

UBUNTU



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WEEKLY ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER * THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & COOPERATION



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PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA TO PARTICIPATE IN SIXTH AU-EU SUMMIT IN BRUSSELS



President Cyril Ramaphosa will participate in the sixth African Union-European Union (AU-EU) Summit on 17 and 18 February 2022.

The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Dr Naledi Pandor, is accompanying the President.

President Ramaphosa has been invited by the Chairperson of the AU Commission to participate in the summit.

The summit will hold an opening ceremony, which will be followed by seven thematic roundtables in which leaders will exchange views and commitments on:

- financing for sustainable and inclusive growth
- climate change and energy transition, digital and transport [connectivity and infrastructure]
- peace, security and governance
- private-sector support and economic integration
- education, culture and vocational training, migration and mobility
- agriculture and sustainable development
- health systems and vaccine production.

President Ramaphosa will participate in the climate change and energy transition, digital and transport roundtable on 17 February and will chair the roundtable on health systems and vaccine production on 18 February 2022.

The strategic partnership between Africa and the EU

The strategic partnership between Africa and the EU was initiated through the first AU-EU Summit in Cairo, Egypt, in 2000.

The partnership became structured through the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, which was an outcome of the second AU-EU Summit in Lisbon, Portugal, in December 2007.

This strategy is the overall cooperation framework that governs this partnership.

The 2022 summit is expected to adopt a declaration and deliverables that set out broad agreement between Africa and the EU on how both continents can build greater prosperity.

The aim is to launch an ambitious Africa-Europe Investment Package, taking into account global challenges such as climate change and the current health crisis.

Leaders will also explore tools and solutions to promote stability and security through a renewed peace and security architecture.



The opening and closing ceremonies of the summit will be livestreamed as follows:

Opening ceremony

Date: Thursday, 17 February 2022

Time: 15h00 (Central European Standard Time) or 16h00 South African Standard Time.

Closing ceremony

Date: Friday, 18 February 2022

Time: 12:00 (Central European Standard Time) or 13:00 South African Standard Time.

GOVERNMENT IDENTIFIES SECTORS TO BOOST ECONOMIC GROWTH



In an endeavour to revive South Africa's economy, government has identified various sectors to stimulate investment and job creation.

WATCH THE VIDEO 

"The hemp and cannabis sector has the potential to create more than 130 000 new jobs. We are therefore streamlining the regulatory processes so that the hemp and cannabis sector can thrive like it is in other countries such as Lesotho," President Cyril Ramaphosa said.

Delivering the State of the Nation Address (SONA) on Thursday, 10 February 2022, the President said government would review the policy and regulatory framework for industrial hemp and cannabis to realise the huge potential for investment and job creation.

"Our people in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and elsewhere are ready to farm with this age-old commodity and bring it to market in new and innovative forms," President Ramaphosa said.

Last year, South Africa's unemployment rate reached its highest recorded level.

The President said unemployment had been caused by low growth, which has in turn resulted from a long-term decline in investment.

"An important pillar of our Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan is to revitalise our manufacturing base and create globally competitive export industries. In the past year, we launched new master plans in the steel industry, furniture and global business services.

"Through these plans, business, government and labour are working together to increase production and create more jobs in the sector," the President said.

In the clothing industry, a number of retailers have announced ambitious localisation sourcing plans.

"While we help existing industries to grow, we are also nurturing new opportunities for growth and jobs. Government and the private sector have worked closely together to grow the global business services sector from a small group of companies to one of the world's leading players," the President said.

The global business services sector is on track to create 500 000 new jobs over the next few years.

"To attract investors into the mining minerals needed in the new global economy, we will soon be finalising our mining exploration strategy. We will continue to support the development of the upstream gas industry, as it holds huge potential for job creation and broader economic development," the President said.

Government will ensure that this is done in strict accordance with the environmental and other laws of the country.

"Our economy cannot grow without efficient ports and railways. Over several years, the functioning of our ports has declined relative to ports in other parts of the world and on the African continent. This constrains economic activity," the President said.

He said the agricultural sector, for example, relied heavily on efficient, well-run ports to export their produce to overseas markets.

"Fresh produce cannot wait for days and even weeks stuck in a terminal. This hurts businesses and compromises our country's reputation as an exporter of quality fresh produce.

"Transnet is addressing these challenges and is currently focussed on improving operational efficiencies at the ports through procuring additional equipment and implementing new systems to reduce congestion," the President said.

Transnet will ask for proposals from private partners for the Durban and Ngqura container terminals within the next few months, which will enable partnerships to be in place at both terminals by October 2022.

