including Pretoria's views on US hypocrisy around democratic values, paternalism and the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The engagements displayed a refreshing honesty rarely seen in diplomatic settings. This was important to win over historical allies who have recently turned critical of the US.

Pandor's strong rhetoric reflects the mood across large parts of Africa: that of belligerence. An increasing number of African sovereigns are no longer willing to be bullied or dictated to, particularly by a country whose moral legitimacy has receded in recent years.

American foreign policy is still suffering the hangover effects of Trumpian insularity, compounded by the general chaos of that administration and the weakening of multilateral institutions. Vaccine hoarding and the West's approach to the Ukraine conflict have further dented Washington's standing with many African countries.

With African nations' growing sense of agency in global affairs and increasing partnership options, Washington knows a very different type of approach is required. This raises the second theme of Blinken's visit – messaging. Rather than the fearmongering that characterised the Trump administration's "cowboy diplomacy", Blinken used constructive and affirming language to try to win over Africans.

The shift to a more positive and less patronising message suggests that the Americans are finally reading the mood of the proverbial room.

On the tour, Blinken referred to Africa's power as a "geopolitical force", stressed "a partnership of equals", and highlighted the importance of "choice" for Africans.

There's also been a deliberate effort to avoid framing Africa as a playground in a proxy battle between the US and China, given that the Cold War narrative has angered African policymakers and diplomats.

Instead, the focus was on providing a vision that aligns with African interests and positioning the US as the "partner of choice". The new administration seems to have understood the importance of respect and African agency – two criticisms that plagued previous US engagements with Africa.

The softer tone is an effective strategy; this greater self-awareness has been well received in various quarters. Indeed, former US Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, Tibor Nagy, tweeted that Blinken had hit all the right notes: "It's not about China, Russia or even the US – it's about Africa, and Africa's goals, especially the young. US-Africa policy must look at the continent through the windshield, not the rear-view mirror."

The third element was the unveiling of the new US strategy for Africa, which aims to position the US as the preferred partner by presenting a clear vision and values for the future. The White House says the new strategy will be based on four pillars: the sovereignty and independence of African countries; the promotion and defence of democracy; Africa's adaptation to the climate crisis; and post-COVID-19 economic recovery.

Blinken said at the University of Pretoria: "It's a strategy that reflects the region's complexity, its diversity, its agency; and one that focusses on what we will do with African nations and peoples, not for African nations and peoples."

As expected, the economic strategy doubled down on the US' traditional focus areas – private sector-led trade and investment. The Prosper Africa initiative, started by the Trump administration, has been reactivated alongside the US' answer to China's Belt and Road Initiative – the Build Back Better World.

Zainab Usman of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace notes that the new approach to climate change is both nuanced and well-articulated and can catalyse a wave of development and investment in Africa. But there are still some obvious limitations.

The strategy still places the containment of Russia and China highly in Washington's thinking (despite efforts to limit its focus). There are also visible gaps in the approach to migration and security.

However, viewed holistically, the strategy marks a distinct shift from what Guillaume Doane of 35°Nord terms the "malign neglect" of the previous administration to actual engagement. Along with the recently concluded US-Africa Business Forum and the upcoming US-Africa Leaders' Summit (the first in almost a decade), the trend is broadly positive.

Does this signal a new era in US-Africa relations? Although the signs are promising, it's too early to say.

Institute for Security Studies Consultant Peter Fabricius agrees. He told *ISS Today:* "While Blinken struck the right notes, it might be premature to judge that he reset relations with the continent.

"No doubt, he erased the sour taste of the Trump years – though Africans already understood Trump was an aberration. But winning over African countries from China and Russia will be a mission, as the relations of many African countries with those powers are deeply rooted, historically, ideologically and economically."

Blinken's visit was an essential public relations exercise but won't in itself shift the dial. The undeniable progress in the engagement – both in appearance and substance – should be seen as an important step in the overdue recalibration of US-Africa relations.











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BIG LOVE.

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV: SOUTHERN AFRICANS HAVE A SPECIAL REASON TO THANK HIM | DIPLOMACY

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV:

Southern Africans have a special reason to thank him

Southern Africans have a special reason to thank Gorbachev. He helped bring apartheid to an end. He did this both directly and indirectly.

By Chris Saunders
Emeritus Professor, University of Cape Town

The whole world has much to thank Mikhail Gorbachev for. As many have pointed out since his death in Moscow recently, Gorbachev – the last leader of the Soviet Union – did more than anyone to bring the Cold War to an end peacefully, reducing the threat that nuclear weapons might be used.

He allowed the countries of Eastern Europe to move out of the Soviet orbit and towards democracy in 1989.

And he tried to set Russia on the path to a more democratic society. His actions led to the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991. Though Vladimir Putin views that break-up as a very negative development, most have welcomed it.

Southern Africans have a special reason to thank Gorbachev. He helped bring apartheid to an end. He did this both directly and indirectly.

Pivotal interventions

The assistance that the Soviet Union provided to both the People's Liberation Army of Namibia and Umkhonto we Sizwe was essential in enabling them to fight armed struggles against the South African regime. Without that assistance, the South West Africa People's Organisation and the African National Congress (ANC) might not have survived in exile, or ultimately come to power.

But it was not those armed struggles that brought them to power. That was made possible in part by the fact that from 1988, the balance of forces in the region changed. In that Gorbachev played a major role.

Soon after taking over as general secretary of the central committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1985, he decided that the Soviet Union should withdraw from regional wars in which it was engaged, most notably in Afghanistan and Angola. He then authorised his diplomats to engage with the Americans to help mediate a negotiated settlement for Angola.

They assisted in that process, which led to an agreement being reached in December 1988 that provided for the withdrawal of the Cuban military from Angola and the independence of Namibia.

The Soviet Union then participated in the joint commission that was set up as a result of that agreement to ensure it was implemented.

When a crisis in April 1989 threatened its implementation, the Soviets again worked with the Americans to help defuse the crisis, after which Namibia moved towards independence with the assistance of the United Nations.

By then, the Soviet Union had made it clear that it was in favour of a negotiated settlement in South Africa.

At the same time, the communist ideology that had underpinned the Soviet Union and its satellite countries was crumbling.

The success of the Namibian transition helped make possible the South African one that followed. But it was also the collapse of the communist regimes of Eastern Europe, and the removal of what South Africa's National Party government had seen as a communist threat, that made it possible for the new President of South Africa, FW de Klerk, to take his party with him when he agreed to open the door to a negotiated settlement.

The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union destroyed what remaining credibility the idea of a "total onslaught" still had in National Party circles and reduced fears, both in those circles and in Western capitals, that the South African Communist Party would control the ANC if it were to come to power.

Though De Klerk initially hoped for a power-sharing arrangement, even such a settlement, which turned out not to be possible, meant the end of apartheid and white minority rule.

Unexpected outcomes

Like Gorbachev, De Klerk was a reformer whose domestic reforms led to unexpected consequences.

When De Klerk made his breakthrough speech in February 1990, unbanning the ANC and announcing that Nelson Mandela would be released from prison unconditionally, he made much of what had happened in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in late 1989.

He said that events there had weakened "the capacity of organisations which were previously supported strongly from those quarters".

Without Gorbachev, those changes would not have taken place, and without them it is unlikely that De Klerk would have moved as he did at that time.

By the end of the 1980s, internal pressures, most particularly from mass resistance, and a variety of external pressures from the West, including sanctions, were undermining the apartheid regime.

But of all the external factors that helped lead to the ending of apartheid in 1994, the collapse of the communist regimes of Eastern Europe and the process leading to the end of the Soviet Union must count among the most important.

And we have Gorbachev to thank for that.

This article was first published on *The Conversation*.



Gorbachev – the last leader of the Soviet Union – did more than anyone to bring the Cold War to an end peacefully, reducing the threat that nuclear weapons might be used.

Of all the external factors that helped lead to the ending of apartheid in 1994, the collapse of the communist regimes of Eastern Europe and the process leading to the end of the Soviet Union must count among the most important.

Happy 87th Birthday!
Dr Esther Mahlangu
11 November 2022



LIBERATION HERITAGE:
Lillian Masediba Ngoyi

Ngoyi was banned for a total of 18 years during which time she was all but confined to a small house, forbidden to move outside the boundaries of one small area and attend gatherings of any kind.

Lilian Masediba Ngoyi was born in Pretoria in 1911 to a family of six children and obtained her primary schooling in Kilnerton. She later enrolled for a nursing training course, but she eventually took up a position as a machinist at a clothing factory where she worked from 1945 to 1956.

She joined the Garment Workers Union under Solly Sachs, and soon became one of its leading figures. Impressed by the spirit of African National Congress (ANC) volunteers, she joined the ANC during the 1950 Defiance Campaign and was arrested for using facilities in a post office that were reserved for white people.

Her energy and her gift as a public speaker won her rapid recognition, and within a year of joining the ANC, she was elected as president of the ANC Women's League.

When the Federation of South African Women was formed in 1954, she became one of its national vice-presidents, and in 1956, she was elected president.

In 1955, she travelled to Europe as a delegate to a conference called by the Women's International Democratic Federation, and was invited by socialist delegates to tour Russia, China and other Eastern bloc countries. She became a member of the Transvaal ANC executive from 1955, and in December 1956, she became the first woman ever elected to the ANC National Executive Committee.

Ngoyi also gained wide recognition overseas as a radical opponent of apartheid. Together with Dora Tamana, she was arrested while trying to board a ship on her way to a conference in Switzerland without a passport.

She addressed protest meetings against apartheid in several world centres, including London's Trafalgar Square.

On 9 August 1956, together with Helen Joseph, Rahima Moosa and Sophia Theresa Williams de Bruyn, she led the women's anti-pass march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria, one of the largest demonstrations staged in South African history.

Holding thousands of petitions in one hand, Ngoyi was the one who knocked on Prime Minister JG Strijdom's door to hand over the petitions. A voice from behind the door told her she had been sent a letter prohibiting her from coming to the Prime Minister's office.

Ngoyi answered: "The women of Africa are outside. They built this place. Their husbands died for this."

They dropped their petitions, went back to the marchers and waited in silence. Eventually, Ngoyi said: "Strijdom is too much of a coward to meet with us." The crowd then sang *Nkosi Sikilel' iAfrika*, followed by *Wathint' Abafazi, Wathint' Imbokodo. Strijdom uzakufa* (You strike a woman, you strike a rock) and left quietly, but with a sense of moral victory.

In December 1956, Ngoyi was arrested for high treason along with 156 other leading figures and stood trial until 1961 as one of the accused in the four-year-long Treason Trial. While the trial was still on and the accused out on bail, Ngoyi was imprisoned for five months under the 1960 State of Emergency. She spent much of this time in solitary confinement.

She was first issued her banning orders in October 1962, which confined her to Orlando Township in Johannesburg and she was forbidden to attend any gatherings. In the mid-1960s, she was jailed under the 90-day Detention Act and spent 71 days in solitary confinement.

Her banning orders lapsed in 1972 but were renewed for a new five-year period in 1975. During the time of her banning, Ngoyi's great energies were totally suppressed and she struggled to earn a decent living. Ngoyi was banned for a total of 18 years during which time she was all but confined to a small house, forbidden to move outside the boundaries of one small area and attend gatherings of any kind.

Although battling to make a living from sewing, she remained fearless and defiant, refusing to give up hope: "My spirits have not been dampened. I am looking forward to the day when my children will share in the wealth of our lovely South Africa."

Although a victim of both gender and racial discrimination, Lilian Ngoyi demonstrated that these restrictions could be transcended, and that women's rights and issues were central to the liberation struggle.

Affectionately known as "Ma Ngoyi", she suffered heart trouble and died on 13 March 1980 at the age of 69.

Long before he wrote the award-winning *Down Second Avenue*, Es'kia Mphahlele described Ngoyi as "the most talked of woman in politics" in an article in *Drum* magazine.

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Long before he wrote the award-winning *Down Second Avenue*, Es'kia Mphahlele described Ngoyi as "the most talked of woman in politics" in an article in *Drum* magazine.



Celebrating the legacy of **Solomon Linda**

This year's focus was on South Africa's indigenous music, which has played an integral role during the struggle for democracy and freedom.

Every year in September, South Africa celebrates Heritage Month to mark the nation's diverse culture and heritage. The 2022 Heritage Month was commemorated under the theme: "Celebrating the Legacy of Solomon Linda and South Africa's Indigenous Music".

This year's focus was on South Africa's indigenous music, which has played an integral role during the struggle for democracy and freedom.

On 8 October 1962, Solomon Linda, the singer and composer of *Mbube*, which became the pop hit as *The Lion Sleeps Tonight*, died without receiving royalties for his work.

Linda was born in Pomeroy in rural KwaZulu-Natal in 1909 and went to Gordon Memorial Mission School. At school, Linda was exposed to different music genres through church music and choir contests.

He also witnessed a visiting group of African Americans from the United States (US), the Jubilee Singers. Linda showed a keen interest in music and fused these into Zulu songs that he wrote and sang with his friends at weddings and events around the community. In the early 1930s, Linda moved to Johannesburg where he worked at Mayi Mayi furniture shop in Small Street in 1931, before moving to work at the Carlton Hotel in 1933.

He began singing with his uncles and later started a group known as Solomon Linda and the Evening Birds.

Their performances at weddings and choir competitions made them popular around Johannesburg. In 1938, Linda and the Evening Birds recorded several songs in Eric Gallo's recording studios with the assistance of a talent scout. By 1949, *Mbube* had sold over 100 000 copies, making Linda a musical star in South Africa. Although *Mbube* is Linda's best-known recorded song, he composed and recorded other songs as well.

Some songs such as *Yetul' isgqoko* (Take off your hat) and *Sikhalela izwe lakithi* (We mourn for our country) carried political undertones protesting against the oppression and the harsh life experienced by black South Africans under colonial rule.

Linda sold his rights of the song *Mbube* to Gallo Record Company for 10 shillings. Since South Africa was still a British Colony when the rights were sold, under the Dickens Clause in British Law, all rights were supposed to revert to his heirs after 25 years of his death.

The heirs would then be entitled to those rights and be able to renegotiate any future deals. This did not happen, and Linda's work was recorded and modified by other music artists. This left the possibility of pursuing a lawsuit in the future.

An American musicologist Alan Lomax discovered the original South African recording of *Mbube* and he gave it to his friend Pete Seeger, who belonged to a folk singing group, The Weavers.

Seeger renamed the song *Wimoweh* and The Weavers recorded the song in 1952.

The song became popular in the US and George Weiss rewrote the song and entitled it *The Lion Sleeps Tonight*.

Since then, the song has been recorded by over 150 artists for example, the Kingston Trio, The Tokens, Robert John, Tight Fit, Jimmy Dorsey and Glen Campbell, among others.

The song has also featured in films such as *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* and *The Lion King*.

After collapsing on stage in 1959, Linda was diagnosed with a kidney disease. He died on 8 October 1962 in poverty without receiving benefits for his talent.

In 2000, a South African journalist, Rian Malan, wrote a feature article for *Rolling Stone* Magazine that told the story of Solomon Linda.

Malan estimated that his song *Mbub*e had earned an estimated US$15 million for its use in *The Lion King* alone.

In 2004, Solomon Linda's surviving daughters Delphi, Elizabeth and Fildah, backed by Gallo Records, brought a lawsuit against Walt Disney for using his song *Mbube* in *The Lion King* movie and stage musical without paying royalties to them.

The lawsuit was finally settled in February 2006 with Linda's daughters receiving an undisclosed amount.

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In 2000, a South African journalist, Rian Malan, wrote a feature article for *Rolling Stone* Magazine that told the story of Solomon Linda. Malan estimated that his song *Mbube* had earned an estimated 15 million American dollars for its use in *The Lion King* alone.





A SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY PUBLISHER MAKES IT TO 100.

A RARE AND IMPORTANT EVENT

Wits University Press now attracts leading local academics with an emphasis on the social sciences and humanities rather than the natural sciences of the earliest days.

By Beth le Roux
Associate Professor, Publishing, University of Pretoria

In the past months, my email has served up two contrasting examples of the state of scholarly publishing in African countries. The one was an invitation to celebrate the centenary of South Africa's Wits University Press. The other, an academic report on the demise of Nigerian university presses.

Between these two extremes, there are only a few functioning African university presses in 2022 – a recent survey found only 15 active presses out of 52 that claim to still be working.

The situation is similar in other universities in the global South, such as in India and Latin America, where most university presses function as printers rather than publishers.

All the more reason, then, to celebrate the longevity – and significance – of a publisher like Wits University Press.

Active scholarly publishers are important because they provide a platform for research originating in a specific region.

Scholars from the global South often go unheard and unseen, even in scholarship that focusses on their own countries and areas of expertise.

As Mary Jay of the African Book Collective notes: "You can take a degree in African Studies without reading a single book published in Africa."

Local university presses are the main channel for such scholars to participate in broader debates and conversations, through books and journals.

If this sounds like a political justification for university presses, it is. Politics has always influenced scholarly publishing: who sets up a press, who provides the funding, and who gets published.

The history of a publisher like Wits University Press is influenced by politics as much as by intellectual traditions.

The early history

Colonial South Africa became a union with a white minority government in 1910.

Wits University Press was established in 1922, the same year as its parent institution, the University of the Witwatersrand.

The decision reflects how the university wanted to be perceived – as a new centre of learning and research that could, with time, stand on par with colonial models. (Melbourne University may have been thinking the same, establishing the oldest university press in Australia in the same year.)

The first title, Economics Professor Robert Lehfeldt's *The National Resources of South Africa*, exemplifies the mission: that research by eminent local academics on South Africa could be conducted, and published, in that country.

The books that followed seem to bear out this early belief that a South African university press could make a mark if it focussed on local expertise. Titles ranged from South African drawings, to drumming, to the citrus industry.

The publishing list was inevitably affected by a shifting political context, and also often shaped by idiosyncratic individual interests or university priorities.

The key focus of publications for the first decades was the so-called "native question" and race relations.

For instance, a founder member of the Wits University Press publications committee, JD Rheinallt Jones, was an advocate for social reform who set up the South African Institute of Race Relations.

Leading social scientists published some of their most important research through the press, including Desmond Cole and Phillip Tobias.

Apartheid and censorship

Apartheid policies began to be entrenched by the white minority government from 1948 with harsh race laws segregating South African society, and controlling the circulation of information. The usual author profile at Wits University Press was, needless to say, white and male.

Exceptional black authors include the Reverend John Henderson Soga in 1930, and the range of writers published through the flagship *Bantu Treasury Series* launched by the press. This and the journal *Bantu Studies* (now *African Studies*), was the brainchild of Clement Doke of the university's Department of Bantu Studies.

His collaboration and friendship with Benedict Wallet Vilakazi, the first black academic at Wits, provided a fertile base for a publishing list in linguistics, dictionaries, ethnography and literature. In more difficult times, the *Bantu Treasury Series* would keep the press afloat. Titles began to be prescribed for Bantu Education schools and teacher training colleges from the 1950s, and the large orders were the main source of income for at least two decades.

As censorship was more heavily enforced from the 1960s, the more radical and well-known South African authors tended to publish abroad. There was a widespread perception that university presses would not take a chance on controversial texts, and could not assure an author of widespread distribution and readership.

It is true that Wits University Press was not a political publisher – some of its most enduring titles include *Trees and Shrubs of the Witwatersrand* (1964) and *South African Frogs: A Complete Guide* (1979). But, from the 1970s, state repression could no longer be ignored and the Wits University Press' publishing list increasingly featured studies of trade unions, labour and law, which served as proxies for overtly political books. Within a decade, the press could describe itself accurately as a "progressive publisher for a new South Africa".

Leading social scientists published some of their most important research through the press, including Desmond Cole and Phillip Tobias.

The West continues to dominate published scholarship about Africa. The solution is more visible research from Africa. Wits University Press has long been part of this solution.

What still needs to be done

Wits University Press now attracts leading local academics with an emphasis on the social sciences and humanities rather than the natural sciences of the earliest days.

The huge expansion in both the numbers and profile of academics in South Africa is reflected in stricter peer review and selection policies, rather than an unsustainable rise in titles.

And the current concern of most university presses – technological developments that have changed publishing processes and formats – has been embraced. However, inequalities remain.

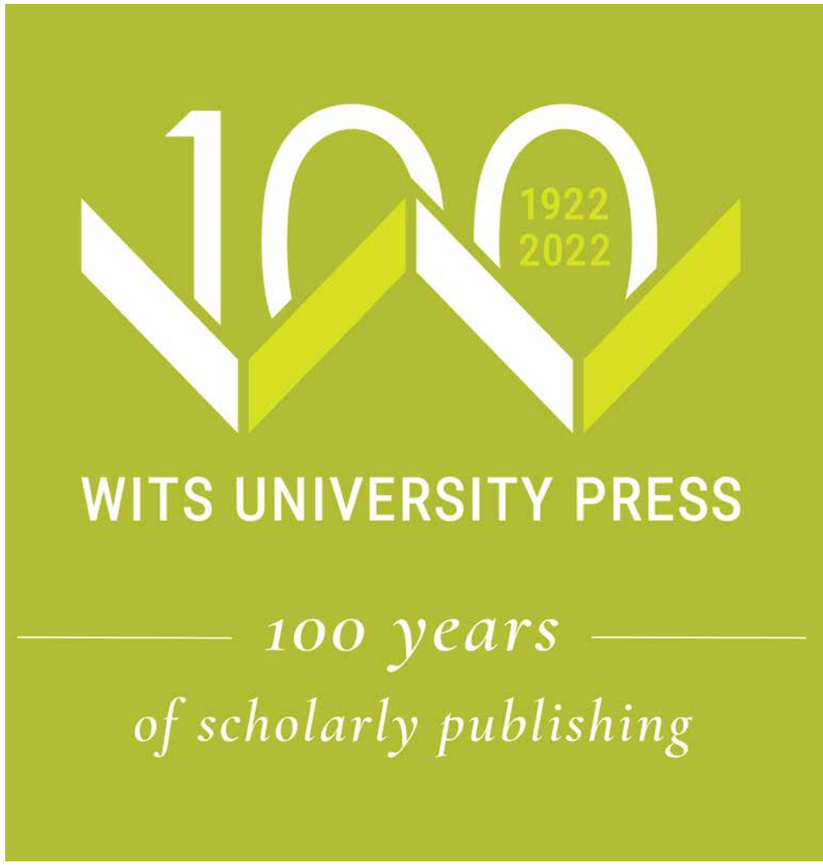
Will Wits University Press make it for another 100 years? The greatest ongoing threat has been there from the very beginning: visibility and relevance.

Or rather, how a South African university press can make itself visible and demonstrate its relevance to often indifferent and highly competitive international markets.

The press has actively explored co-publishing and distribution agreements in North America and Europe.

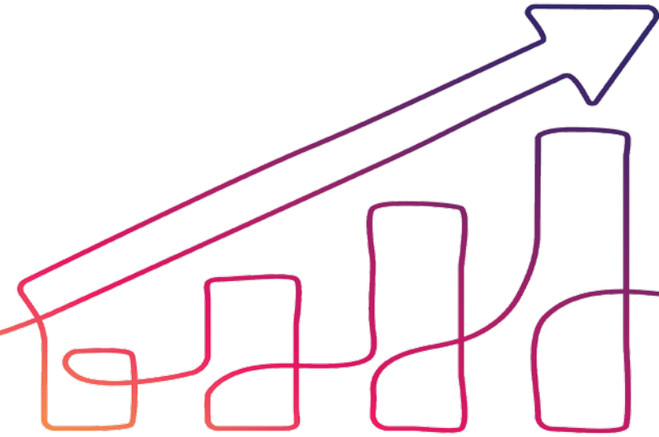
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This article was first published on *The Conversation*.



TOURISM SECTOR IS MAKING SIGNIFICANT STRIDES TOWARDS RECOVERY | FEATURE

TOURISM SECTOR IS MAKING SIGNIFICANT STRIDES TOWARDS RECOVERY



SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM

There is renewed hope on the horizon. Our visitors are responding positively to all come to South Africa and "Live Again". The tourist numbers reaffirm faith in our unique tourism products.

By Lindiwe Sisulu
Minister of Tourism

The tourism sector has done incredibly well in the first half of 2022 and has made significant strides towards recovery.

South Africa is optimistic about its tourism prospects, following the total rescinding of the COVID-19 restrictive regulations and lockdowns in June 2022.

We are poised for a tremendous bounce back and positive growth, as a sector. Our mood is buoyant because we know the resilient nature of our people who drive the tourism industry.

I want to recognise the enormous support from the tourism sector itself and pay tribute to the various service providers in the tourism value chain, from our trade partners, car guards, taxi drivers, petrol attendants, tourism guides, restaurateurs and hoteliers and all our diligent operators.

The tourism sector can only thrive with their unequivocal support at work.

Domestic performance

The biggest driver of domestic travel in the first six months of 2022 was the easing of COVID-19 travel restrictions.

In the first quarter of 2021, South Africa was on adjusted alert level 3, with the closure of beaches, including other restrictions, which impacted the movement and gathering of people.

The ease and removal of travel bans have released a pent-up demand for travel locally and across provinces, to beaches and the mountains, connecting with family and friends and socialising.

Between January and June 2022, 15.2 million domestic trips were taken. This is a major win for the tourism sector, as this is higher than pre-pandemic levels, indicating that South Africa's domestic tourism sector also experienced the revenge travel trend. Furthermore, the share of holiday trips increased by 23.8% compared with the same period in 2021.

Additionally, the average spend per trip increased by 28.6%, meaning South Africans saved their travel money during lockdown travel restrictions to take that one trip they have been looking forward to for almost two years.

On average, South Africans spend R2 850 on their domestic trips. Many of the small tourism businesses that struggled during the travel restrictions benefitted from this direct spend.

I am grateful to all those in the tourism and greater hospitality sector who kept their doors open and to ordinary South Africans who came out to support local tourism.

International performance

International arrivals are still 54% below 2019 levels. Yet, there was a steady improvement from January to June 2022.

In the first half of the year, Europe was the best-performing region, despite security concerns mounting due to the conflict in Ukraine.

The Americas were the second-best performing region. This market is slowly making its way back to pre-pandemic levels, performing at minus 40% below 2019 levels. Recovery in Asia and the Pacific is much slower, due to border closures and strict travel policies.

The total arrivals for January to June 2022 were 2 285 746 – a 147% increase from January to June 2021.

The biggest market in terms of absolute numbers was the African land markets; these showed a 109% increase in arrivals compared to the same period in 2021. The Africa air markets brought in 1 634 244 arrivals.

So far in 2022, Zimbabwe accounted for most arrivals to South Africa. Mozambique tailed closely in second place, shadowed by Lesotho in third place. Arrivals from the Americas increased by 331% and represented 128 991 arrivals. Europe had the most considerable percentage increase in arrivals of 563%. The total number of European arrivals from January to June 2022 was 356 352.

Nevertheless, African land arrivals still account for the bulk of arrivals to South Africa. Europe is the second-biggest region for arrivals this year, followed by the Americas.

The top countries that drove growth between January and June 2021 and 2022 were Lesotho, Mozambique and the United Kingdom (UK). The UK was the largest overseas market, followed by the United States of America (USA) and Germany. In other words, the region that drove the growth in arrivals between 2021 and 2022 was predominantly African land.

Looking ahead

The future for our tourism and hospitality sector looks even brighter. In August 2022, forward bookings increased by 328% (85 960). Between August to October, there was an impressive 287% (187 667) increase in bookings. Between August to January 2023, there was a 227% (294 220) increase in bookings. This is a new emerging trend, as we are seeing that international tourists are now booking further in advance for their future travel.

For August to January 2023, the UK had by far the most forward bookings. The USA was in second place and Germany in third.

Global seat capacity on the rise

We are also seeing a steady increase in global seat capacity. Air capacity makes up just 61% of the 2019 levels, with Airlink as the largest airline, which has seen fares up by 7%. Only Qatar saw prices dip below pre-pandemic levels and below 2021 among the top airlines.

On international routes, 75% of seat capacity in South Africa is on the Johannesburg routes. Seat capacity on the routes to Johannesburg grew 71% over 2021 with Qatar being the largest source route. Cape Town has 1.2 million seats with Emirates Airways being the largest route. Durban-King Shaka International Airport, which has 4% of all seats, saw a 150% growth from 2021.

The Durban routes grew with Emirates seats up over 400% and was the most extensive route in the region.

The Kruger route has seen 23 100 seats in 2022 and has less than 1% of all seats on international routes. The two airlines active on the Kruger route are Lufthansa from Frankfurt and Airlink from Livingstone.

Emirates

During a four-day working visit to the Dubai EXPO from 12 to 16 December 2021, we held bilateral engagements with potential investors, members of the trade that sell South Africa to the world as well as airline executives. His Highness, Sheik Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, indicated during his engagement with us that Emirates' long-term plan was to grow the tourism business and position the United Arab Emirates as a destination rather than being a hub dependent on passenger transit.

South Africa has a code sharing agreement with the Emirates, which gives the airline access to South Africa's domestic routes while Emirates promotes South Africa on its airline's Global Network.

We have since signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Emirates to grow the tourism market in South Africa.

We view our collaboration with Emirates as critical in supporting our turnaround strategy and rebuilding trust in travel to the global South and we expect this will boost visitor arrivals. It will promote tourism and inbound traffic to South Africa from key markets across the Emirates network.

Qatar

We are also working on an MoU with Qatar, which will be hosting the World Cup this year to consider us a hub for the World Cup. The Middle East is a critical market for South Africa, so this collaboration will be instrumental in ensuring ease of access to and from South Africa for travellers from this region and will assist us in elevating our trade efforts.

Africa's Travel Indaba

South Africa held a successful Travel Indaba from 2 to 5 May 2022 and this provided the necessary springboard for the continent to achieve even greater levels of recovery.

Over 600 buyers participated in the Indaba, who came from various parts of the world to come to experience the diverse, authentically African products and experiences that our continent has on offer.

We thank these buyers as they are valued partners in helping to package Africa as an attractive tourism destination to various travellers from across the world.

We are confident that a lot of mutually beneficial business deals will be borne out of Africa's Travel Indaba.

There is renewed hope on the horizon. Our visitors are responding positively to all come to South Africa and "Live Again". The tourist numbers reaffirm faith in our unique tourism products.

As a destination of choice for 15 million visitors annually, we can safely say we guarantee happiness for all. South Africa offers perfect leisure and pleasure tourism experiences.

No other tourism destination offers our people warmth and legendary smiles coupled with clear skies and bright sun rays.

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AFRICA'S FREE TRADE AREA OFFERS PROMISE FOR CITIES – BUT ONLY IF THERE'S INVESTMENT | FEATURE

AFRICA'S FREE TRADE AREA
OFFERS PROMISE FOR CITIES – BUT ONLY IF THERE'S INVESTMENT

Substantial investments in infrastructure are needed for cities to be able to unlock the benefits of the free trade area.

By Astrid RN Haas
Fellow, Infrastructure Institute, School of Cities, University of Toronto

The African Continental Free Trade Area came into operation on 1 January 2021. This is a considerable achievement. The free trade area is now the world's single largest market for goods and services, when measured by number of countries, after the World Trade Organisation. It is also the largest in terms of geographic area and population size.

If implemented as foreseen by the agreement, the free trade area will unlock significant growth for the African continent.

The World Bank has estimated that by 2035, trade between African countries could expand by 81%, boosting output by US$450 billion, raising wages by 10%, particularly benefitting women, and lifting 30 million people out of extreme poverty.

These expectations, based on research into the links between trade and economic growth, have generated excitement and political impetus around getting the free trade area working.

Less well understood, however, is the fact that for the agreement to fulfil its promises, the continent's cities are key. They are hubs for production and consumption and will become significantly more so.

But their current set-up, lacking the necessary infrastructure and services, means most of Africa's cities are not yet ready to benefit from and support the free trade area. This will require substantially greater investments in the continent's cities.

This link between urbanisation and trade is analysed in the United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Africa's recently launched publication, *Cities: Gateways for Africa's Regional Economic Integration.*

What cities bring to the party

The importance of cities in unlocking the benefits of the free trade area is premised on three well-established advantages of the economic density that cities can provide.

Firstly, firms, which are the primary vehicles for producing goods for export, prefer to be in cities. There, they are closer to a larger pool of labour and to each other. This proximity enables them to specialise but still have access to inputs for their production processes from other firms. They can also learn from each other, which spurs innovation.

Secondly, cities are the physical locations from which most trade takes place. Cities provide the main transport links, including road junctions, ports and airports.

Think of the Port of Mombasa, which serves not only Kenya, but also Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. It is also difficult to think of a major city that is not served by an airport.

Cities also provide their own internal markets. Rapid urbanisation, with an estimated 900 million people set to enter African cities in the next 30 years, creates a large upcoming consumer pool. This is the third advantage of density.

Particularly on the African context, it is not only the number of consumers that will make the difference.

The current political support for the free trade agreement is significant, with all but one African country having signed the deal and 43 countries already having ratified it. Harnessing the combined effect of trade and urbanisation could positively transform the African continent's economy.

As evidence shows, when people move to cities, their diets change as well.

For example, there is a greater demand for goods with higher value addition, such as refined grains and processed foods. This is an opportunity for Africa's farmers to gain, too, as this value addition will fetch a higher price.

Not yet fit for purpose

Substantial investments in infrastructure are needed for cities to be able to unlock the benefits of the free trade area.

Most notable is the paucity of paved roads. Currently, only an estimated 800 000 km out of 2.8 million km of the continent's roads are paved.

This statistic is critical because an estimated 80% to 90% of African trade takes place by road. This raises the costs of African trade.

For example, while it costs about US$2 000 to ship a container from China to the port in Beira, Mozambique, it costs more than double that amount, namely US$5 000, to move it 500 km further inland to Malawi.

This lack of infrastructure is a hindrance in cities too.

In particular, according to the UN Economic Commission for Africa report, the cities that should drive the largest portion of trade and reap relatively larger benefits from the free trade agreement's provisions are small to medium size ones, especially those located close to borders.

These are also the cities that have had comparatively less investment to date.

Without basic infrastructure, they will not attract firms – the drivers of production, value addition and export. Whatever happens in implementing the free trade area, rapid urbanisation will continue across Africa. Consumption preferences of the continent's population will shift.

If African firms can't meet these demands, imports from other regions of the world will do so.

Under this scenario, other countries will disproportionately gain from Africa's new urban consumer population.

Investing in cities

The current political support for the free trade agreement is significant, with all but one African country having signed the deal and 43 countries already having ratified it.

Harnessing the combined effect of trade and urbanisation could positively transform the African continent's economy.

This will require not only the signing of policies but their implementation.

To date, only Egypt, Ghana and South Africa have readjusted their national regimes to implement the customs rules under the agreement.

Well-managed urbanisation is still not a primary policy focus in many countries. The result is that populations are settling in cities quicker than planning and investments are happening.

Rather than benefitting from well-managed density, major African cities are characterised by the proliferation of slums and congestion. On top of this, substandard infrastructure is deterring large firms.

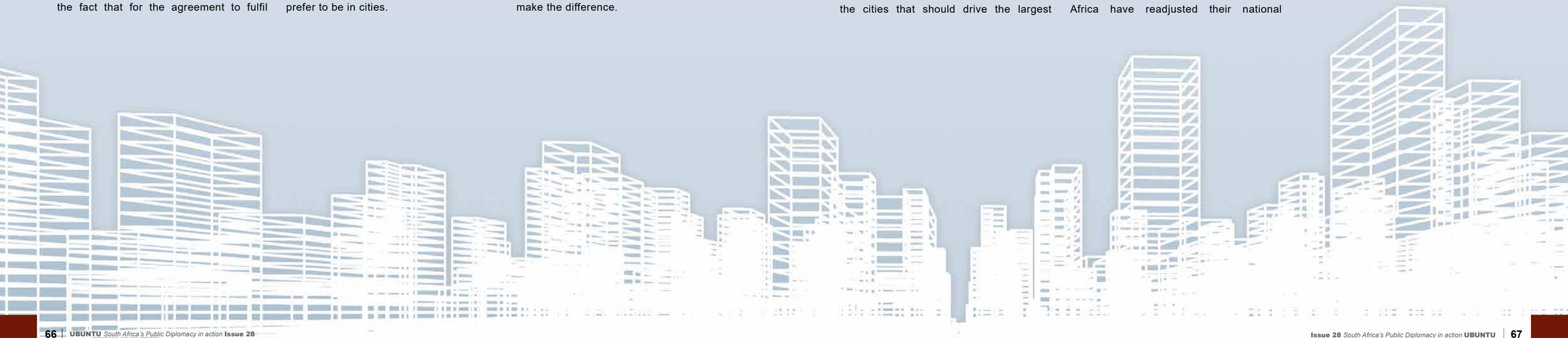
Each of these challenges has its own host of policy reforms, programmes and actions that need to be taken.

But to unleash the combined benefits of trade and urbanisation, it will be important to build on the political momentum that the free trade agreement has set in motion.

This will ensure that national legislation is centred on the agreement's impacts on cities, and on the needs of cities.

Similarly, in planning for urbanisation, particularly intermediary and border towns, investments should focus on unleashing their comparative advantages in relation to the free trade agreement.

This article was first published on *The Conversation.*



HOW AFRICAN COUNTRIES COORDINATED THE RESPONSE TO COVID-19 | FEATURE

HOW AFRICAN COUNTRIES COORDINATED THE RESPONSE TO COVID-19:

LESSONS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Organised and well-directed coordination mechanisms provide a structured pandemic management plan or outline of purposeful actions. Having a collaborative approach involving different stakeholders is essential for future emergencies.

By Boniface Oyugi
Health Policy and Health Economics Researcher and Honorary Researcher at the Centre for Health Services Studies, University of Kent

The COVID-19 pandemic spread much slower on the African continent than in the rest of the world, contrary to predictions.

As of 20 July 2022, a total of 562 672 324 COVID-19 confirmed cases and 6 367 793 deaths had been recorded globally. Only 1.63% (9 176 657) of the global cases and 2.73% (173 888) of global deaths recorded were from the African continent – which has around 17% of the world's population.

Multiple reasons for the slower spread have been put forward. One was that the continent's population is relatively young and younger people were at lower risk of severe illness in the event of SARS-CoV-2 infection. The possible contribution of pre-existing immunity from other viral infections was also put forward. And it was suggested that the slower spread might not be the real picture: there could be an underestimation of the true magnitude of the pandemic, resulting from weak surveillance systems.

There is another aspect to consider, though. It is possible that what countries did to slow the spread of SARS-CoV-2 infections actually worked to some extent. Diverse sectors and disciplines collaborated towards the shared goal of mitigating the pandemic effects.

In our recent study, we traced policies retrospectively and related them to patterns of the disease. We set out to understand how the 47 countries forming the World Health Organisation (WHO) African region coordinated the response to COVID-19 – and what we could learn from their strategies. By coordination, we mean management to ensure unity of effort. Our analysis showed that decentralisation strategies and innovation played key roles in coordination. Financing was a challenge to coordination.

Three levels of coordination

All 47 countries in the WHO African region instituted three distinct layered coordination mechanisms: strategic, operational and tactical.

Most (41) countries implemented strategic coordination. This means that the highest authority in government or a designated authority oversaw the overall response. One example is the strong leadership by the President of Seychelles, who is also the Minister of Health. Another is the National Disaster Risk Management Council led by the Deputy Prime Minister's Office in Ethiopia.

The second layer was operational coordination. This refers to the provision of day-to-day technical and operational support to the in-country response team. It was implemented by 28 countries and led by experts in public health emergency operations centres. An example is the Public Health Emergency Operations that provided the operational level leadership in Côte d'Ivoire under the General Director of Health.

The third layer was tactical coordination. This is decentralised coordination at local levels (such as districts, states or counties), and was implemented by 14 countries. For instance, existing district surveillance teams were immediately called into play to respond to the virus in their jurisdictions in Uganda.

The coordination mechanisms and levels of preparedness may not have been strong enough in the first wave of infections. Every country was trying to do a lot within a short period. Many countries were piloting to see what worked and what did not.

Nonetheless, the combined three coordination mechanisms may have been a key to slowing the spread of the initial wave of the pandemic and the length of the subsequent waves. Our study findings showed that the length of the second wave was shortened by an average of 69.73 days among countries that combined all three coordination mechanisms in tandem compared to those that only combined the strategic and tactical.

Governments applied what they learnt on the go. For instance, Senegal made use of treatment regimens that seemed promising and collaborated with private partners to use a diagnostic test for COVID-19 that could be done at home.

Implications

Our analysis points to several lessons about preparing for and responding to health emergencies.

Engage different players. Countries have to empower players like government officials, technocrats, expert advisers, development partners, United Nations agencies and private companies. Governments also need to invest in the technical expertise that can coordinate the multiple elements of a pandemic. These elements include logistics, fund-raising, management, healthcare data collection and analysis.

Organise emergency financing. Setting aside an emergency funding pot will reduce reliance on development partners. Over-reliance on partners slowed down the coordination of the response in most countries. A transparent institutional framework that is accountable for the funds is useful too.

Setting aside an emergency funding pot will reduce reliance on development partners. Over-reliance on partners slowed down the coordination of the response in most countries. A transparent institutional framework that is accountable for the funds is useful too.

Invest in a decentralised emergency response. Countries that decentralised their emergency response to the subnational levels (or districts or grassroots) were able to slow community transmission.

For instance, using provincial incident management teams in South Africa or existing district surveillance teams and district task forces in Uganda left the central government to focus on strategy development and resource mobilisation.