"Transnet will start the process of providing third-party access to its freight rail network from April 2022 by making slots available on the container corridor between Durban and City Deep in Gauteng."

In addition, Transnet has developed partnerships with the private sector to address cable theft and vandalism on the freight rail network through advanced technologies and additional security personnel.

This collaborative effort is already showing results in reduced disruptions to rail operations.

The President delivered the address during a hybrid joint sitting of the two Houses (National Assembly and National Council of Provinces) at the Cape Town City Hall.

The event took place at the Cape Town City Hall, following the damage by fire to Parliament on Sunday, 2 January 2022.

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

SA EVISA SYSTEM LAUNCHED IN 14 COUNTRIES

President Cyril Ramaphosa says the eVisa system has been launched in 14 countries, including China, India, Kenya and Nigeria, according to government's commitment.



President Ramaphosa said government was also streamlining and modernising the visa application process to make it easier to travel to South Africa for tourism, business and work.

In his State of the Nation Address, delivered in Cape Town on Thursday, 10 February 2022, President Ramaphosa said the revised Critical Skills List had been published for the first time since 2014, following detailed technical work and extensive consultations with business and labour.

"The updated list reflects the skills that are in shortage today, to ensure that our immigration policy matches the demands of our economy," President Ramaphosa said.

He said a comprehensive review of the work visa system was currently underway, led by a former Director-General of Home Affairs, Mavuso Msimang. This review is exploring the possibility of new visa categories that could enable economic growth, such as a start-up visa and a remote working visa," President Ramaphosa said.

President Ramaphosa said the world over, the ability to attract skilled immigrants was the hallmark of a modern, thriving economy.

The South Africa e-visa application is aimed to make the immigration process more fluid and to amplify the border security checks. It allows eligible citizens to enter the country without going to an embassy.

The e-Visa enables the prospective visitor to apply for a visa from his/her home country online without visiting the Mission and also pay the visa fee online.

On arrival, the visitor presents the authorisation to the immigration authorities who would then stamp the entry into the country.

The South Africa online visa is aimed at being available to a larger number of nationalities, such as the United States, Australia, Canada and all of European Union member states.

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

DIRCO AWARDS CELEBRATE EXCELLENCE IN DIPLOMACY

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) has recognised, among others, nuclear scientist Nomso Kana for her contributions in empowering women and girls in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region during the sixth Ubuntu Awards, held on Saturday, 12 February 2022, at the ICC in Cape Town.

WATCH THE VIDEO



The Ubuntu Awards seek to recognise the efforts of South Africans who promote South Africa's national interests and values through their service and personal contribution towards advancing the country's image across the globe.

Addressing the glittering occasion, the Minister of International Relations and cooperation, Dr Naledi Pandor, said:

“We introduced the Ubuntu Awards to recognise South African citizens and organisations who fly the South African flag high on the global stage. Through excelling in their chosen fields, these patriots have become our country's ambassadors. When the world sees them, they see South Africa.

“Allow me then to take this opportunity to congratulate all the nominees and the winners who will be recognised tonight. Thank you for all you do, for going out of your way to make South Africa look good.”

Kana, who is also a South African delegation leader for the world sustainability energy forum based in Austria, took home the statue for social responsibility, which she dedicated to girls she has met through her work.

Kana says, “Girls that I meet in the SADC region, with so much interest in science, really want to contribute to the growth of our continent and this is where we believe our generation will lead in artificial intelligence. Africa, and our country, will not just consume, we’ll also participate, innovate and generate ideas that can put our continent in the forefront.”

Aspen Pharmacare won the Global Economic Diplomacy Award and Old Mutual won the Africa Global Diplomacy Award, during the award ceremony.

World Health Organisation Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, received the Special Ubuntu Humanitarian Award.

Dr Ghebreyesus was in the country to discuss progress in making Africa self-sufficient in the production of COVID19 vaccines and related treatments.

“We hope that this year will be the end of the acute phase of the pandemic. Of course, we have to reach 70% vaccination coverage in each and every country. And we have to observe the public health measures, but I believe that the future in South Africa, our continent and the whole world will be better if we can use this pandemic as an opportunity, because it’s not just a health issue. It has exposed everything, the inequities, the inequalities and all the problems that we have,” Dr Ghebreyesus said upon receiving the award.

The South African soccer fraternity was well represented by legendary coach Pitso Mosimane, who walked away with the 2022 Ubuntu Sports Diplomacy Award after excelling abroad with Egyptian soccer giants Al Ahly.