Botswana built upon existing community health platforms that had been strengthened over many years through PEPFAR (United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief) investments to combat the HIV epidemic.

This helped in contact tracing and helped health workers to manage COVID-19 cases as there were few cases in hospitals.

For all these decentralised strategies to work, countries must have a strong political commitment to provide the required health resources and facilities. They also need a well-coordinated information flow from the centre to the periphery. Information is essential for enhancing the accountability of response actions and tackling misinformation. Besides, it allows communities to be part of the solution.

Keep building on projects and innovations. Building on existing structures used during previous emergencies, such as the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone, made it easier to activate the response.

Countries should also develop and use new and adapted technologies. For example, Rwanda used drones to share public information.

In Ghana, robots were used for screening and inpatient care. Liberia used a communication platform called mHero to connect the Ministry of Health and health workers. Niger used an app called Alerte COVID-19. Today's tech-for-health innovations tailored to the pandemic response can be adapted for broader use in future. Organised and well-directed coordination mechanisms provide a structured pandemic management plan or outline of purposeful actions.

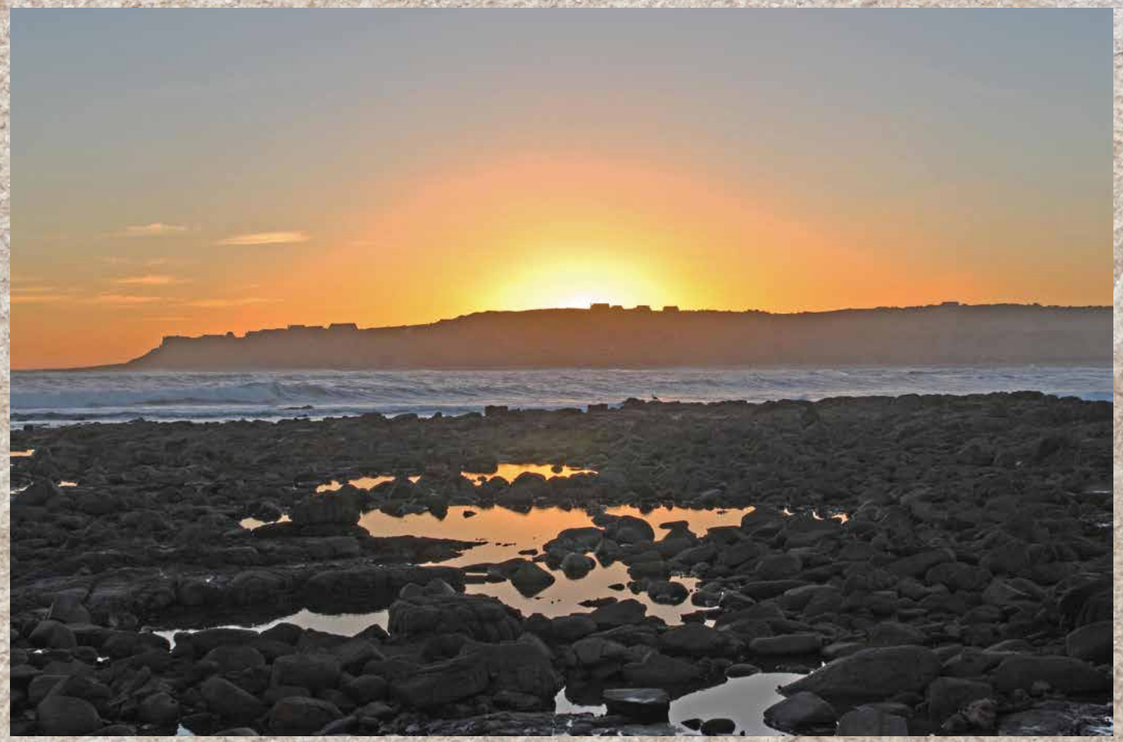
Having a collaborative approach involving different stakeholders is essential for future emergencies.

This article was first published on *The Conversation.*

Keep building on projects and innovations. Building on existing structures used during previous emergencies, such as the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone, made it easier to activate the response.







ROCK STARS: HOW A GROUP OF SCIENTISTS IN SA RESCUED A RARE CHUNK OF HUMAN HISTORY | FEATURE

ROCK STARS: HOW A GROUP OF SCIENTISTS IN SOUTH AFRICA RESCUED A RARE CHUNK OF HUMAN HISTORY

> Given the rock's size and weight, there was only one way to remove it: with a helicopter, a skilled pilot, and a strong net attached to a long-line cable.

By Charles Helm
Research Associate, African Centre for Coastal Palaeoscience, Nelson Mandela University (NMU), and
Jan Carlo De Vynck
Director and Research Fellow, African Centre for Coastal Palaeoscience, NMU

Scientific breakthroughs can happen in the strangest ways and places. Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin because of mould growing on a Petri dish left out while he was on holiday.

Chinese monks in the 9th century wanted to make a potion for immortality: instead, they discovered gunpowder.

Our own remarkable discovery happened on a rugged, remote stretch of coastline east of Still Bay on South Africa's Cape south coast.

It was low tide, and three members of our ichnology team (people who study tracks and traces) were in search of newly exposed Pleistocene vertebrate tracksites in aeolianites (cemented dunes).

Ahead we saw a large rock that had tumbled down from the cliffs above. On its surface was a pattern of linear groove features in a large triangular shape, complete with an almost perfect bisecting groove.

The sides of the triangle were close to a metre in length.

After extensive research, we concluded that these grooves must have been made on a dune surface of unconsolidated sand by our human ancestors in the Middle Stone Age. The patterns are likely between 143 000 and 91 000 years old.

It was an important find in a significant place. Multiple lines of evidence on this coastline indicate that it's an area where our distant ancestors became truly modern, using fire as an engineering tool and creating abstract images.

But there was a problem. On a follow-up visit, we found a smaller rock close by with a similar triangular feature. Subsequently, it was destroyed, likely by storm surges or high tides buffetting and overturning it. We knew that the larger rock inevitably awaited a similar fate if we did nothing. From our perspective this is one of the most important rocks in the world: it takes us back to our roots as a species and indicates the kind of "proto-art" we were capable of creating so long ago.

So, we staged an unusual mission: a "rescue" operation designed to get the approximately 500-kilogram rock to safety – in a museum.

A coordinated mission

Given the rock's size and weight, there was only one way to remove it: with a helicopter, a skilled pilot, and a strong net attached to a long-line cable.

Our research team accumulated funding through our paid contributions to a book project. That money went towards hiring a private helicopter and pilot, as well as getting a ground crew in place on the day. We also obtained approval from the owner of the private land on which the rock was located. We also needed a permit from the provincial heritage authority to proceed because the rock is a precious heritage item.

It was a nerve-racking process. The rock might have been broken as it was being lifted from its cliffside spot or might have fallen into the sea. But 29 September 2022 – what we'd dubbed Recovery Day – went smoothly. The ground crew and the helicopter pilot co-operated superbly.

Minutes after being lifted out of the remote location, the rock was safely on a pallet on a truck at the local airfield. From there, it began a very cautious journey to the Blombos Museum of Archaeology in nearby Still Bay.

Here, it was lifted and gently manoeuvred into place by a dozen volunteers. The rock has subsequently been encased and placed on exhibit, with interpretive text panels. It joins similar exhibits in the museum; the grooves were an example of an ammoglyph, a term we had coined to describe a pattern created by humans in sand that is now evident in rock that has become cemented and then re-exposed.

Ascribing meaning to these geometric patterns made so long ago by our distant ancestors is not within our field of expertise.

Still, we could not help but notice the resemblance of the triangular shape to a purported fertility symbol found in France and dated to around 38 000 years.

Should the pattern on our rock represent the same motif, it would not be the first time that southern African discoveries had pushed back in time what has been viewed as an Upper Palaeolithic Eurasian phenomenon.

Our research team now sleeps better at night, knowing that this priceless piece of our human heritage has been recovered and is available for others to see, appreciate and critique.

More to discover

Happily, there was an unexpected bonus. Beside the eroded remains of the second rock, our ground crew noted a third rock surface, which had not been evident previously.

Near one edge it contained a distinct pair of grooves that met at an angle of 69 degrees, forming what may have been part of another triangular feature.

This is clearly an area we will return to repeatedly, in the hope that tidal forces may turn over other rocks before destroying them and may give us an opportunity to glimpse – and perhaps recover – more ammoglyphs.

This article was first published on *The Conversation*.

Snowcapped mountains in the Du Toitskloof Pass in the Western Cape

AFRICA IS A TREASURE TROVE OF MEDICINAL PLANTS: HERE ARE SEVEN THAT ARE POPULAR

Africa is endowed with up to 45 000 plant species – about 25% of the world's plant genetic resources. More than 5 000 plant species from this enormous African resource are used in traditional medicines.

By Adeyemi Oladapo Aremu, Associate Professor, North-West University, and Nox Makunga, Associate Professor: Medicinal Plant Biotechnology, Stellenbosch University

Plants have directly contributed to the development of important drugs. The anti-malarial treatment artemisinin, pain medication morphine, and cancer chemotherapy, taxol, are just three examples of drugs derived from plants. Africa is endowed with up to 45 000 plant species – about 25% of the world's plant genetic resources. More than 5 000 plant species from this enormous African resource are used in traditional medicines. Medicinal plant specialists Associate Professor Adeyemi Aremu and Professor Nox Makunga highlight some of these plants.

***Artemisia afra Jacq. ex Willd.* (African wormwood)**

Artemisia afra is the only species in its genus that is indigenous to the African continent.

It's often regarded as a potential flagship plant because of its high popularity and diverse uses in African traditional medicine. African wormwood has been used for coughs, colds, influenza and malaria.

Scientific evidence of its antimicrobial, anti-depressant, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects has been reported. African wormwood gained global interest when it was promoted as having potential to treat COVID-19 and was tested in laboratory studies. The extracts had some degree of inhibitory activity against Feline Coronavirus and SARS-CoV-2. But this requires further clinical study to reach a valid conclusion.The traditional uses and increasing popularity of African wormwood have resulted in a number of commercial herbal products.

But with insufficient clinical data, it's not yet known whether African wormwood is a treasure chest of new drugs.

***Catharanthus roseus* (L.) G.Don**

This plant is also known as bright eyes, Cape periwinkle, graveyard plant, Madagascar periwinkle, old maid or pink periwinkle. It is native and endemic to Madagascar.

The plant is commonly used as a tonic and emetic for the treatment of many health conditions, including rheumatism, diabetes and skin-related and venereal diseases.

Pink periwinkle has several phytochemicals, which are associated with antioxidant, antimicrobial, antidiabetic and anticancer properties. Alkaloids remain one of the signature. Two of its alkaloids, vincristine and vinblastine, have been extensively explored by the pharmaceutical industry. These two alkaloids were the first plant-derived anticancer agents deployed for clinical use.

***Griffonia simplicifolia* (DC.) Baill. (Griffonia, Atooto, gbogbotri, kajya, kanya, kwakuo-aboto)**

Griffonia simplicifolia is a woody climbing shrub. It is native to west and central African countries, including Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Togo.

In African traditional medicine, the seeds are reputed to exert several medicinal effects and have been explored as an aphrodisiac, and a remedy for diarrhoea, stomach ache and dysentery. The plant's chemical properties have been studied extensively.

It has been found to contain rich phytochemicals with enormous pharmaceutical value. Particularly, the seeds are known as an excellent source of 5-hydroxy-L-tryptophan (commercially called oxitriptan), which the body uses to produce serotonin. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter, which is known to affect sleep, appetite, pain and mood. It plays an important role in treating depression, insomnia, obesity and related health conditions, especially those associated with mental health.

The seed of *Griffonia simplicifolia* remains one of the most reliable and abundant sources. Commercial interest has increased over the years. Based on recent estimates, the market value for annual bulk seed extract for the plant is between US$32 million and US$100 million and demand is expected to grow at 7% per year.

***Sceletium tortuosum* (L.) N.E.Br. (Kanna, kougoed)**

Kanna is an endemic South African succulent. It is sparsely distributed in semi-arid areas and used for conditions relating to stress, depression, pain and anxiety.

Mesembrine-type alkaloids are dominant and typically responsible for the pharmacological effects exerted by kanna as a psychoactive plant and mood stimulant. Zembrin® has been developed as a standardised extract of the plant.

It's used as a dietary supplement with the potential to elevate mood, relieve stress and improve cognition.

The use of this species stems from the traditions of the Khoekhoe and San. Many other medicinal uses have been reported for this species as it can be used to treat headaches, abdominal pains and respiratory ailments. Trimesemine™ (a commercially available extract high in concentrations of mesembrine) has been shown to act as a monoamine releaser, by increasing serotonin, a chemical messenger that is produced by the body that is also known to regulate the mood. It is potentially useful for attention deficit and other central nervous system disorders such as Alzheimer's disease.

***Strophanthus gratus* (Wall.and Hook.) Baill. (Climbing oleander)**

Strophanthus gratus, a vigorous evergreen climbing shrub, occurs in tropical regions from Senegal to the Democratic Republic of Congo. In traditional medicine, climbing oleander has been used to treat snake bites, ▶▶



Artemisia afra Jacq. ex Willd. (African wormwood)



Catharanthus roseus (L.) G.Don



Griffonia simplicifolia (DC.) Baill. (Griffonia, Atooto, gbogbotri, kajya, kanya, kwakuo-aboto)

sores, gonorrhoea, constipation and fever. The root is claimed to be an aphrodisiac. Cardiac glycosides, which are organic compounds that increase the output force of the heart, are the signature compounds in the plant.

Particularly, ouabain has been identified as the main glycoside, which is dominant in the seed.

Ouabain, a cardio glycoside, was isolated because of the way climbing oleander is used in traditional medicine.

It's now used as a treatment for heart failure and arrhythmias or irregular heartbeat. Recent studies have also found a novel use that can prove relevant for metastatic prostate cancer.

***Pelargonium sidoides* DC (African geranium, South African geranium)**

This medicinal geranium, which is indigenous to South Africa and the Lesotho highlands, has root tubers that are harvested for medicinal purposes.

People use these tubers for diarrhoea, colic, gastritis, tuberculosis, cough, liver disorders, menstrual complaints, gonorrhoea and many other medical conditions. Clinical evidence suggests the effectiveness of extracts prepared from this species for the management of acute respiratory tract infections.

These data supports the use of this medicinal geranium, especially for alleviating symptoms of acute inflammation of the nasal cavity and sinuses and the common cold in adults. Umckaloabo® (EPs® 7630), a standardised proprietary extract, is one of most successfully produced plant-derived pharmaceuticals from this species. A number of clinical studies have shown it can reduce the symptoms of acute bronchitis. Over-the-counter medications (Kaloba and Umcka) made from extracts of this pelargonium are now sold all over the world. Linctagon® is a pelargonium-inspired medication that is prescribed to assist the body to fight colds and flu by stimulating the immune system.

***Siphonochilus aethiopicus* (Schweinf.) B.L. Burtt (African ginger, Wild ginger)**

African ginger is native to western and southern tropical Africa, where it occurs in about 30 African countries. This wide range of distribution likely accounts for its use for a variety of health conditions.

These include respiratory problems (like cough and influenza), pain, inflammation and malaria.

An analysis of the essential oil of the root and rhizome of African ginger found about 70 compounds in the root and 60 compounds in the rhizomes.

The bioactive compounds siphonochilone and eucalyptol found in the roots and rhizomes have demonstrated potential for treating asthma and allergic reactions. In a clinical trial, eucalyptol, which is present in root and rhizome essential oil, has demonstrated anti-inflammatory activity in bronchial asthma.

In South Africa, this species is classified as critically endangered because it has been over-harvested for traditional medicine.

This species is fast headed towards extinction in South Africa in the wild. Cultivation is strongly encouraged for its conservation.

This article was first published on *The Conversation*.



Strophanthus gratus (Wall.and Hook.) Baill. (Climbing oleander)



Pelargonium sidoides DC (African geranium, South African geranium)



Sceletium tortuosum (L.) N.E.Br. (Kanna, kougoed)



Siphonochilus aethiopicus (Schweinf.) B.L. Burtt (African ginger, Wild ginger)

AFTER LANDMARK UN DECLARATION, HOPE FOR CLEANER AIR



By the United Nations Environment Programme

After landmark UN declaration, hope for cleaner AIR

Ultimately, the hope is that the recent United Nations General Assembly resolution will not only move the needle on environmental rule of law and the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements on air quality but that it will empower citizens of the world to demand their right to breathe clean air.

In July 2022, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) passed a historic resolution declaring access to a healthy environment a universal human right.

The resolution has been lauded around the world in recent months, raising hopes it will prod governments to tackle a host of long-neglected environmental problems.

At the top of the list for environmental campaigners is air pollution, which is responsible for nearly 10% of all global deaths.

"The resolution will empower people to claim their rights to a healthy environment," said Soo-Young Hwang, a Legal Officer with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). "And the right to breathe clean air is an integral component of the right to a healthy environment."

Hwang made the comments ahead of the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies, which is designed to raise awareness about the dangers of air pollution.

Precedent-setting

The UNGA resolution, which was passed by a 161-0 vote on 28 July 2022, is not legally binding on UN member states. But, its backers say it will have a profound effect on people's understanding of their rights and encourage states to implement national laws and regional treaties that safeguard the environment.

Air pollution is one of the world's gravest threats to public health, causing an estimated seven million people to die prematurely every year. While air pollution is a global threat, it is developing countries that suffer the most due to a reliance on wood and other solid fuels, like coal, for cooking and heating. And even within developing countries, the crisis is felt most acutely by low-income and marginalised communities.

Air pollution also takes a heavy economic toll: According the World Bank, in 2019 alone, it cost the world economy US$8.1 trillion, equivalent to 6.1% of global gross domestic product.

Those who have championed the UNGA resolution say that it will help citizens, especially the poor, demand better air quality from governments and multinational corporations that pollute the environment.

Even before the resolution was passed, citizens, civil-society groups and conservationists from Brazil to Indonesia have increasingly been using rights-based litigation to demand environmental justice, including the right to clean air.

In March this year, the High Court of South Africa recognised the "poor air quality in South Africa's Mpumalanga Highveld region as a breach of residents' constitutional right to an environment that is not harmful to their health and well-being."

National impact

Renée Gift, a Legal Officer with UNEP, said the UNGA resolution could push more states to develop and enforce national outdoor air quality standards, which she called "integral" to ensuring clean air.

According to UNEP's first global assessment of air pollution legislation in 2021, one-third of the world's countries have no legally-mandated ambient air quality standards. And in many cases, even when these standards exist, they are not adhered to.

The recognition of the right to clean air at the national level would also create a strong basis for litigation against governments that fail to uphold air quality standards. This is already taking place in many jurisdictions and is likely to increase as a result of the resolution.

There are hopes the UNGA declaration will have the same impact as a 2010 resolution declaring access to clean water a human right. "What happened with that resolution is that it compelled countries to review their legislation at the national level," said Hwang.

"What that meant was that water had to be accessible, it had to be affordable, and it had to integrate non-discrimination clauses. This has changed a lot of people's lives, especially low-income people," she added.

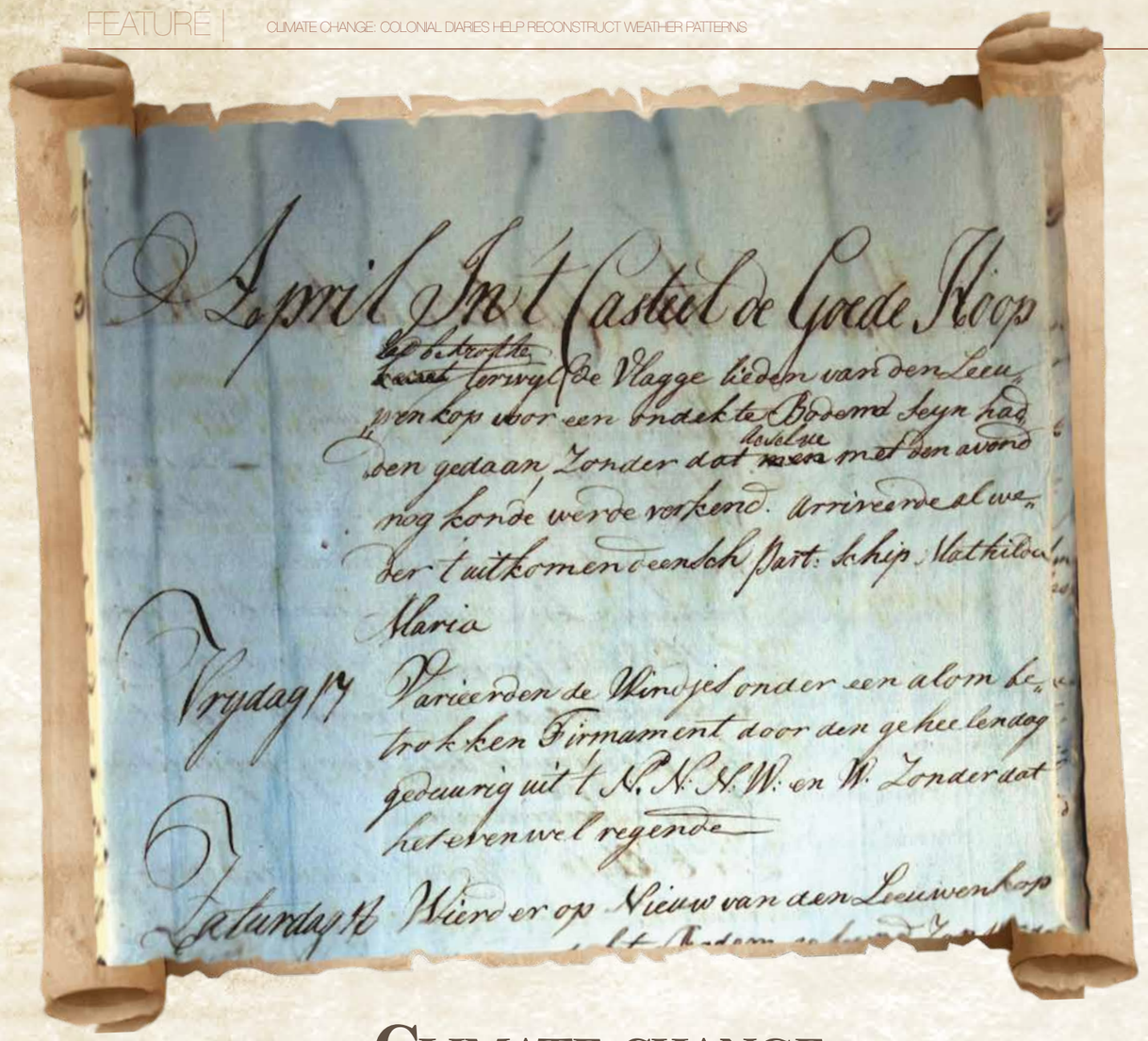
Ultimately, the hope is that the recent UNGA resolution will not only move the needle on environmental rule of law and the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements on air quality but that it will empower citizens of the world to demand their right to breathe clean air.

As David Boyd, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment, said, "Having a right to a healthy environment changes people's perspective from begging to demanding governments to act".

Every year, on 7 September, the world celebrates the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies. The day aims to raise awareness and facilitate actions to improve air quality.

It is a global call to find new ways of doing things, to reduce the amount of air pollution we cause and ensure that everyone, everywhere can enjoy their right to breathe clean air.

The theme of the third annual International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies, facilitated by the United Nations Environment Programme, was "The Air We Share".



Climate change: Colonial diaries in South Africa

are helping scientists reconstruct weather patterns of the past to protect against future events

The digitised records are a treasure trove for climate scientists. They represent the longest and oldest known corporate chronicle of near-continuous daily weather recording for the southern hemisphere.

By Stefan Grab
Professor of Historical Climate and Weather, University of the Witwatersrand

The current climate crisis raises many questions. Some are forward-looking: how can this be fixed? Some look to the recent past: how did we get here? And some reach further back into history: are today's extreme heat waves, catastrophic droughts and floods all due to climate change?

Was climate and weather this bad 100 or a few hundred years ago? For scientists to answer those last two questions, they need to consult reliable instrumental weather records. But these only go back a few decades for many regions of Africa.

The continent's longest continuous single station weather record is that of the South African Astronomical Observatory in Cape Town, starting in 1841. This record shows that rainfall has gradually declined since about 1900.

Yet, it also demonstrates that while Cape Town's 2015 – 2017 drought was severe, it was little different from a much earlier drought (1930 – 1939).

Looking even further back could help to create a more complete, nuanced picture of weather and climatic shifts in Cape Town. But, given the absence of instrumental weather records prior to the 19th century – or during times well before human-induced accelerated global warming – this hasn't been possible.

Now, some answers are being provided by what seems at first glance an unlikely source: a massive project to photograph and transcribe daily registers kept by the *Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie* (VOC), or Dutch East India Company, between 1651 and 1795.

All of the trading company's activity in the Cape Colony was carefully documented in the VOC's *daghregisters,* its daily registers or journals. Since 2016, these detailed records, held by the Cape Town Archives and *Nationaal Archief* in The Hague, have been photographed and digitised by the non-profit Tracing History Trust. By 2021, 2.5 million words had been transcribed for the VC *Daghregister* Project.

As we outlined in a recent research paper, the digitised records are a treasure trove for climate scientists.

They represent the longest and oldest known corporate chronicle of near-continuous daily weather recording for the southern hemisphere.

Here's what we've learned from them so far – and what they may have to teach us about current and future climate.

Detailed entries

The VOC had a monopoly on shipping trade between what is today the Netherlands and southeast Asia through Indian Ocean trade routes at the end of the 16th century.

By the mid-17th century, the company realised it needed a permanent reprovisioning and resting station. Table Bay at the Cape was deemed the most suitable. Jan van Riebeeck was then commissioned to establish the settlement as the first Governor of the Cape from 1652.

Daily journal entries were written by trained scribes in a relatively informal style. The language used was an older version of modern Dutch of the Netherlands and Flanders, and also of Afrikaans, which evolved as a South African language from such early Dutch.

The register entries detail a wide range of human activity: trade, politics, diet, health, diplomacy, religion, governance and so on. They also contain environmental observations, such as daily weather phenomena.

Daily weather observations were written into the registers in a consistent and systematic manner. Particular attention was given to sub-daily wind direction and force, which was important to shipping.

Other regular observations included precipitation (rainfall, hail, snow) and conditions of the sky (cloudiness, visibility).

Extreme events such as violent storms, gale force winds, exceptionally hot or cold conditions, flooding and drought were noted and at times elaborated on with detail on human, agricultural, infrastructural and environmental consequences and responses.

Historical climate extremes

Our initial investigation focussed on the period 1773 to 1791. We outlined extreme inter-annual climate variability ranging from the highest number of annual rain days on record and flooding in 1787, to severe drought in 1788.

Temperatures must have also been highly variable. Even though we do not have thermometer values, anecdotal accounts regularly speak of "excessive heat" during summer and icy winter conditions.

It is clear that society had to cope with "wild weather" and climate extremes during historical times.

But, coping mechanisms were not advanced and so, societal suffering was often considerable – the weather records also provide valuable context to notable historic events such as shipwrecks and chronic food shortages. This is not the end of our research; the records hold far more information from which we can learn about the Cape's historical climate and weather. Our ongoing work aims to extend the climate chronology back to 1652 and establish the causes of climate variability and extreme weather during the 17th and 18th centuries.

If we are better able to identify the drivers of past climate variability and extreme events, it will benefit our modelling of projected future climate scenarios and assist in forecasting expected short-term (the next few months) weather conditions.

All the transcriptions of the VC Daghregister *Project will be made available in the public domain on a website to be hosted by the* Nationaal Archief Nederland.

This article was first published on *The Conversation.*

Extreme events such as violent storms, gale force winds, exceptionally hot or cold conditions, flooding and drought were noted and at times elaborated on with detail on human, agricultural, infrastructural and environmental consequences and responses.

THE WOMAN KING

IS MORE THAN AN ACTION MOVIE – IT SHINES A LIGHT ON THE WOMEN WARRIORS OF BENIN

The action blockbuster is adding to renewed global interest in the historical women warriors of Dahomey, a kingdom that flourished in the 1700s and 1800s in what is today Benin in West Africa.

By Dominique Somda
Junior Research Fellow, Institute for Humanities in Africa, University of Cape Town



The Woman King is a big-budget Hollywood movie that has been anticipated since 2018, when United States (US) star Viola Davis was announced as the lead in the story of the "amazons" of Dahomey.

Rising South African star Thuso Mbedu also takes a key role in the film, which has premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and is showing in cinemas worldwide.

The action blockbuster is adding to renewed global interest in the historical women warriors of Dahomey, a kingdom that flourished in the 1700s and 1800s in what is today Benin in West Africa.

The "amazons" were exceptionally skilful women warriors. They inspired fear and curiosity among locals and foreigners who had come to explore and colonise the territory. Protectors of the king, the anticolonial women warriors are referred to as Agoodjies in Fon, one of Benin's many languages. *The Woman King* is not the first time that Dahomey's "amazons" have appeared in Hollywood productions lately.

The mighty warriors were featured in the popular TV series *Lovecraft Country* (in an episode where Hippolyta Freeman, a black woman in pre-civil rights America, experiences a triumphant, cosmic journey of liberation).

And there were the Dora Milaje, the Wakanda warriors in the blockbuster film *Black Panther*. Modelled on the Agoodjie, they are the protectors of Black Panther.

Incarnations like these have helped bring the warriors of Dahomey into the popular culture spotlight.

On social media and in reviews, the film is being celebrated as an example of "fierce" representations of black womanhood, so unlike dominant popular culture stereotypes. But who were these women – and how does their legacy resonate in Benin today?

A statue is unveiled

A colossal bronze monument called *Amazon* – created by Chinese sculptor Li Xiangqun – was unveiled in Cotonou in Benin on 30 July, the 62nd anniversary of the country's independence from France.

It depicts a young female warrior dressed in a belted tunic and armed with a shotgun and a short sword.

Amazon joined two other new monuments erected as symbols of anticolonial resistance.

The statue follows an exhibition about the warriors held in Cotonou in 2018 and a new museum featuring them is expected to open in 2024 in Abomey, the former royal capital of the Dahomey kings. The Government of Benin appears to have tasked them with the dual responsibility of embodying a new female power and reviving national pride. The "amazons" have truly returned.

Who were the warriors?

Much has been written about these legendary women warriors. The explicit comparison to the Amazons, a mythological group of female hunters and soldiers in ancient Greece, was first made by European men encountering the Agoodjie in Dahomey in the 1700s. The "amazon" reference became common by the mid-1800s.

The female warriors encountered by explorers and traders in the Fon (Dahomey) kingdom inspired awe because of their military prowess and perceived gender-bending. Dahomey was one of many kingdoms in an area known as Aja-Yoruba (between present day Togo and south-west Nigeria).

Its regional dominance spanned the 1700s and 1800s, when Dahomey went from being a mere supplier of slaves for the African kingdoms of Allada and Hueda (Ouidah) – a prominent port in the transatlantic slave trade – to becoming the main coastal broker.

The women warriors of Dahomey's skills as combatants were admired and feared, all the more so when they were seen as transgressively emulating masculine aggression. They may have been seen as fighting as males.

Yet, in the royal palace, their positions were akin to other women – wives, concubines and enslaved women.

The women warriors were not always fighting for the independence of their land.

They fought in the various wars that the kings of Dahomey waged against its neighbours. They played an important role in conflicts and raids that led to the enslavement of many Africans. Cudjo Lewis (formerly known as Kossula), "the last survivor of the slave trade in the USA", recalled, in an interview with anthropologist and novelist Zora Neale Hurston, the terrifying attack on his village and the female warriors that robbed him of his freedom.

Return of the queen

A real-life queen has, in the past decade, been restored in both history books and the hearts of Beninese people. Queen Tassi Hangbé reigned from 1716 to 1718 and is sometimes credited as founding the corps.

As a child growing up in Cotonou in the 1980s, I was not as familiar with her as I was with her twin brother and predecessor, King Akaba. For a long time, the rule of Hangbé was presented as a mere regency.

One study explains that she wasn't even part of the king's list (the names of the various sovereigns of Dahomey) until the 1900s. Hers is the only female name featured in the dynasty. Hangbé has a complicated history.

Her erasure was largely due to the efforts of Agadja, the royal twins' younger brother and Hangbé's successor.

The queen, though, might not have been a warrior or the founder of the "amazons". According to a 1998 study, the institution of female hunters and warriors probably existed before the creation of the Dahomey kingdom in the 1700s.

Historians have advanced the theory that Hangbé's twinship with Akaba nonetheless led to a dualistic organisation of men and women across the kingdom. Male officers, for example, had their female counterparts, displaying an ideal of genders completing one another to form a whole. Hangbé's legacy is now illustrious. The Queen Hangbé Foundation (*Fondation Reine Hangbe*) proposes to restore the twin sister's place in history and to fight to end violence against women.

Although the new statue in Cotonou is rumoured to be inspired by her, the Government is clear that the new statue favours no particular kingdom or ethnic group in Benin. Instead, the monument honours the resistance against gender-based violence and is dedicated to past and present Beninese female fighters.

Benin has also recently passed a few important laws protecting women and their reproductive rights.

Disrupting the male order

The Dahomey "amazons" were exceptional, but heroic women warriors, queens and princesses leading armies and resisting colonial expansion existed elsewhere across the continent, such as Queen Nzinga in Angola and Queen Nana Yaa Asantewaa in Ghana.

For some African feminists, African women have never been frail and defenceless.

The feminisation of the spectacle of violence still presents an exhilarating sense of disruption in an often male-dominated historical order.

Thanks to the hype around *The Woman King* and the conversations it has begun to ignite, the movie will undoubtedly help to shed more light on the extraordinary legacies of the Agoodjies.

Not exotic heroines, mythological figures or comic book characters, but all-too-real combatants of West Africa's "slave coast".

This article was first published on *The Conversation*.

Star-studded and packed with proud black female talent, *The Woman King* hit South African shores on 30 September 2022.

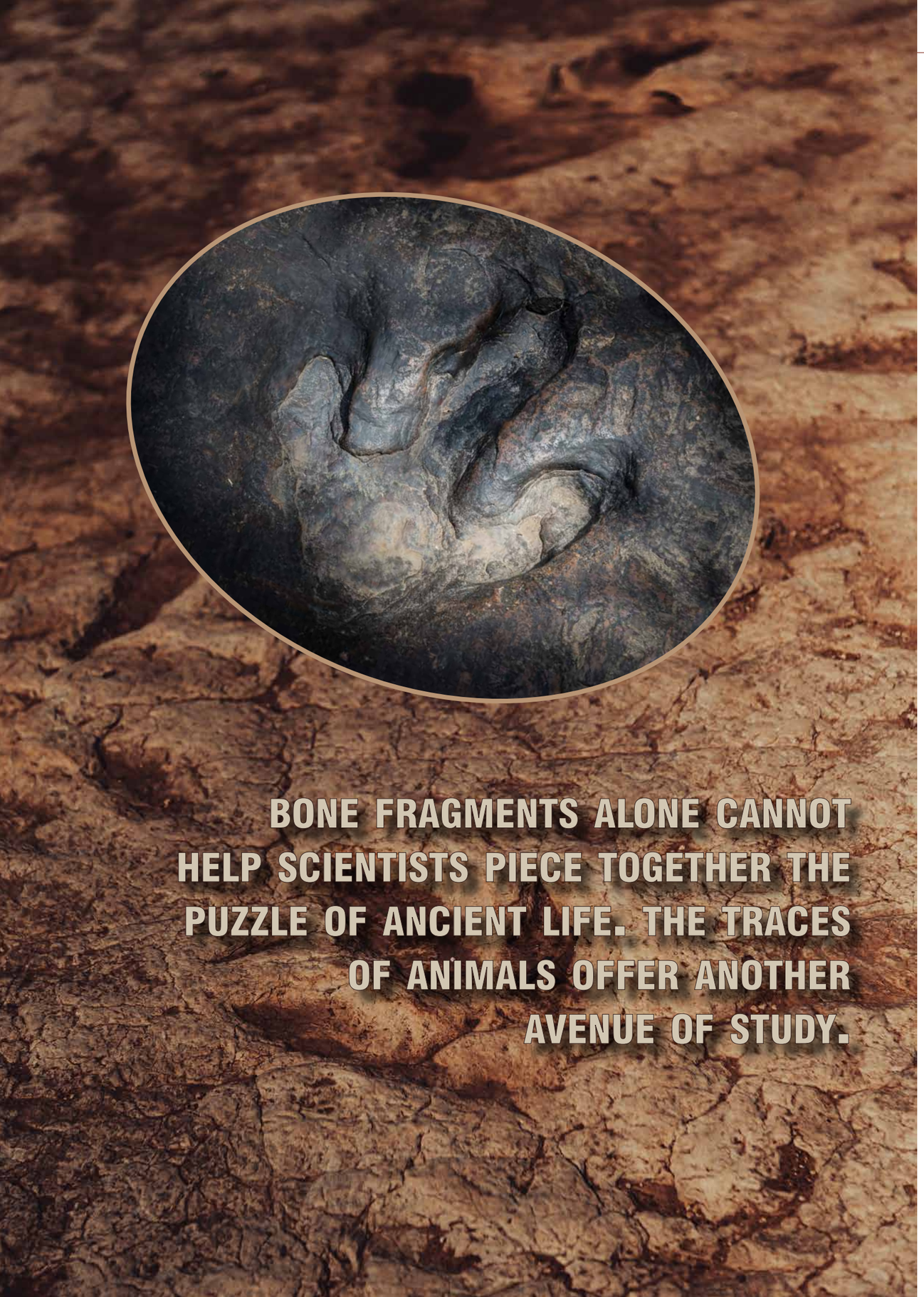
The film stars Viola Davis alongside South African talent Thuso Mbedu (*Underground Railroad*) and *No Time to Die* star Lashana Lynch and was directed by the award-winning writer and director of *Love and Basketball*, Gina Prince-Bythewood.

Other South Africans stars appearing in the film include Sivuyile "Siv" Ngesi, Riaan Visman, Seputla Sebogodi and Kekole Mathabathe. Benin-born global pop icon Angélique Kidjo also appears in the film as herself.

The action fantasy film is based in a cinematic universe of the Kingdom of Dahomey, one of the most powerful states of Africa in the 18th and 19th centuries. *The Woman King* was filmed in its entirety in South Africa, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal and Cape Town.

Several important sequences for *The Woman King* was shot in KwaZulu-Natal, in particular Jozini, a settlement in the Umkhanyakude District Municipality. Jozini is a small town on the main route to Mozambique, and it is close to the Jozini or Pongolapoort Dam. Lake Jozini, as the dam is called, has become very popular as a Tiger fishing destination.

The majority of *The Woman King* was taped across Cape Town, the legislative capital, the oldest city and the second-largest city of South Africa. The production team travelled across the city to record different sequences against suitable backdrops, including a mine on the outskirts of Cape Town. The city has hosted the production of many movies and TV shows over the years, such as: *Mad Max: Fury Road, Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom, Safe House, Invictus, Black Sails*, A*round the World in 80 Days, Blood Diamond* and *Tomb Raider*. *https://thecinemaholic.com*



Footprints take science a step closer to understanding southern Africa's dinosaurs

South Africa and Lesotho's main Karoo Basin contain plentiful dinosaur fossils in the rock succession that formed between 220 million and 183 million years ago during the Late Triassic-Early Jurassic period.

By Miengah Abrahams
Lecturer, University of Cape Town

Dinosaurs have captured people's imaginations more than any other ancient creatures. These reptiles – some large, some small; some carnivores and other herbivores – rose and dominated the world's landscapes for more than 135 million years during a period known as the Mesozoic.

Today, dinosaur fossils can be found in many parts of the world, contained in rock successions. These are a series of strata or rock units in chronological order.

South Africa and Lesotho's main Karoo Basin, for example, contain plentiful dinosaur fossils in the rock succession that formed between 220 million and 183 million years ago during the Late Triassic-Early Jurassic period. These ancient remains include body fossils (bones) and trace fossils, which are markings in the ancient sediments in the form of footprints and burrows in the ground.

Body fossils can assist in recreating the ancient life forms, understanding what they looked like, their size, and even how they grew and evolved. The problem is that intact body fossils can be rare in some areas. Bone fragments alone cannot help scientists piece together the puzzle of ancient life. The traces of animals offer another avenue of study.

In the main Karoo Basin, bone fossils of carnivorous dinosaurs called theropods are incredibly scarce. But their footprints, preserved in the rocks during the Late Triassic and Early Jurassic, are abundant.

These fossil footprints are a treasure chest of information. They can reveal what organism made the tracks – different animals have different footprint shapes. They offer clues to the creature's behaviour – hopping on two legs would leave a different footprint pattern than walking on four. They also provide evidence about the substrate conditions when the creature walked, such as whether it sank into wet sand or was standing firmly on dry gravel.

In a recent study, our team looked at around 200 footprints attributed to theropods across a time span of about 35 million years. We wanted to understand how dinosaurs' feet changed through time in southern Africa. The time interval we studied is critical in dinosaur history because it captures a mass extinction event and the ancient ecosystems' subsequent recovery period.

Our findings reveal that over time, our local theropods became larger and had a greater diversity than what the body fossil record could suggest.

Footprints: A closer inspection

To begin our study, we first looked for diagnostic clues to tell theropod footprints apart from the tracks of other ancient animals. Theropod footprints typically preserve three, slender toe impressions where the footprint is longer than it is wide. The middle toe has a pronounced forward projection. These footprints also commonly preserve fierce claw mark impressions.

We know the shape of their feet and how they moved from reconstructions based on theropod body fossil material. Scientists have also learned about these aspects of dinosaurs by making modern footprints using their closest living relatives: birds.

Once we identified the theropod footprints in the field, we quantified their footprint shape by measuring a set of standard parameters agreed on by the global dinosaur trace fossil scientist community.

Based on these measurements across time and space, we were able to draw conclusions about theropod foot and body size evolution. This is possible because there is a direct link between foot length, and therefore footprint length, and body size (specifically hip heights and body lengths).

Our study recorded a 40% increase in the maximum and average footprint length in the studied time interval of 35 million years. Furthermore, we observed that larger bodied theropods were present, though rare, in the Late Triassic and that they became even larger and more common in the Early Jurassic, during the recovery period following the mass extinction event. These observations echo trends recorded elsewhere in the world. We also observed that through time, theropod footprints became more prevalent. This may suggest that the carnivore population thrived during the recovery period.

This change in abundance might, however, also have been influenced by changes in the ancient environment from meandering rivers with lushly vegetated floodplains to shallower ephemeral streams and lakes under dryland conditions. This newer setting is more conducive to preserving footprints because deposits in the soil are less likely to erode.

Based on our measurements, we identified three distinct types of footprint shapes that may be attributed to the three different theropods that roamed the landscape in the Early Jurassic. This means that southern Africa's theropod footprint record reflects a greater theropod diversity than the scant carnivorous dinosaur body fossil record, which only preserves fragmentary material of two theropods, Dracovenator and Megapnosaurus.

More to explore

Another key finding centred on changes to the form of theropods' footprints. One is that the forward projection of the middle toes (how much further forward it is than the outer two toes) decreased over time. Another change is that small local theropods had shorter middle toe projections than their contemporaneous North American equivalents. These observations require more investigation to better understand what these changes mean, especially because the middle toe projection has been linked to an animal's running ability.

Our research illustrates the importance of the understudied fossil footprint record in studying ancient life and how it complements the more explored body fossil record. Make no bones about it: evolutionary changes among southern African dinosaurs can be tracked by examining their footprints.

This article was first published on *The Conversation.*











Flipper traces reveal the presence of ancient seals on South Africa's coast

Until now, there's been no documented evidence of fossilised seal traces – the tell-tale signs of these big animals dragging their flippers while hauling themselves along ancient beaches.

By Charles Helm
Research Associate, African Centre for Coastal Palaeoscience, Nelson Mandela University

The world's largest and heaviest living carnivore is not a big cat, a bear or a wolf: it's the southern elephant seal (*Mirounga leonina*). Bulls of this species can be 5 metres long and can weigh up to 3 500 kg. The Cape fur seal, meanwhile, can grow to 3.9 metres and weigh up to 360 kg. A large African lion, by comparison, weighs 250 kg.

So, you might think that the ancient ancestors of these and other large seals would leave ample evidence of their presence in the fossil record. That's partly true; there is an extensive global body fossil record for seals. But, until now, there's been no documented evidence of fossilised seal traces – the tell-tale signs of these big animals dragging their flippers while hauling themselves along ancient beaches.

Our new research, from South Africa's Goukamma Nature Reserve on the country's Cape south coast, changes that. The traces we discovered and described are from two sites that date back about 75 000 years.

This adds to our existing knowledge about what kinds of animals roamed this landscape long ago, as well as what the landscape might have looked like – an important part of understanding what's changed over time and how it might change as the climate shifts.

Many different creatures

The Cape South Coast Ichnology Project started in 2008. Ichnology is the study of tracks and traces. Since then, our team has identified more than 300 vertebrate track sites along a 350-km stretch of the South African coastline. The tracks and traces date back to the Pleistocene epoch, which started around 2.6 million years ago and ended 11 700 years ago.

The tracks and traces are found in aeolianites (the cemented remains of dune surfaces) and cemented beach deposits. The fossil sites have provided a census of which creatures left traces of their passage on those ancient dunes and beaches: elephants, crocodiles, large birds – and even hominins, human ancestors. There were tiny members of this varied community, too; we've reported on gerbil and spider tracks and traces.

Seals' absence from the global ichnology record can probably be explained by these mammals spending much of their time in the ocean, and to a preference for rocky islands, cliff-side ledges and pebble beaches when they do come ashore. None of these environments would preserve fossil traces of seals.

However, large colonies can be found on remote sandy beaches, and individual seals often haul up on beaches, both of which might leave a trace fossil record.

Two sites

One of the sites we studied was situated on a north-facing slope of a sand-bar and shows a furrow created by sliding down the slope, complete with hind-flipper drag marks. There are parallel grooves and nested grooves adjacent to it, consistent with front-flipper traces. Taken together, these features are more consistent with traces of a fur seal than those of an elephant seal. Both species occur on the coastline today, but Cape fur seals are far more common.

Cape fur seals often gather into dense rookeries, some of which contain hundreds of thousands of seals; one such rookery can be found at Cape Cross in Namibia.

Seals in rookeries on beaches may create depressions in the sand that are moulds of their outlines, and this is what the evidence at the second site suggests.

Four large impressions are consistent with moulds of juvenile seals, and one of these contains what appears to be a flipper impression. Microscopy of thin sections sampled from the rock surfaces enabled us to ascertain that both sites are from beach rather than dune environments.

This helped to corroborate our interpretation of the tracks as seal traces. Meanwhile, optically stimulated luminescence dating studies performed at the University of Leicester indicated that the seals inhabited these beaches about 75 000 years ago.

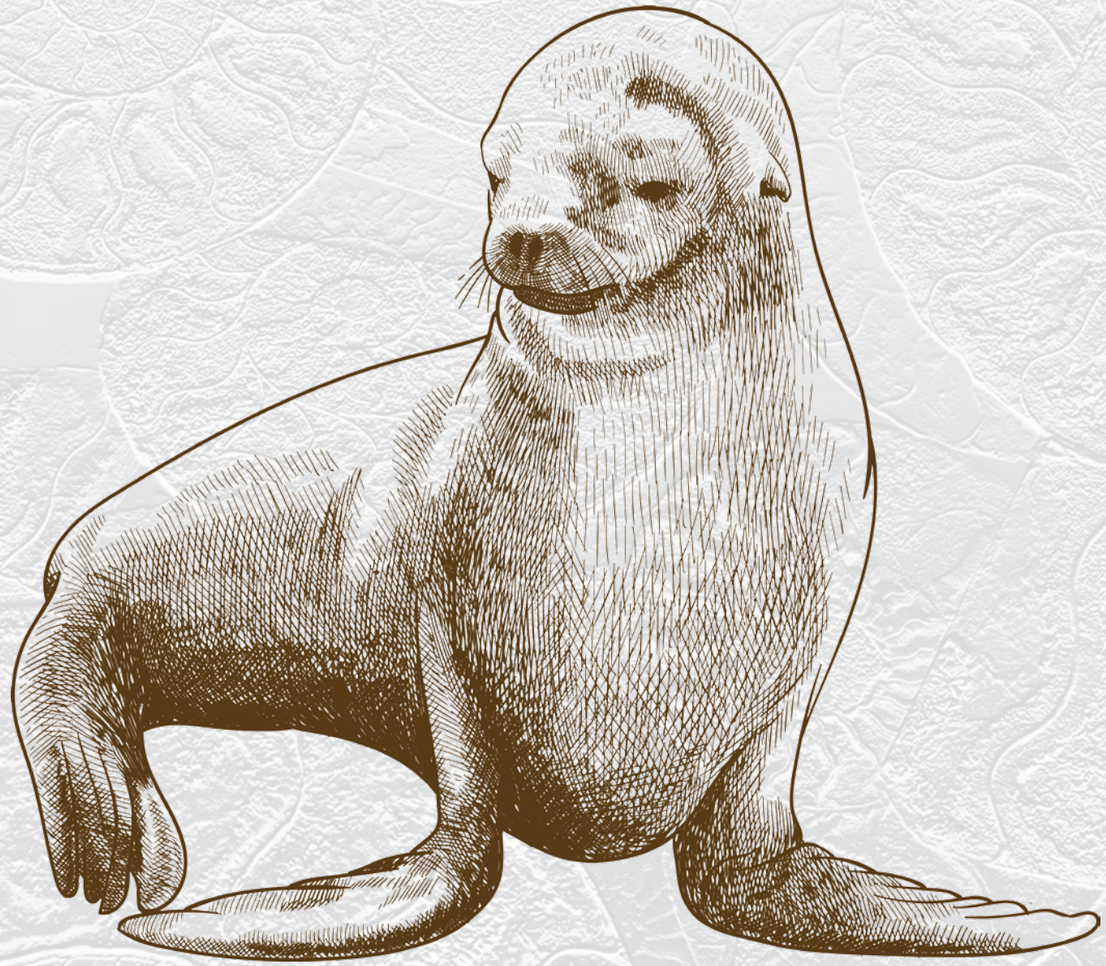
The Cape South Coast Ichnology project started in 2008. Ichnology is the study of tracks and traces. Since then, our team has identified more than 300 vertebrate track sites along a 350-km stretch of the South African coastline.

Our findings help to fill what was a substantial gap in the global ichnology record. Our discoveries will hopefully spur researchers elsewhere to look for similar traces to better understand what parts of the ancient world seals occupied, and when.

More to find?

The notion of seal traces, made so long ago on these beaches, being evident on rock surfaces today can be regarded as remarkable. Our findings help to fill what was a substantial gap in the global ichnology record. Our discoveries will hopefully spur researchers elsewhere to look for similar traces to better understand what parts of the ancient world seals occupied, and when.

This article was first published on *The Conversation*.





Four lessons from Serena Williams for sportswomen in Africa

The story of Serena Williams and her sister Venus Williams, a fellow star player, is not one of privilege. Serena's success was initially nurtured at an old public tennis court in her neighbourhood.

By Awino Okech
Associate Professor in Political Sociology, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

United States icon Serena Williams, considered one of the greatest tennis players of all time, is retiring from professional tennis. Williams has won 23 grand slam singles titles, more than any other woman or man during the professional era, which began in 1968.

Coached by her father, she changed the face of the women's game.

In the process, through speaking frankly about her life and career, she became a role model for many black women around the world. Tennis Kenya secretary general and former player, Wanjiru Mbugua Karani, recently said: "Serena has been the 'be-all' for African tennis, and especially for girls in Africa."

We asked Kenyan political sociologist and gender expert Awino Okech what lessons can be learned for African women in sports when reflecting on Williams' career.

Public investment in sport pays off

The story of Serena Williams and her sister Venus Williams, a fellow star player, is not one of privilege.

Serena's success was initially nurtured at an old public tennis court in her neighbourhood. Her father gathered resources where he could find them to skill his daughters when he saw potential in tennis.

Across sections of Africa, we see the public divestment in sports through land grabs with public parks converted into office buildings and apartments, thus limiting space for recreation and sports.

Secondly, the privatisation of sporting facilities limits public access as people have to pay to use them. Thirdly, the under-resourcing of public schools results in limited, if any, investment in sporting facilities.

The result is a class divide that writes out most young Africans from sporting opportunities.

African governments need to make greater investments in public sports facilities and programmes targeting girls, particularly in contexts where sports is not viewed as a viable career option.

Racism in sport must be eliminated

Serena and Venus Williams' importance to world tennis lies in their being outliers in a sport that has been historically dominated by white women and men.

Consequently, Serena's iconic stature as a tennis star has been coloured by the gender and racial dynamics that have shaped her treatment in the sport.

She was subjected to descriptions around her masculinity, aggression and her power as a player. These are broader racialised tropes that link black people to savagery and whiteness to evolved humanity.

In the visual and verbal descriptions of Serena in the public media, we saw the use of historically racialised tropes of the angry black woman and animalistic caricatures by the media and social media users.

This was intended to diminish her capabilities through psychological warfare.

Anti-black racism in sport has been the subject of public debates and investigations. One study revealed that black football players who missed penalties were the most abused players in the Euro 2020 championship final stage.

In Serena's case, these experiences sit at the intersection of gender and race. All women share the experience of sexism – from pay disparities to the lack of attention to women's sports compared to men's.

However, the combination of race and gender doubles the battle that Serena Williams and other international athletes like South African sprinting champion Caster Semenya must contend with.

Serena took a stand. She withdrew from and boycotted events such as the BNP Paribas Open in California because of racial slurs from the crowd.

The race problem in sports – which becomes visible through online abuse, spectator behaviour and overall sports management – is reflective of a broader problem.

The anti-black character of racism experienced by Serena will not be solved by more representation of black women but by a systemic reckoning that challenges how race and gender disparities are entrenched in the DNA of competitive sport.

Serena and Venus Williams' importance to world tennis lies in their being outliers in a sport that has been historically dominated by white women and men. Consequently, Serena's iconic stature as a tennis star has been coloured by the gender and racial dynamics that have shaped her treatment in the sport.

We need to talk about mental health in women's sport

Sexism and racism, accompanied by the intense public scrutiny in competitive sport, have drawn attention to the critical question of mental health.

We are now witnessing a generation of younger athletes such as Japanese tennis star Naomi Osaka and US gymnastics champion Simone Biles taking a stand.

They have at times chosen mental well-being over participating in high-pressured competitions. Serena Williams has played an important role in creating the space for a tennis player like Osaka to speak out.

These acts of courage take place in an environment in which a discussion on mental well-being is construed as weakness. They focus attention on a neglected area in sports, the need for a holistic health system that supports the pressure cooker environment of elite sports.

The case of Kenyan middleweight boxer Conjestina Achieng, the first African woman to hold an international boxing title, is illustrative. Achieng, who was diagnosed with mental illness, has been failed by a broader public health system. One that allocates too few resources to training mental health experts and providing specialist services in public hospitals.

The limited options available for athletes in the global South points to the destruction of public health systems due to privatisation.

In Kenya, for example, failed public healthcare is a legacy of policies promoting historical inequality, which continues under the veneer of public-private partnerships. A conversation about mental health in sports is fundamentally a public policy discussion about economic investment in health systems.

Sportswomen deserve a more secure future

Serena's exit from tennis is accompanied by a financial exit strategy – Serena Ventures, a venture capital firm. The financial security built of decades of success in a sport does not translate in the same way in contexts shaped by vast economic disparities. Serena's context shows what needs to change.

In Kenya, coupled with the pressures of competitive sport, women athletes are also dealing with the silence around intimate partner violence in the sports fraternity – highlighted by the murders of athletes Agnes Tirop and Damaris Muthee.

There are three interlocked issues here. The first is the absence of strong financial advice and support to athletes over the course of their careers. The second is the vast societal inequalities that create undue pressure on young athletes who come into money to support their families financially. Finally, the combination of class and gender demands that femicide and intimate partner violence are taken as seriously by sports associations as they do anti-doping campaigns.

Serena Williams' journey of excellence and fortitude also shines a light on the negative outcomes that sit at the intersection of race, gender and class in sports specifically and society generally.

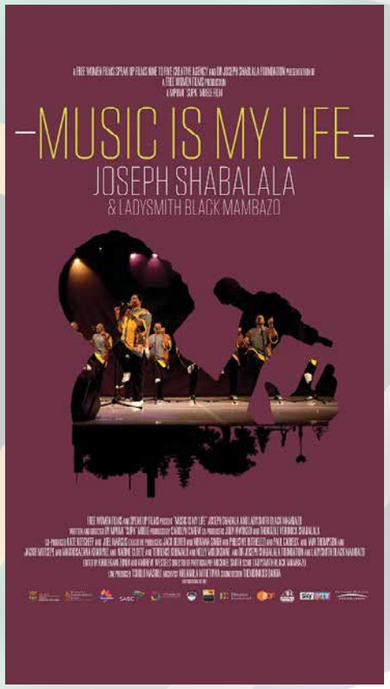
As we hail the "Greatest of All Time", African governments must take heed of the structural shifts required in our sports arena.

This article was first published on *The Conversation*.

The combination of race and gender doubles the battle that Serena Williams and other international athletes like South African sprinting champion Caster Semenya must contend with.

Flying the FLAG

Documentary about Ladysmith Black Mambazo founder Joseph Shabalala wins at international festival



The documentary about Ladysmith Black Mambazo founder Joseph Shabalala and the multi-Grammy-award winning singing group scooped the second prize at the Art & Tur film festival in Ourém, Portugal, in October 2022.

It was shot over five years and includes artists like Dolly Parton and Stevie Wonder, whom he worked with.

According to a press statement, *Music Is My Life – Joseph Shabalala and Ladysmith Black Mambazo* was selected from 87 films and shortlisted from 281 promotional and documentary films from 32 countries.

It scooped the second spot after the shortlisted films were evaluated by an international jury consisting of film experts from 19 countries, who reflected on the topics covered in the films in 13 thematic sessions.

"It was a great honour to be able to travel to Famita, Portugal, to receive the award for our film and for the support we received from the KwaZulu-Natal Film Commission both while making this film and for entry our film into the festival," its producer, Carolyn Carew, said in the statement. Director Mpumi Supa Mbele said Shabalala's achievements etched him among African musical superstars.

"Shabalala's achievements place him in the pantheon of African musical superstars. This film takes viewers on his spiritual and emotional journey."

The documentary tells the story of how Shabalala (1940 – 2020) and the group rose to fame after contributing to Paul Simon's *Graceland* album. It covers Shabalala's life, from his early years to the height of his global success and his death.

"Along with the footage from the *Graceland* recording sessions, the film introduces us to many of the luminaries who worked with Shabalala, including Dolly Parton and Stevie Wonder," the statement continued.

"The film also documents the complex history of isicathamiya music – the musical idiom whose boundaries he helped to expand in terms of the political and musical forces that helped to form it."

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Charlize Theron and Dior launch capsule created by SA designer Thebe Magugu



Charlize Theron and Dior have teamed up with South African fashion designer Thebe Magugu in support of her Africa Outreach Project.

The South African-born actor shared a snippet on Instagram, unveiling the stunning pieces in the limited-edition capsule.

"The South African designer and youngest recipient of the LVMH Prize created pieces that are colourful, female-focussed and whose proceeds benefit the health, education and safety of young people living in southern Africa," she wrote in her caption.

Magugu is the youngest recipient of the LVMH Prize and the first African to receive the prestigious distinction. The capsule comprises six key pieces, including a white cotton T-shirt, entirely produced in South Africa, that displays the design of two female profiles holding hands. The same design appears on a silk twill scarf featuring captivating graphics constellated with the Dior signature.

The Dior Book Tote is embellished with the same design in a large format.

A matching hat adorned with two drawstrings completes this hyper-modern, hybrid silhouette. It is elevated by a feather-light tulle skirt, with pleats underlining symmetrical effects.

"I am proud to introduce my new capsule in collaboration with Dior; one that benefits CTAOP – a foundation created by my fellow South African Charlize Theron – which invests in the health, education and safety of young people living in southern Africa," Magugu said of the capsule.

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Mezzo-soprano Siphokazi Molteno makes her debut at the Metropolitan Opera



Siphokazi Molteno recently debuted at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, playing the role of Flora in Verdi's *La Traviata*. Her performance has received high praise from critics and she says her dreams have come true!

Molteno, from Cape Town, is an award-winning opera singer. She graduated with degrees in Music from Nelson Mandela University and the University of Cape Town.

As a young artist with Cape Town Opera, she sang Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*. She went on to win the Fleur Du Cap's Best Performance in an Opera (Female) Award in both 2020 and 2022 for the role.

Molteno also received the 2020 Rising Star Encouragement Award in the Glyndebourne Opera Cup and received both the Ana María Martínez Encouragement Award and the Audience Choice Award at Houston Grand Opera's Eleanor McCollum Competition in 2017.

"I'm still in disbelief and words cannot express how grateful I am, I waited for this moment since I was a little girl and little did I know that this dream will come true so early in my career." – Siphokazi Molteno

Opera critic Rick Perdian, for the *New York Classical Review*, gave high praise for her debut performance, saying: "There were two house debuts of note. As Violetta's confident Flora, mezzo-soprano Siphokazi Molteno, a member of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Programme, displayed a striking voice. Flora often comes off as frivolous and flighty, yet Molteno's take on her was just the opposite."

Her season at the Metropolitan Opera will include her role as Flora in *La Traviata* and Sister Mathilde in *Dialogues des Carmélites*.

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South Africa finishes top In Portugal with 26 golds at the Biathle-Triathle World Championships



South Africa came out tops – out of 31 countries – with an amazing 26 gold medals at the Biathle-Triathle World Championships, which was held recently in Madeira, Portugal.

The *Union Internationale de Pentathlon Moderne* (UIPM) World Pentathlon said: "The battle for medal supremacy was an all-African affair as South Africa and Egypt shone across almost all age grades. In the end, it was South Africa who came out on top …"

Egypt finished with 22 golds and Great Britain with 16. There were 31 countries with 647 athletes ranging in age from under nine to over 60 who gathered at Machico, on the island of Madeira. The sequence of Biathle is run-swim-run, while athletes in Triathle compete in a swim-run-shoot format.

The sport made its debut on the international stage at the UIPM Biathle-Triathle World Championships in 2013 in Cyprus.

www.sapeople.com

Unathi Lutshaba honoured by UN with "Most Influential" title



Unathi Lutshaba is officially one of the world's most influential people of African descent as chosen by the United Nations (UN). She was honoured due to her work as the Executive Director of the SA Cultural Observatory.

Included in the Most Influential People of African Descent's (MIPAD) Global Top 100 Under 40 sector in the Activism and Humanitarian Category, Lutshaba received the recognition at the UN's headquarters in New York in October 2022. MIPAD identifies high achievers of African descent in the public and private sectors from all around the world as a progressive network of relevant actors to join together in the spirit of recognition, justice and development of Africa and it's people on the continent.

The event ran for five days and included leadership training, panel discussions and opportunities to work and collaborate with fellow recipients from around the world. Lutshaba is a Nelson Mandela University alumnus and is based out of the university's building where she works towards researching South Africa's diverse arts and cultures.

She graduated from the university in 2011 with a Master's degree in Development Studies. Since then, she has headed up a research team building evidence and influencing policy in the music, visual arts and film industry, for the good of creatives and the country's economy.

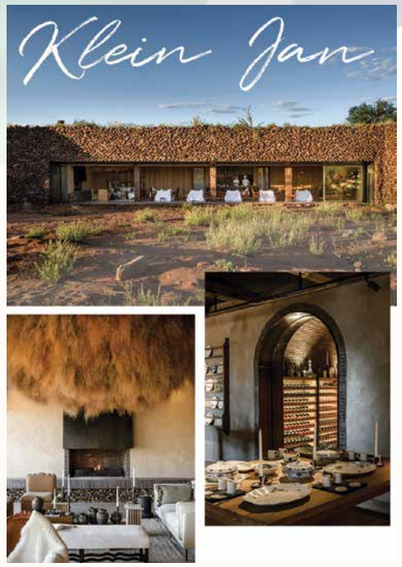
"The creative world is no longer about art for art's sake, but rather an undervalued and under-supported industry with untapped potential for generating economic growth and social unity."

This country's cultural and creative industry accounts for 6% of all jobs and in 2020, it directly contributed R161 billion, or 2.97%, of the country's gross domestic product.

Her contribution to research and understanding this sector has greatly empowered South Africans.

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South African restaurant tops world's Extraordinary Fine-Dining List



Travel + Leisure has released a list of the top 10 Extraordinary Fine-dining Experiences Around the World – from dinner under the sea to lunch in an ice cave – and a South African restaurant has found itself at the top of the list! The publication highlighted one-of-a-kind eating experiences that are unavailable anywhere else on the planet. Some of these destinations lean toward theatre, while others border on the surreal.

"Dinner under the sea. Lunch inside an ice cave. Small bites in a subterranean root cellar. A wine-paired picnic on a lava field. They say you eat with your eyes first and nowhere is that truer than at the world's most unique fine-dining restaurants and other-worldly environments where the settings are as epic and imaginative as what's on the plate." – *Travel + Leisure*

From Waldorf Astoria in the Maldives to Eden Roc Cap Cana in the Dominican Republic, the full list takes one deep into caves and even to Richard Branson's private island.

But the restaurant that brings all the feels is Klein Jan in the Kalahari!

From kneading dough in the farmhouse kitchen of his childhood in Mpumalanga, South Africa, to running his own restaurant in Nice, France, Jan-Hendrik van der Westhuizen's journey has taken many unexpected turns.

In 2019, he opened Klein Jan in the heart of the Kalahari. Klein Jan is at Tswalu Kalahari, one of South Africa's leading private game reserves; an untamed, untouched, unspoiled refuge that celebrates the simple, authentic splendours of this magical region. Driven by his values of local authenticity, heritage and sustainability of the environment, Klein Jan has become the region's culinary epicentre, a place where the Kalahari's unique ingredients are translated into world-class cuisine.

"The adventure begins en route to this one-of-a-kind dining destination since wildlife and matchless landscapes encompass the drive in.

"Combine a century-old farmhouse in the midst of the Kalahari Desert's iconic orange sand, an awe-inspiring subterranean root cellar 13 feet below, and a soaring dining room open to the wild, and you start to get the picture of Klein Jan, a transportive culinary experience created by Michelin-starred chef Jan Hendrik van der Westhuizen for South Africa's largest private safari reserve.

"The surprises are endless and stupendous, both in the way diners physically move through the meal and the flavours, textures, and stories packed into the delectable journey that is distinctly of the Kalahari.

"This is no passive lunch or dinner; it's participatory, immersive, and wildly thrilling, mysteries unfolding with every exceptional bite." – *Travel + Leisure*

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Cape Town is Africa's best destination



For the fourth year in a row, Table Mountain has been voted Africa's leading tourist attraction in the World Travel Awards 2022 for Africa.

The Table Mountain Cable Way is also in the running for the World's Leading Cable Car Ride.

It was the fifth win for the mountain attraction. The V&A Waterfront and Robben Island were also in the running, as was Mount Kilimanjaro, which has five wins under its belt too.

While Cape Town bagged a handful of wins – such as Africa's Leading City Destination and Leading Airport – Durban came out tops in the Events and Festivals Category for the second year in a row and was elected for the sixth year in a row as Africa's Leading Meetings and Conference Destination. Kenyatta International Convention Centre in Nairobi was chosen as Africa's Leading Meetings and Conference Centre.

The Silo Hotel in Cape Town did a double as well, being voted Africa's Leading Design Hotel as well as Africa's Leading Luxury Hotel. The Saxon Hotel, Villas and Spa in Johannesburg was again elected Leading Boutique Hotel, and the Nelson Mandela Platinum Suite at the hotel was voted Leading Hotel Suite.

The Leading Hotel in Africa is the Fairmont Mount Kenya Safari Club in Nanyuki.

Silvan Safari in Mpumalanga came out tops in the Leading Luxury Lodge Category. It was voted the top luxury lodge in the world for the last four years and is in the running again.

The Leading Private Game Reserve is Shambala Private Game Reserve in Limpopo, and the Leading Safari Lodge is Earth Lodge @ Sabi Sabi Private Game Reserve in Mpumalanga.

The Serengeti in Tanzania is the Leading National Park in Africa again.

The Blue Train has no competition in this race and got its 14th nod as the continent's Leading Luxury Train. It was nominated as the Leading Luxury Train in the World again this year.

On the booking side of the business, South Africa scored two more wins: Flight Centre was voted Africa's Leading Travel Agency, and Rennies BCD Travel Africa's Leading Travel Management Company.

The Leading Beach Destination is again Zanzibar, and the Leading Beach Resort is Swahili Beach in Kenya.

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South African opera singer Pretty Yende awarded Ceremonial Badge of Honour in France



In October 2022, South African opera singer Pretty Yende earned yet another recognition from the international world for her contribution to the arts.

She was awarded an Order of Arts and Letters Award by France's Culture Minister, Rima Abdul Malak. The award is given to those whose creativity has helped develop the arts and literature in France and throughout the world.

Born in 1985 in a remote town in South Africa, Yende was first introduced to operatic music at the age of 16 when hearing the *Flower Duet* from Delibes's opera *Lakmé* in a British Airways commercial. At that moment, she decided to become an opera singer.

Years later, Yende is one of opera's fastest-rising divas, a star of Milan's La Scala, New York's Met and as a top billing at London's Covent Garden.

Yende rose to the top of the opera world with unparalleled speed, with competition successes and engagements at the world's foremost opera houses.

She made her professional operatic debut at the Latvian National Theatre in Riga as Micaela in *Carmen* and has since been seen at nearly all of the major theatres of the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, Teatro Alla Scala, Covent Garden, Deutsche Oper Berlin, and many others.

In 2019, Italy honoured her with the Order of "Knight of the Italian Star". Yende was the youngest South African to receive this honour.

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Siya Kolisi spreads gospel with eye-catching segment on US' legendary *60 Minutes*

If the Springboks receive a sharp boost in support from the United States, they should thank Siya Kolisi.

In October 2022, the national skipper's burgeoning reputation as one of the most recognisable world athletes to emerge from South Africa was entrenched after he was featured in a full segment on *60 Minutes*, one of America's most respected and longstanding national news programmes.

While some chunk of the insert chronicles his significant playing exploits – Kolisi's excellent showing in the third Test against Wales in Cape Town this year features prominently – it's his inspirational life story and his huge contribution to the Bok brand, transcending mere sporting excellence and becoming a beacon of hope for the nation that, rightly, dominates the narrative.

As host Jon Wertheim notes in his introduction: "Captaincy is more important still when your rugby team represents an entire country.

"So, when Siya Kolisi was named captain of the national team, the first black player to hold the honour, it may as well have marked a political appointment.

"Kolisi responded with a singular approach, reconsidering a macho sport and recognising how valuable rugby can be [by] helping bind a country still riven by crime, corruption and inequality."

Kolisi regaled how he felt when Rassie Erasmus, SA Rugby's Director of Rugby, confirmed his appointment in mid-2018.

"Honestly, I didn't know what it meant," Kolisi told the show.

"I didn't realise how big it was until it was announced. I saw myself in every single newspaper, the headlines. Turn on the TV, everybody's talking about it … I was just happy that I was promoted captain. And then, I spoke to people. They're like, 'But you don't understand, like, representation matters'."

That's also the reason why Francois Pienaar, South Africa's captain in the momentous 1995 World Cup win, believes 2019's success was more significant.

"When your country performs, or an individual performs, you are that person, or you are that team. You wear the colours; you're so invested in the emotions. And I never realised how big it would be. Never," he said.

"In South Africa and the townships across the land, everybody, again, was proud. They were world champions, and that is what sport does. Nothing else can do that."

Following that triumph, Kolisi said he and wife Rachel made a concerted effort to let it count for more, notably establishing their foundation.

"We all want these big moments. It can be just a big moment. That's it ... or you can use it for so much more."

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The Silo Hotel named one of the Most Instagrammable Pools in the World

The Silo Hotel at the V&A Waterfront is one of Cape Town's newest highlights in travel. The hotel has been built inside an old grain silo, and the architecture is unbelievable. Since its opening, the hotel has been earning many accolades from around the world, and the latest is for how "instagrammable" it is, as voted by Big 7 Travel. Some 1.5 million people from 60 countries take surveys for Big 7 Travel and vote for the best travel accolades worldwide.

Big 7 Media shares several lists, which promote global travel. In the past, it has shared lists about South Africa, including being the fifth most "Instagrammable" country in the world in 2019, or Kruger and Cape Town listed in the top 50 destinations to visit after the COVID-19 pandemic. There have been many more, but these are just a few of the exciting accolades awarded to South Africa.

The Silo Hotel pool boasts some incredible views, which is why the pool has earned a place on the "50 Most Instagrammable Pools in the World".

The proudly South African pool lands at number 22 on this list. In 2021, it was named the third-best pool in the world by the same publication.

"Global travel site Big 7 Travel has officially released the 50 Most Instagrammable Pools in the World 2022. Our annual hashtag tally, which is now in its second year, analyses swimming pools that hold the most gram appeal.

"The full list includes 50 destinations on nearly every continent, from infinity pools overlooking Caribbean turquoise oceans to a golden energy pool surrounded by the towering Himalayas. We ranked these breathtaking pools based on the number of times the hashtag was used on Instagram."

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Caleb Payne wins Young Artist Academy Award for his role in *Good Life*



Eleven-year-old Caleb Payne has made South African history by becoming the first young actor to win a "Youth Oscar" in over 43 years.

The proudly South African film *Good Life* continues to inspire and Payne was delighted when he received a nomination from the Young Artist Academy in Hollywood, California, for the Feature Film Artist Category. The Young Artist Academy Awards are playfully dubbed the "Youth Oscars". The award ceremony took place in Los Angeles on 2 October 2022.

The awards have seen the likes of Scarlett Johansson, Leonardo DiCaprio and Jennifer Lawrence as nominees and winners. Payne is the first South African to be nominated for a Youth Artist Award in its 43-year history. Payne played the role of Jetmir in the film *Good Life*, which has been taking the world by storm. The film won the award for Best Feature Film at the Berlin Independent Film Festival.

The film follows Olive Pappadopoulous, 35, an oral hygienist from Cape Town, who flees the country after she is left heartbroken.

She arrives in her Mediterranean paradise only to be faced with hostility from the local villagers. Olivia is then befriended by a seven-year-old refugee named Jet, who teaches her how to live the *Good Life*.

At just 11 years old, Payne has already had an exciting career with appearances in *The Kissing Booth 3* (Netflix 2021), *Resident Evil* (Netflix 2022), *Warrior S1&2* (HBO 2018 –) and *Lincoln* (History 2021).

On stage, he played the role of Eric in GWB Entertainment's touring production of *Matilda*. He has been in local productions such as MNet's successful series *Lioness* where he rubbed shoulders with South African acting elite such as Frank Rautenbach, Natasha Sutherland and Fiona Ramsay.

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Cape Town voted one of the best cities in the world



Readers have to rate their favourite countries based on various criteria, including food, accommodation, scenery and value for money.

The annual Readers' Travel Awards celebrate the best of the best in travel, as voted for by people who love travel … the readers of *Condé Nast Traveler*.

A score is then given, representing overall average levels of satisfaction. Cape Town scored 88.27 for 2022, putting the Mother City at number nine.

This is what the publication had to say:

"On pristine beaches, penguins waddle about their business while leaping dolphins frame spectacular sunsets – and thrill-seekers head out on boats to come face-to-face with fearsome sharks. Away from the ocean, guests check into world-renowned hotels such as The Silo, the recognisable property where rooms feature contemporary African art and 360-degree views of the city. Table Mountain views are enjoyed over supper, especially during trips to Delaire Graff Estate for wine-swirling and impeccable tasting menus."

This is not the first time that Cape Town has been voted as "one of the best cities" in the world. In 2019, *The Telegraph* voted Cape Town as The Best City in the world … a title that the city had held onto for seven years! In 2021, the city was voted as Best in Africa and earlier this year, the Mother City was named voted 11th-best city in the world (and second-best in Africa).

See the full *Condé Nast Traveler* list below:

10. Mumbai, India. Score 88.27
9. Cape Town, South Africa. Score 88.27
8. Québec City, Canada. Score 88.29
7. Mérida, Mexico. Score 88.30
6. Tokyo, Japan. Score 88.32
5. San Sebastián, Spain. Score 89.15
4. Bangkok, Thailand. Score 89.36
3. Victoria, Canada. Score 89.46
2. Singapore. Score 89.49
1. San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. Score 92.94.

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Stars reunite in New York to celebrate 30 years of *Sarafina!*



A special screening of the pioneering South African film *Sarafina!* took place recently to commemorate the 30th anniversary of its release in the United States (US).

"I am honoured to be alive to celebrate the 30-year anniversary," said lead actor, Whoopi Goldberg, who attended the event.

The screening at the Museum of Modern Art in New York on 21 September 2022 – co-hosted by Anant Singh, the Nelson Mandela Foundation and the South African Consulate General in New York – coincided with the United Nations (UN) General Assembly.

The event was attended by His Serene Highness, Prince Albert of Monaco, members of the original *Sarafina!* cast, including lead actors Goldberg and Leleti Khumalo, Ntombikhona Dlamini, Nandi Ndlovu, Lindiwe Dlamini, Basetsana Kumalo, Chair of the South African Chamber of Commerce in the US, Neil Diamond and a host of UN delegates, diplomats and members of the International Olympic Committee. Directed by Darrell Roodt, *Sarafina!* had its US premiere at New York's prestigious Radio City Musical Hall 30 years ago, on 14 September 1992.

Speaking at the screening, Singh said: "*Sarafina!* holds up really well 30 years after its release. The film celebrates the young women of our liberation, the mothers of the struggle who made significant sacrifices and our powerful legacy of activism."

He added: "When we started the process of making *Sarafina!*, little did we know that by the time the film had its premiere, Madiba would be released from prison. We are very privileged that he attended the world premiere in Johannesburg three decades ago."

Also speaking at the screening, Goldberg said: "It's great to be here. I look at Leleti, I look at Anant, and I think, 'Wow, we did do this!' I'm getting old, and every couple of years, there's a celebration, and this is a 30-year celebration. I am honoured to be alive to celebrate it."

Khumalo said: "I lived the role of Sarafina on stage, and I am grateful to Anant for believing in me to play the role in the film. I am thrilled to be here in person to celebrate this milestone and to share this special moment with Whoopi."

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Carolyn Steyn named Philanthropist of The Year at ceremony in London



In September 2022, Carolyn Steyn was named the Philanthropist of the Year at the African Achievers Awards in London for her work in uplifting South African lives.

Steyn is a force of good in South Africa. Her work has inspired thousands of South Africans and touched the lives of millions more.

Steyn is a prominent figure in the worlds of philanthropy, art, music and media in South Africa. With an early career as an actress and decades of experience in the world of radio, she has become a household name and voice, with a dedication to various cultural or charitable organisations.

Many know her for her work with 67 Blankets and the "KnitWits" of South Africa. Through these philanthropic pursuits, Steyn was recognised by the African Achievers Awards.

"What a privilege to have been in the company of such brilliant young minds at the 12th African Achiever Awards last night, honouring leaders making strides in changing the narrative of the African continent. A particular highlight for me was listening to and meeting the former President of Mauritius, Dr Bibi Ameenah Firdaus Gurib-Fakim. Thank you African Achiever Awards for presenting me with the award for African Philanthropist of the Year.

"Knowing that the very first African Achiever Award was presented to Archbishop Desmond Tutu back in 2012 makes me feel truly humbled." – Carolyn Steyn

This year marked the 12th annual African Achievers Awards, which were hosted in London. The awards celebrate African excellence by recognising and honouring notable individuals and organisations in Africa across multiple industries that contribute immensely to the growth and development of the continent. The very first award was presented to Archbishop Tutu in 2012 to recognise his fight for human rights, justice and peace. This adds to Steyn's accolades for 2022, as earlier this year, she was honoured by the French Embassy with the award of *Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite.*

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SA lecturer wins prize for representing diversity of Commonwealth chemistry



In November 2022, Dr Nehemiah Latolla was selected as a winner for the Commonwealth Chemistry Poster Competition, winning in the Biodiversity and Natural Products theme. His winning poster explains the anti-diabetic activity of the Eastern Cape plants *Cissampelos Capensis* and *Strychnos henningsii*.

Dr Latolla works in the Department of Chemistry, at the Faculty of Science, Nelson Mandela University. He worked with Buyiswa Hlangothi to author the poster. The medicinal plants researched were investigated for their anti-diabetic properties. Diabetes is a significant health issue in South Africa, making the research vital.

With access to medical care limited and traditional medicines playing a vital role in care, the study into these medicinal plants to see if they can help will assist many. According to some of the findings in the study, "the study contributes new knowledge as it validates the use of these plants by locals to manage diabetes".

The Commonwealth Chemistry Poster Competition is an annual event that was started three years ago. The Federation of Commonwealth Chemical Sciences Societies hosts the competition and invites scientists from all the Commonwealth countries to design educational posters that fall within six themes. These include Biodiversity and Natural Products, Energy and Materials, Food and Agriculture, Green Chemistry and Catalysis, Health and Well-being, and Water and Environmental Chemistry.

The federation works to champion equal opportunity, drive innovation and promote excellence in the chemical sciences for the benefit of the Commonwealth nations and their people.

The competition took place in September 2022 and saw 180 entries from 31 countries.

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16-year-old South African wins World Championship in Acting



Sixteen-year-old Fourways resident Vongai Dhliwayo recently competed in the World Championships of Performing Arts in Los Angeles and won the Overall Grand Championship Award for Acting.

This international competition is often cited as the official "Talent Olympics" for aspiring performers and entertainers and the only event of its kind held annually in the Hollywood area, the entertainment capital of the world.

Fifty-two countries competed and Dhliwayo took home six medals (one gold and five silver), in addition to winning the overall Grand Championship Award for Acting and the overall Division Award for Dramatic Acting.

The talented star was also awarded a full scholarship to the New York Film Academy.

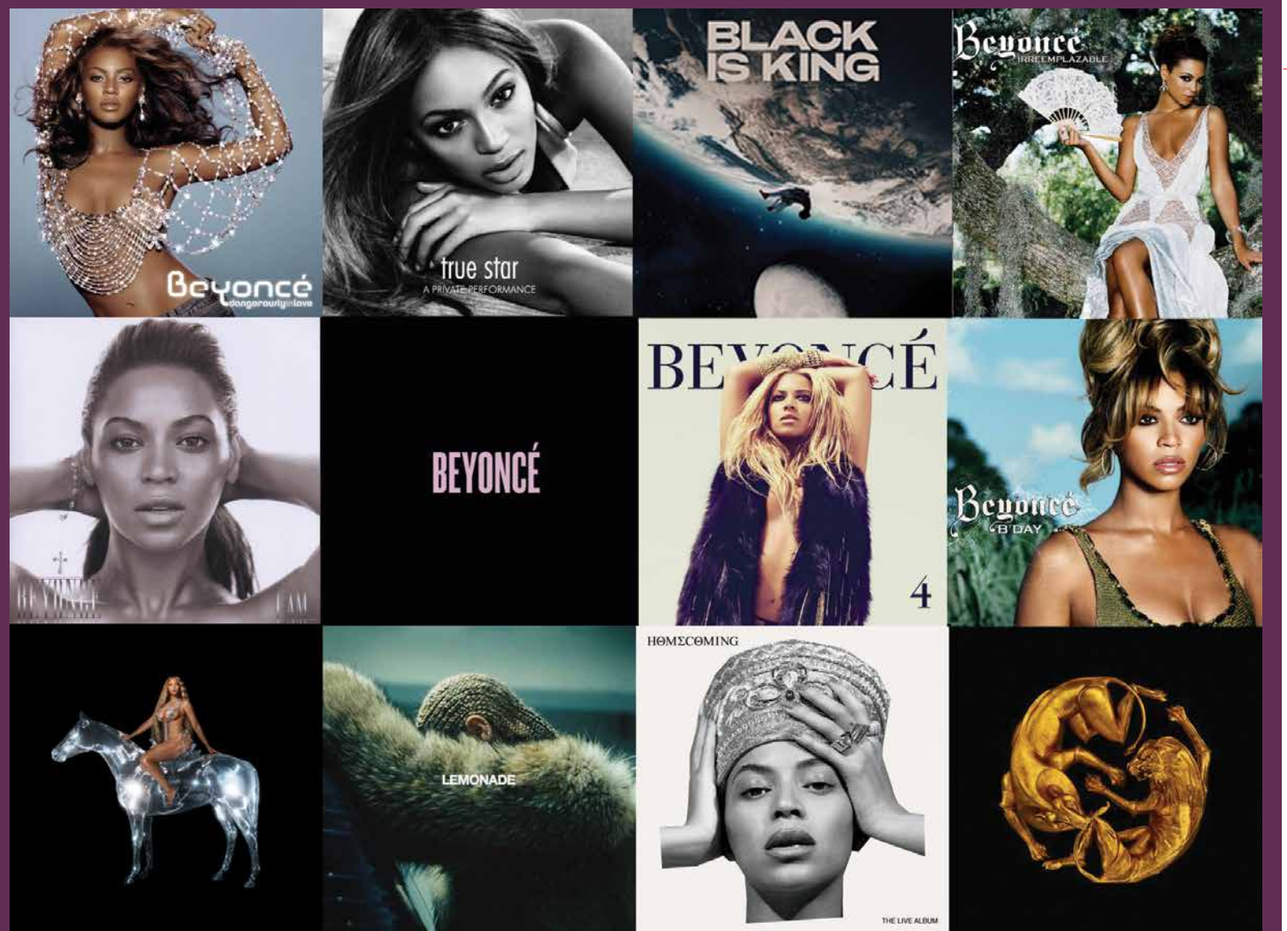
"I started by picking my monologues with my coach and then she helped me prepare them for the next four months. It was a lot of memorising lines and repeating monologues over and over again, but I'm so grateful for the experience and happy to put the work in," Dhliwayo explains.

"What was really important for me was to go on stage and make sure I do the best I can. This isn't always easy when there are so many talented people around you. I am happy I was able to focus on doing my best and not trying to outdo the others around me – I think this is what I'm most proud of at the championships."

Dhliwayo is trained by Upstage Concepts Performing Arts Studio and this is the second time one of their students has won the World Championships.

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A three-day celebration was held in Gaborone, Botswana, from 3 to 6 August 2022 to commemorate 28 years of diplomatic relations between South Africa and Botswana. The celebrations included a fashion show where South Africa was represented by the House of Fabrosanz, owned by award-winning female fashion entrepreneur, Sandisiwe Mazibuko.



Beyoncé has helped usher in a renaissance for African artists

Beyoncé has contributed to a renewal of various narratives in popular music and has in so doing engaged meaningfully with African culture and music.

By James Chikomborero Paradza
Doctor of Music Candidate, University of Pretoria

Beyoncé has released her seventh solo studio album, titled *Renaissance* (2022). The album, an event in global popular culture, is the first of a three-part project by the United States (US) artist. Her previous outing, the visual album *Black is King* (2020), collaborated with a host of African artists.

Renaissance pays tribute to black dance music and again features African artists, including Nigerian singer-songwriter Tems, who is having a global moment of her own.

In history, the renaissance era (from the 1400s) was characterised by the rebirth and renewal of culture and scholarship in Europe following a period of stagnation. Today, still, art – paintings, music, fashion – contributes to how people dress and behave, what they choose to post and talk about, and how they perceive themselves and society.

For the last three decades, Beyoncé has played a major role in shaping global popular culture. She has continuously empowered listeners and sparked debate, and her lyrics have often been quoted in discussions on societal issues. Her views on monogamy on the album *Dangerously in Love* (2003), for example, offer a counter narrative to the patriarchal depiction of hypersexuality in black women.

On *Lemonade* (2016), Beyoncé uses music genres beyond those expected of a black female artist. In the process, she challenges the discrimination she faces. On *Black is King*, she reflects a renaissance of African art forms in a time when cultural norms dominated by Western thinking are on the decline and Africa's star is rising in popular culture. In this article, I argue that throughout her career, Beyoncé has contributed to a renewal of various narratives in popular music and has in so doing engaged meaningfully with African culture and music.

African collaborations

Beyoncé has involved various African artists in her projects and many a time introduced them to international audiences. Before *Black is King*, these include poetry by Kenyan-born Warsan Shire on *Lemonade*, a quote by Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie on *Flawless* (2013) and choreography by Tofo Tofo – the Mozambique-based dance group – in the *Run the World (Girls)* video.

Though not as prominently as on *Black is King*, Beyoncé has included African artists on *Renaissance* too, particularly on the song *Move*, which has an Afrobeats-inspired style and features P2J (Nigeria) and GuiltyBeatz (Ghana) as producers, as well as Tems as a writer and performer.

Tems (Temilade Openiyi), a versatile vocalist who also writes songs, rose to fame after being featured on *Essence* (2020) by Nigerian star vocalist WizKid. Her discography consists of music across different genres, including alternative R&B, neo-soul and Afropop. Her debut single *Mr Rebel* (2018) displays her R&B talents (as both a producer and vocalist), while her 2021 feature on Canadian rapper Drake's *Fountains* shows her ability to convey emotions through her voice.

Tems' name is on everyone's lips following the release of the trailer for the *Black Panther* movie sequel set to her cover of Bob Marley's *No Woman, No Cry*. She has contributed to the renewal of perceptions towards Afropop and commercial African music, and its popularisation across the globe through her unique style of music.

Black is King

"I believe that when black people tell our own stories, we can shift the axis of the world and tell our REAL history of generational wealth and richness of soul that are not told in our history books." – Beyoncé

Black is King, Beyoncé's previous album, is a celebration of African traditions with a "modern twist". In the visual album, she incorporates a Pan-African-inspired lens and integrates elements from several African countries. She partners with various African actors, directors, designers, choreographers and musicians, highlighting the continent's diversity.

Viewers are exposed to African elements ranging from music genres like Afrobeats (Nigeria) and gqom (South Africa) to popular dance styles like the Network (Ghana) and Kpakujemu (Nigeria). There are also visuals of landscapes across the continent. Beyoncé must not mistakenly be credited with originating these elements, nor even popularising them. They existed and were appreciated by people long before she started filming. However, one cannot deny the instrumental role Beyoncé has played in bringing these elements to the forefront of global popular culture as a result of her platform as an international star.

Moreover, the visual album portrays a more accurate representation of the African continent and its diversity than other works that adopt an African label in global popular culture. *Black is King* has introduced a renaissance of Africa's image in popular media and empowered many African and black people as they finally feel more represented in mainstream popular culture.

Renaissance

Beyoncé has once again incorporated an element of renewal on *Renaissance*. Through the 16 tracks on the album, she takes listeners on a journey with the stated intention of creating a safe space, free from judgement, perfectionism and overthinking. Listeners are exposed to music that channels the Studio 54 disco era of the 1970s with effortless transitions to more contemporary pop, R&B and house genres.

Early disco music was influenced by the funk, soul and jazz of the late 1960s, and combined these styles with technology such as synthesisers, multitrack recordings and drum machines.

This created a lavish and decadent form of dance-orientated pop music characterised by a steady beat and vocals that are prominent, high and reverberated. The genre was at its peak between 1975 to early 1979, with artists such as Donna Summer and Gloria Gaynor dominating the charts.

On the appropriately titled *Renaissance,* Beyoncé has brought this style back to the forefront of pop culture, introducing many young listeners to it. From the outset of the lead single *Break My Soul*, listeners are exposed to the album's pervasive dance-pop and house-inspired style.

Beyoncé successfully integrates music genres, including pop, electronic house, Afrobeats, trap and soul, to name a few, in combination with various disco influences. Through the lyrics on the album, an overarching sense of self-love and pride is portrayed. This resembles the music by one of South Africa's and the continent's most prominent pop artists, Brenda Fassie (1964 – 2004).

"I believe that when black people tell our own stories, we can shift the axis of the world and tell our REAL history of generational wealth and richness of soul that are not told in our history books." – Beyoncé

Throughout her career, Fassie, one of the queens of African pop, made disco and pop music that was influenced by her township roots. Her iconic music narrated the stories of black South Africans during the country's apartheid era.

Global stage

When considering how popular music acts as a locus for social change within popular culture, it is evident that Beyoncé plays a key role in shaping parts of popular societal thought.

Throughout her career, her music has challenged and renewed various narratives within the popular music industry.

Her work serves as a platform for African artists on a global stage, using various music genres as a method to counter people's perceptions of black female musicians. Her latest album continues to do this by introducing new listeners to a revival of disco with a contemporary flair.

This article was first published on *The Conversation.*

Throughout her career, Fassie, one of the queens of African pop, made disco and pop music that was influenced by her township roots. Her iconic music narrated the stories of black South Africans during the country's apartheid era.

Epitaph for a baobab: Remembering South African poet and activist Don Mattera

> Poets are more than wordsmiths, they deliver heart and minds from emotional suffering and ignorance and inspire agency. It is a calling, not a career.

By Phillippa Yaa de Villiers
Poet and Lecturer in Creative Writing, University of the Witwatersrand

The towering South African poet, activist and humanitarian Donato Francesco Mattera passed away on 18 July 2022 at the age of 86. What he represented to South Africa is far larger than his contribution to literature.

During the online memorial service for Mattera, filmmaker and lecturer Dr Teddy Mattera said of his father: "He illuminated my pathway as a creative person." Tributes from journalists, historians, politicians, doctors and lawyers – people who don't readily identify as creative – echoed his sentiments. Herein lies the enduring greatness of Don Mattera: what he did for people.

He was, in the traditional sense, an African poet, the centre of social life. Although Don was entertaining, he was far more than an entertainer; as a spokesman for the poor and marginalised, his reach was wider than an activist's. He was never a public representative, yet he represented people.

He was an outsider to the intellectual establishment; a passionate voice in the wilderness.

Often abrupt in his critique of elitism, and his lifelong profound identification with the poorest and most marginalised members of society, what he stands for challenges the academy's conception of The Humanities.

It urges them to do better to serve human beings. For South African universities to walk their decolonial talk, they will have to acknowledge the importance of a figure like Mattera to the society well beyond making people write exams on his scansion and prosody. They will have to perforate brick and mortar of the university with clay and thatch, and abandon, or at least question, the brittle certainties that uphold the system as it is.

Like all great poets, Don embodied paradox, and was motivated by, and motivated, radical change.

From the early days of apartheid right up until his death, he challenged authority, publicly witnessed systemic violence; he actively used his agency and voice to liberate himself and others.

His style was emotional and subjective, which may also have contributed to his exclusion from the academy, where his work is not widely taught.

He spoke up for and supported organisations defending prisoners, children, women, people with disabilities and the KhoeKhoe people. If the essence of excellent scholarship is rigorous research, innovation and relevance to society, Don's only crime was passion.

Memory is the Weapon

Don's autobiography *Memory is the Weapon* (1987) is a seminal reflection on apartheid's earliest crimes, particularly for its detailed observation of ordinary life, its unflinching portrayal of violence and its much-needed humour and humanity. It is the "poet as historian" described by South African author AC Jordan.

An instance of the vividness of his language and searing compassion, reflecting the conditions that sadly continue to dehumanise and impoverish people:

"You would find a man or a woman lying drunk in the slime and grime and debris, breathing the foul air of a dispossessed and forsaken life – men and women robbed of those vital fibres that separate man from beast."

Poetry brought Don and I together. We agreed that poetry, with its ability to contain and express the harshness of pain, grief, rage and despair, had drawn us in and healed us: his from the harsh deprivations of early urban apartheid and mine from the duplicity of my childhood.

Poet of compassion

"He led with his soul," said Fasiha Hassan, scholar, activist and mentee of activist and political leader Jessie Duarte at an intimate Women of Waqf event at the Masjid-Ul-Islam in Fordsburg specifically designed for community healing following the deaths of Yasmin Jessie Duarte and Don Muhammad Omaruddin Mattera.

Spirituality and poetry are on the same frequency and lent his words a presence and intimacy, which inspired his readers to action – always positive, affirming and defending black people, and importantly, inspiring people to raise each other. In this way, we reach for and enact our highest human potential.

He said to me, "When you get a chance to move up in the world, look around and see who you can take with you."

We were in Kimberley at the Northern Cape Writers' Festival of 2008, where he held court alongside poet Keorapetse Kgositsile, healer and author Credo Mutwa, and writers Diana Ferrus, Sindiwe Magona and James Matthews.

Unique in the way it presented traditional dance and storytellers from deep in the Kalahari desert, the festival programme taught me, among other things, that there are at least three more indigenous languages that are not recognised because they're not written down, and Don could speak them. The Kimberley stage was broad enough to contain and cherish his unique genius and gave him space to demonstrate his prolific response to the canon of indigenous oral poetry, and equally the lyrical in English.

Don's relationship with mortality may have its roots in another formative experience, he confided in me when we were on tour in the United Kingdom (UK). As a teenage gangster in Sophiatown in the 1950s, before he got involved with politics, he killed a rival gangster in self-defence.

Eternally wounded by the experience, Don became the poet of compassion, of anything life-affirming.

His spirituality was also political: his Pan-Africanism was non-racial and welcoming. In 2009, we joined a delegation, including Kgositsile and Lebo Mashile to tour the UK.

As we walked through the airport, waiters, servers, bartenders and cleaners flocked to greet the two gentlemen of letters, while white fellow travellers looked on bemusedly.

I was reminded, after having experienced the same with James Matthews two years previously, that we are seen by those who are invisible.

And poets are more than wordsmiths, they deliver heart and minds from emotional suffering and ignorance and inspire agency. It is a calling, not a career.

Mattera and his works were banned for more than 10 years during apartheid. After the banning order was lifted, he self-published his poetry collections, and in 2008, Rose Francis, the founder of African Perspectives Publishing, republished *Memory is the Weapon* and *Azanian Love Song*.

If a poet's value is based on their commercial currency, many of us would not be able to claim the title.

Mattera's values, strongly influenced by his Pan-Africanism, Black Consciousness and Islam, see the well-being of the individual as indivisible from that of the collective, and the humanities would do well to follow that example.

A baobab kneels

The aesthetic concerns of oral poetry do not always successfully transfer to the page; sound demands a musicality that is sometimes at odds with the content of a poem.

Don Mattera's unforgettable voice straddled traditions and united divergent and often contradictory imperatives: he was an oral poet and a writer, an Italian and an African, a nationalist and a Pan-African.

> Don Mattera's unforgettable voice straddled traditions and united divergent and often contradictory imperatives: he was an oral poet and a writer, an Italian and an African, a nationalist and a Pan-African.

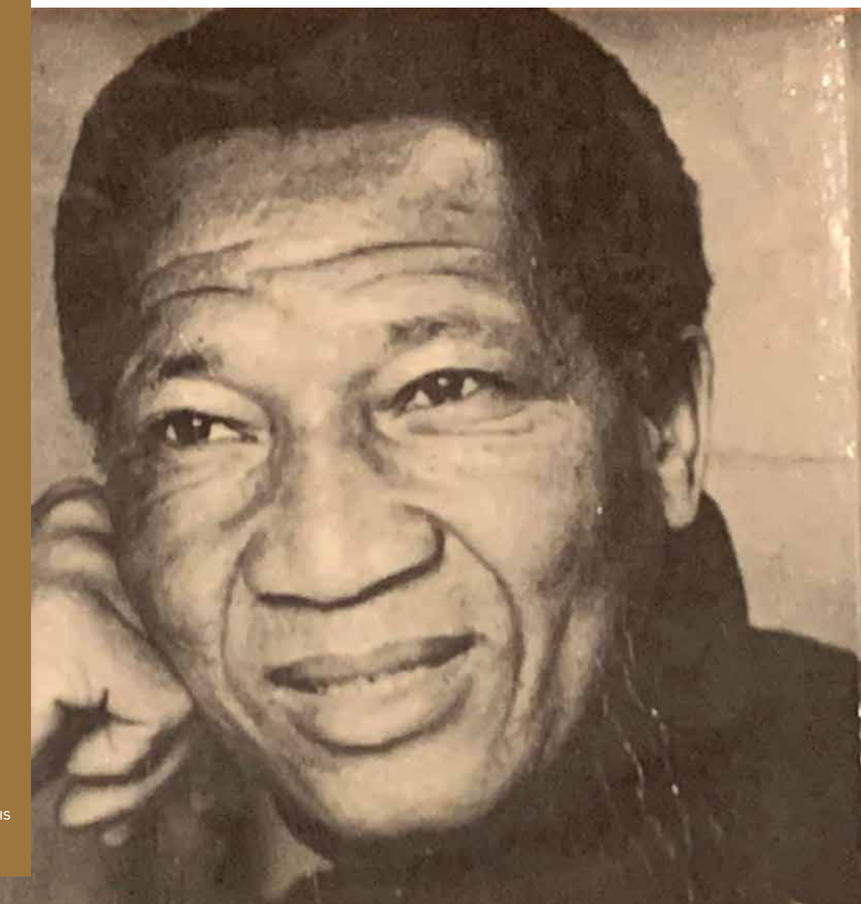
To keep his vision alive, we could start by conceiving of creativity as a human potential in everyone, and prescribe his works to students of medicine, law, social work and administration, and not just teaching and literature.

In his tribute at the memorial, Teddy said that his father was an oak who left many seeds, but I disagree. He is a baobab who seeded a forest.

This article was first published on *The Conversation*.

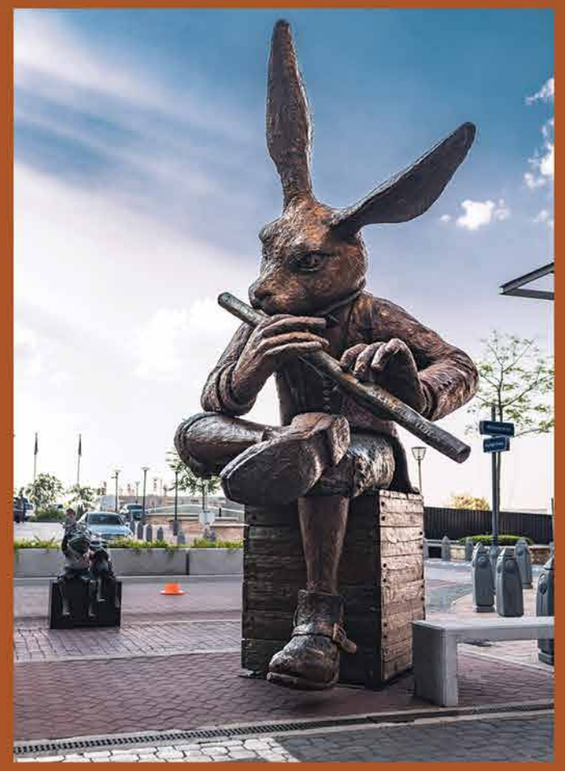
Baobab by Phillippa Yaa de Villiers
For all the Matteras

You say an oak has fallen
I say a baobab kneels on the earth
its thick fingers
offering chalkty fruits that quench thirst
medicine, perfume, textiles, shelter. Stories.
Baobab
Unfathomable presence
immeasurable girth
babobas do not fall I say
but just the other day I read
a 2500-year old baobab has died
this giving tree
suddently mortal
like any living thing
and now
more precious
that it has gone.
Noboty can tell me where
my grandmother is buried
so I go to visit poets
I kneel to feel the earth buzzing
with precious life like a child I lift
my arms remembering
my baby son saying
up me mummy, up me:
I may kneel like a baobab but my arms
are full of memories stained with regret:
spent so much time thinking I was useless
I became uselesws, until Don kneeling
on the earth, holding the whirling universe in his
arms, returns to up me again.









Fifth edition of SCULPTX

presents over 200 works and 80 artists

This annual sculpture fair, the largest of its kind in South Africa, this year, presented over 200 works.

The fifth edition of SculptX ran from 1 September to 16 October 2022 at The Melrose Gallery, Melrose Arch, Johannesburg, offering art lovers the unique opportunity to view the largest and most diverse collection of sculptures.

This annual sculpture fair, the largest of its kind in South Africa, this year, presented over 200 works. The materials they were fashioned from varied from bronze to wood, glass, crystal, steel and bone to stone, resin and other media. Similarly, the modes of expression encompassed in this vast number of sculptures varied widely from figurative works, depicting the human body, the natural world, or the built environment to abstract works, where form, texture and line entertained the eye.

In this way, SculptX revealed the breadths and depths that this traditional art medium could offer and the abundance of artistic talent in the country that had applied itself to this three-dimensional art form.

In short, SculptX is a celebration of all manner of sculptural expression.

It was established by The Melrose Gallery in 2017 in association with Melrose Arch and was on view across multiple venues. "We wanted to create a platform to promote sculpture and sculptors to those who live, work and play in the precinct, as well as art collectors and enthusiasts in general," said Craig Mark, Director of The Melrose Gallery.

This fair was also conceived in response to the increase in bronze-casting foundries in South Africa, which has led to a growth in the production and interest in sculpture.

This has translated into the establishment of outdoor sculpture parks in the country by several art foundations and artists primarily working in this medium.

Clearly, there is a need for more platforms for sculpture. SculptX provides a space for artists at different levels in their careers. Established artists – Willie Bester, Pitika Ntuli, Andre Stead and Strijdom van der Merwe, among numerous others – showed alongside a younger set of artists pushing the boundaries of the medium such as Mandy Johnston, Simon Zitha and Bridget Modema as well as other emerging and mid-career artists still exploring the possibilities of sculpture.

Female artists were represented strongly in the fair with works by Wilma Cruise, Elizabeth Balcomb, Ela Cronje, Rirhandzu Makhubele and Sarah Richards, among many others, dispelling the myth that sculpture is primarily the preserve of male artists.

"We have put much effort into sourcing female and young artists from previously disadvantaged communities to give them the benefit of this valuable platform as they are often overlooked and underrepresented in this genre," added Mark.

A public call-out process was used to identify works for the fair and attracted proposals from many emerging artists.

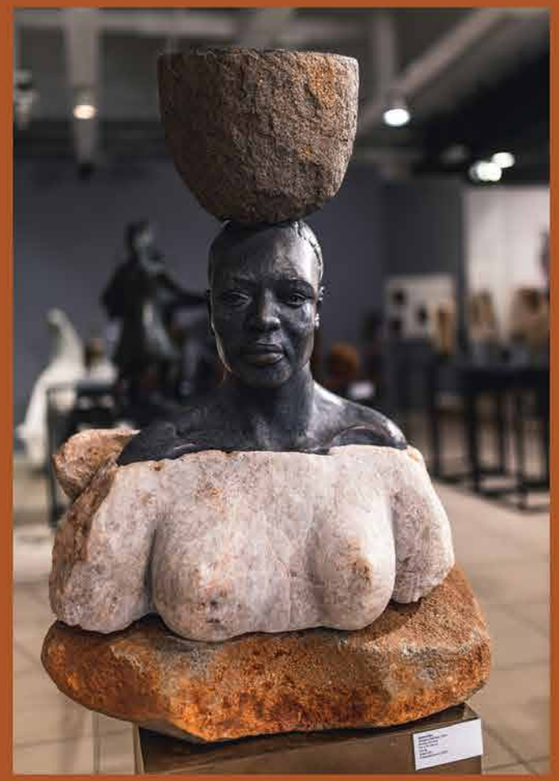
Curator, Ruzy Rusike, considered more than 300 submissions before settling on the 200 works by 80 artists. This approach ensured that SculptX remained an open platform that offered many surprises in terms of its content.

The works were shown at The Melrose Gallery and several other indoor and outdoor venues in Melrose Arch.

This year, the fair once again paired with an online viewing room where more details about the artworks and the artists were available, allowing those near and far to enjoy and browse through the vast content this fair offers.

Panel discussions and workshops focussed on the artists and sculpture as a form of expression were held during the run of the fair.





Why the V&A's new Africa Fashion exhibition is important – and long overdue

> "Fashion is a catalyst to tell deeper, richer, expanded stories from across the African continent. We hope visitors will be inspired and assumptions will be challenged." – Christine Checinska, Curator

By Benita Odogwu-Atkinson
Senior Lecturer in Fashion Design, University for the Creative Arts



A landmark show has recently opened its doors at the V&A in London, where exhibitions celebrating fashion and design from around the world have omitted the continent of Africa for years. In fact, nearly 200 years. For the first time in its 170-year history, the V&A is holding an exhibition that centres solely on African fashion.

Fashion has long been seen and taught as centred in Europe, with Japanese designers occasionally highlighted as international non-Western exponents. The fashion education experienced by students often relies on a design cycle that has not changed since the 1980s, focussed on well-known designers from New York, London, Paris and Milan.

Fashion internationalism must now look beyond a Eurocentric perspective and draw from a broader source of creativity with respect – and appeal to a wider market. It is time to break the stereotypical elitist view of Africa and fashion. And this latest exhibition from the V&A, Africa Fashion, is an excellent place to start.

Decolonising fashion

Could the lack of recognition of African fashion be pinpointed to the years of colonialism and the view that many cultures and heritages of Africa were dismissed as "simple" and not worthy of archiving or exhibiting? Even in the capturing of the past, there is a hierarchical process that pushes some cultures to the bottom of a historical league table.

The "simple" take by early colonialists on African dress – or lack of it as they saw it – fuelled the dismissal of the African continent as unsophisticated or unqualified to offer fashion for decades. This thinking was yet another form of "othering" that grew from the imagery and language perpetrated to "sell" slavery. Colonialists portrayed Africans as uncivilised and different to European people and culture, thereby dehumanising the African continent.

European designers have always borrowed – sometimes even plundered and tokenised – African cultures in their designs and catwalk shows. Western designers have been applauded for their take on African heritage and culture, while the originators have been dismissed and left without a platform.

The Western use of African textiles, colours, patterns and style often exhibited disrespect and lack of understanding, resulting in appropriation rather than appreciation.

At last, in this exhibition, the opportunity to celebrate African fashion has arisen, providing recognition and status to wonderful sources of inspiration, creativity and cultural abundancy as Cameroonian designer Imane Ayissi has pointed out in the past: "Showcasing, under the golden crown moulding of a Parisian building during Haute Couture Week, luxurious contemporary garments made of textiles woven by artisans in Cameroon, Ghana or Nigeria is for me the best way of showing that Africa knowhow is just as sophisticated and valuable as artisanship in the rest of the world."

Groundbreaking

The V&A exhibition has been two years in the making, and is an opportunity to showcase vibrant fashion history overlooked by museums and galleries in the United Kingdom, often separated and presented in anthropology and ethnoecology sections.

The entrance to Africa Fashion is welcoming and beautifully presented, indicating from the start that this is a respectful space that will tell the story of rich creativity, but by no means the whole story. The exhibition was masterminded by the V&A's senior curator for Africa and the Diaspora, Christine Checinska, and initiates various conversation points such as the political and cultural renaissance of Africa, and how this impacts designers.

An important theme is highlighting the variety of cultures and nations that make up Africa, which is a continent, not a country. The exhibition covers 45 designers from more than 20 countries and serves as an informative foundation to build on for fashion lovers, educators and industry contributors.

The show sets out to involve the Diaspora of Africa from the start. As a woman of African heritage, it is wonderful to see family albums of photographs so relatable to my own. These images capture artisanal craft, style and pride, and are evidence that fashion was and is very much part of the lives of so many Africans today.

A variety of short films show how fashion from Africa retains traditional elements combined with contemporary touches, and explore creativity and inspiration while offering opportunities for discussion.

The presentation of traditional clothing and fashion on display embodies the myriad cultures and heritages within the continent. Divided into two sections, the first acts as an introduction and looks at the development of post-colonialist fashion.

We see the Ghanian Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah wearing a traditional kente cloth as he announces his country's independence from British rule in 1957, and watch as Nelson Mandela rocks his signature look, the casual Madiba shirt that made him feel connected to his people. There is also an array of striking imagery from the well-known studios of photographers Sanle Sory and Seydou Keita from the 1960s and 1970s.

The contemporary section of the exhibition presents fashion from a variety of designers, well known on the continent. The new-era designers have included brands like Nigerian label Orange Culture and sustainable textile designer Sindiso Khumalo, both of which address political issues such as feminism and LGBTQI+ rights in their work.

The Africa Fashion exhibition is the start of a conversation on creative developments taking place, which have been largely ignored in the west. Its vivid and glorious displays challenge stereotypes and educate the onlooker by enriching the knowledge of African fashion. I urge you to go and see it for yourself.

This article was first published on *The Conversation*.

A new show from the V&A Museum in London is always a highlight on the cultural calendar – and Africa Fashion is set to exceed all expectations.

The landmark exhibition brings together an extraordinary collection of work, from the pioneering 20th century African designers through to new-gen creatives, to showcase the continent's flourishing fashion scene.

It's been years in the planning, but Africa Fashion finally opened at the V&A Museum on 2 July – and curator Dr Christine Checinska is excited. "Africa Fashion is the UK's most extensive exhibition of African fashions to date, giving a platform to creatives from over 20 countries across a broad spectrum of aesthetics. It is both a timely and conscious celebration of this innovative and impactful scene," she tells *The Glossary*.

The exhibition is beautifully researched and presented, focussing on two time periods – independence and liberation, and the contemporary moment – spread across a couple of floors of the gallery. Checinska – a creative designer for brands such as Margaret Howell, as well as a scholar, fashion historian and the V&A's inaugural Senior Curator of African and African Diaspora Textiles and Fashion – and project curator Elisabeth Murray have brought together over 250 objects to tell this story.

Africa Fashion runs from 2 July until 16 April 2023.

vam.ac.uk

Spiritual traditions fuel South African jazz artist Tumi Mogorosi's new album

When black South African jazz players, decades ago, heard and admired American jazz on record or at the movies, they not only copied the styles and approaches. They also employed many ways to "make it our own".

By Gwen Ansell
Associate of the Gordon Institute for Business Science, University of Pretoria

Blues … Black … Darker than grey/ Creation sounds Gold Reef Mine rockfall crush-sounds/ Guitar-string gun-spit tear flesh/ Black sonic science/ Darkest Acoustics … (from Where Are The Keys? on Group Theory: Black Music)

South African poet Lesego Rampolokeng often writes about black music in his poems. His collaborations with musicians on record are rarer but always remarkable. There was the casette-only 1994 African Axemen collaboration with Zimbabwean Louis Mhlanga and a stellar crew of other Pan-African guitarists. And his *Tears for Marikana* on Salim Washington's album, *Sankofa*. And now the track *Where Are the Keys*? on South African drummer and composer Tumi Mogorosi's fourth outing: *Group Theory: Black Music*.

What makes the collaboration so satisfying is the shared skill of both Rampolokeng and Mogorosi in signifying. Not the "signification" of semiotics, but the righteous, subversive signifying perfected by the black churches and theorised by United States literary critic Henry Louis Gates Jr. For him, signifying is "the practice of representing an idea indirectly, through a commentary that is often humourous, boastful, insulting, or provocative". Communities repurpose ideas; poets like Rampolokeng do it via wordplay; jazz musicians, every time they improvise.

So, when black South African jazz players, decades ago, heard and admired American jazz on record or at the movies, they not only copied the styles and approaches. They also employed many ways to "make it our own". When Peter Rezant's Merry Blackbirds recorded the international standard *Heatwave* in 1939, for example, they played the tune straight – but the words, in an African language, became a praise song for the band's national prowess.

Tumi Mogorosi

Musician, activist and scholar Mogorosi started his musical career as a chorister in church. So, it's not surprising that part of his signifying has often been through working with voices. From singing, he moved to guitar and later drums. At 18, he studied music at the Tshwane University of Technology. He now has a Master's degree in Fine Arts and is registered on a doctoral programme.

Along the way, he produced his 2014 debut album, *Project ELO* (from a sextet with four accompanying voices). In 2017, he was part of the Swiss-based Sanctum Sanctorium with its allusion to sacred rites. He worked internationally with, among others, United Kingdom (UK) saxophonist Shabaka Hutchings.

Those international collaborations set the scene for the joint release of the new album between South African label Mushroom Half Hour and UK imprint New Soil.

In 2020, in a trio called Wretched with vocalist Gabisile Motuba and guitarist Andrei van Wyk, he improvised and experimented with vocals and noise.

The album

Group Theory: Black Music has echoes of all those, but is a sonically distinct new project. The album's notes refer to two musical sources, from South African and American jazz traditions.

The rich South African vocal tradition of jazz composers like Todd Matshikiza and Victor Ntoni, and the work with voices of radical American jazzmen like Max Roach, Billy Harper and Andrew Hill.

Mogorosi says: "(Black voices in concert have) this idea of mass, of a group of people gathering, which has a political implication. And the operatic voice has both a presence and a capacity to scream, a capacity for affect. The instrumental group can sustain the intensity of that affect, and the chorus can go beyond improvisation, towards communal melodies that everyone can be a part of."

So, alongside the jazz quintet (Mogorosi, reedman Mthunzi Mvubu, trumpeter Tumi Pheko, guitarist Reza Khota and bassist Dalisu Ndlazi) the tracks employ a nine-voice chorus, predominantly singing in unison to shape the communal voice. There are also two guest vocalists, Motuba and Siyabonga Mthembu, each providing a very different interpretation of the traditional *Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child*.

That choice of song (the only one not composed by Mogorosi) makes explicit the community and spiritual traditions shared by Africa and the black Diaspora. Mthembu's take on it is inspiring, heartfelt and soul-infused: the massed voices echoing the historic style of the Howard Roberts Chorale. Motuba's voice is more subversive: underlined by Khota's guitar improvisation, she fractures lyric and phrasing deliberately to build tension with the choir.

The very distinctive instrumental voices and the presence of veteran piano guest Andile Yenana, also interrogate conventional roles in an ensemble. Who is a leader and who a composer when each sonic element cedes and creates space for the ideas of others. Far less smooth is the sound of the chorus on *Thaba Bosiu*, the track featuring Yenana, where fragmented textures and that capacity to "scream" that Mogorosi notes come to the fore over urgent, imaginative improvisation from drums, guitar, piano and bass. The track is faded out (it's a long album), but that's the one I wanted more of.

The theory

The theoretical underpinnings of the album are many. The title, *Group Theory: Black Music,* foregrounds three: association, identity and closure. But, there is nothing dry and theoretical about the sound. It's warm, human and at points more tuneful than some of Mogorosi's previous work.

The drummer quotes jazz historian and critic Amiri Baraka's proposition about the "New Black Music" of another era – "Find the self, then kill it" – to point to the collective and global struggle to generate new identities, ideas and sounds from those who were previously hemmed in.

The closing track, *Where Are the Keys*?, with the prominent presence of veterans Yenana and Rampolokeng, and the poet's encyclopedic stringing together of all the music's sonic, intellectual and revolutionary influences, ties everything together.

Reading the poetry (which is supplied) is a rich source of perspectives for all kinds of thinking beyond the edges of a record. The situation of war, poverty, but also creativity into which the music is published means that, right now, closure isn't an answer; it's a question too:

"*Slash that … vinyl scratch/ The pain slides through the gash/ Tripping off morning horns/ Past the dawning…*"

This article was first published on *The Conversation.*

The theoretical underpinnings of the album are many. The title, *Group Theory: Black Music*, foregrounds three: association, identity and closure. But, there is nothing dry and theoretical about the sound. It's warm, human and at points more tuneful than some of Mogorosi's previous work.



South African resorts and hotels among the best in the world

For their 35th annual Readers' Choice Awards survey, a record 600 000 registered *Condé Nast Traveler* voters weighed in on their favourite resorts and hotels in the world.The *Condé Nast Traveler* Readers' Choice Awards are the longest-running and most prestigious recognition of excellence in the travel industry. Here are the South African resorts and hotels that global trotters loved most this year:

Number 7 – Singita Sabi Sand

Singita Sabi Sand includes three well-appointed options that provide an elegant base from which to bask in the natural beauty of one of South Africa's most renowned game reserves.

Singita's founding property, Ebony Lodge, sits surrounded by a grove of its namesake trees, with 12 suites inspired by old explorers' camps. Boulders Lodge, meanwhile, was named after the ancient rocks strewn along the banks of the Sand River, and the 12 glass-fronted suites have artfully pared-down interiors, featuring fossilised tree stumps and other found objects.

And Castleton Lodge occupies the ancestral home of Singita founder Luke Bailes. Its Cape Dutch charm, mullioned windows, antiques, expert safari guides, and longtime family staff remain – but the wine cellar, state-of-the-art kitchen, and full gym are all new.



Number 20 – Grootbos Private Nature Reserve

For a long time, lodges in South Africa tended to be geared toward the Big Five. Grootbos, on the fynbos slopes near Walker Bay, south of Cape Town, is different.

This 6,177-acre private reserve is about treasuring the smaller, finer things. With 889 plant species, seven of which are newly discovered, it is first and foremost a rare botanical treasure trove, in which owner Michael Lutzeyer has employed some of the Cape's leading botanists and entomologists.

The lodges are glassy and contemporary, but there's a constant call outdoors – from the outside showers to tracking elusive aardvark and Cape leopard, or having lantern-lit dinners in a 1,000-year-old milkwood forest, all fairy-tale tangles.

You can ride horses across the sands, past ancient sea caves; go on flower safaris, tree-planting expeditions, and whale-watching flights to see the calving Southern right whales that migrate inshore between July and December.

Most of the food on the carbon-negative reserve is grown on site, and nothing comes from more than 30 miles away, with many of the staff graduates of the in-house hospitality academy.

But the main takeaway of Grootbos is that just stopping and looking – at the interconnectedness and mad beauty of life – is the most mesmerising thing of all.



Condé Nast Traveler also released the list of the best hotels in the world and South Africa took three places in this category.

Number 26 – Babylonstoren

What if you could actually visit the Garden of Eden? And what if it was surrounded by vineyards, historic Cape Dutch farm buildings, and a formal French-style potager garden, where you could pick your own strawberries and fragrant herbs?

At Babylonstoren, in the Drakenstein Valley, 33 miles northeast of Cape Town, the mythical garden comes to life. Founded in 1690, the 590-acre compound is modelled on the farms that supplied the ships making their way around the Cape of Good Hope en route to India.

The cottages and suites are minimalist but stylish. You won't find a grand lobby or an obsequious concierge here, but the staff, most of whom are wearing T-shirts, aprons, or khakis, combine a genuine eagerness to help with a high level of knowledge about the farm and its long history.

Stay long enough and eventually – after a visit to the on-site bakery, the winery, the cheesemaker, the butcher and the farm-tank-style swimming pool – you may forget that you're staying at a hotel.



Number 38 – One&Only Cape Town

Cape Town's only urban resort One&Only has a prime Waterfront location next door to the Two Oceans Aquarium and is within strolling distance of the Water Shed, an indoor market filled with must-have local designer brands.

Much more of a resort than a hotel, it has space in abundance and everything is dramatically scaled, including the reception lobby leading into Vista Bar and Lounge, the social heart of the hotel where cocktails, high tea and light meals are served in great style.

Triple-volume glass windows frame views of Table Mountain, and the air is infused with a distinctive woody room fragrance – something you remember instantly as a returning guest. The spa is a destination in its own right, situated on its own island, with 12 treatment rooms, private wet areas and a yoga pavilion in the garden.

Make use of the spa thermal suites, even if you don't book a spa treatment. His-and-hers hydrotherapy facilities each have a vitality pool, aroma-steam room, sauna, ice fountain and experience showers.



Number 42 – Cape Cadogan Boutique Hotel

This elegant 15-room Georgian-era townhouse is tucked away in a residential street in Gardens, a fashionable, upbeat neighbourhood known for its restaurants, bars and interior design shops.

Table Mountain forms a majestic backdrop, and Lion's Head beckons. From the outside, Cape Cadogan looks like a beautiful private home complete with crisp white paintwork, black shutters, manicured garden and pool terrace.

Step inside and you enter a world of Bohemian chic. It won't be easy to find a smart room in such a brilliant location, as slickly managed, luxurious, or private at this price anywhere else in Cape Town.

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