The winners of the various categories were:

- 2022 Ubuntu Award in Economic Diplomacy Africa: Old Mutual
- Ubuntu Economic Diplomacy Award Global: Aspen Pharmacare
- Ubuntu Social Responsibility Award: Nomso Faith Kana
- Ubuntu Sports Diplomacy Award: Pitso Mosimane
- Ubuntu Youth Award: Lesego Finger
- Ubuntu Cultural Diplomacy Veteran Award: Don Mattera
- Ubuntu Cultural Diplomacy Youth Award: Master KG
- OR Tambo Lifetime Achievement in Diplomacy Award: Aziz Pahad
- Special Ubuntu Humanitarian Award: Dr Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

The judges were:

- Ambassador Maud Dlomo
- Thebe Ikalafeng
- Leanne Manas
- Dr Sthembile Mbete
- Chichi Mponya
- Robert Marawa
- Clayson Monyela.

– Source: www.sabc.com



SA'S MRNA VACCINE HUB MAKES WAY FOR SELF-RELIANCE

Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) Minister, Dr Blade Nzimande, believes that COVID-19 has demonstrated the importance of investment in science, technology and innovation as the country races to manufacture its lifesaving vaccine.



“Therefore, preparing for future pandemics is key and so the WHO mRNA global hub is a critical building block to ensure that South Africa and the whole continent have the production capacity that is essential for equitable vaccine roll-out,” Minister Nzimande added.

Minister Nzimande; World Health Organisation (WHO) Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus; Health Minister, Dr Joe Phaahla; and Belgium Minister of Development Cooperation and Urban Policy, Meryame Kitir; were visiting public- and private-sector partners that are collaborating to develop and build the WHO’s global mRNA vaccine technology transfer hub locally.

“The mRNA technology is not only for COVID-19, we hope it can be adapted to help us in the fight against HIV, tuberculosis and malaria, which is why we’re investing heavily, alongside international partners, in this initiative,” Minister Nzimande said.

The pandemic shone the spotlight on the limited global vaccine supply, leading to disparities in COVID-19 vaccine access, leaving billions of people – especially in low- and middle-income countries – vulnerable to serious disease and death.

According to the DSI, low levels of vaccine coverage also provide the ideal conditions for new variants to develop.

While supply has now increased, the department is concerned that access to any new formulations of COVID-19 vaccines – tailored specifically to new variants – would likely also be inequitable.

The department believes that this is due to manufacturing capacity that remains limited to a handful of companies and countries.

South Africa and France have also joined hands in accelerating vaccine production in Africa.

Meanwhile, a consortium, including the Medicines Patent Pool, Biovac, Afrigen Biologics and Vaccines, DSI, the South African Medical Research Council, a network of universities and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention are driving the initiative.

Minister Phaahla has warned that the country is not out of the woods yet in the fight against COVID-19.

"We are likely to be hit by new COVID-19 variants and a fifth wave that coincides with our winter season, which would compound our flu and cold season. However, we can reduce the impact by ensuring most people are vaccinated, especially the most vulnerable groups," he stressed.

The new hub is not just for South Africa, said the Minister but provided a one-stop shop for low- and middle-income countries across the world to benefit and end vaccine inequity.

Afrigen, which is part of the WHO's mRNA consortium, recently announced it developed its version of an mRNA shot, using Moderna COVID-19 vaccine data.

"This virus shows how interconnected we all are and I am proud that Belgium – and other European Union countries – are now collaborating to build vaccine capacity everywhere," said Kitir.

"Going forward, we need more sharing of licences, technology transfer and know-how, so that in this pandemic and future ones, we can roll vaccines out quickly and equitably to the whole global population."

The pandemic, according to Dr Ghebreyesus, has highlighted the need for increased local production of vaccines globally, especially in poor countries.

"The WHO mRNA global hub is a major step in that direction, by sharing technology and building on the capacity and scientific expertise that already exist in South Africa."

The global hubs will also act as training facilities where technology is established at an industrial scale and clinical development performed.

The WHO will complement this activity and assist African countries and other low- and middle-income countries to strengthen biomanufacturing capacity as well as regulatory capacity.

The WHO's Regional Director, Dr Matshidiso Moeti, said: "The mRNA hubs provide an unprecedented opportunity for capacity development, putting Africa on the path to self-reliance".

"We are opening the door to better health and well-being for our people."

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

AFRICA ON COURSE TO “CONTROLLING” COVID-19 PANDEMIC

World Health Organisation (WHO) Africa Regional Director, Dr Matshidiso Moeti, says the continent is on course to controlling the COVID-19 pandemic.



She was speaking as the continent is about to observe two years since the first case of COVID-19 was identified on 14 February 2020.

Since then, at least 11 million cases and 242 000 deaths as a result of the virus have been recorded in Africa.

"If the current trends hold, there is light at the end of the tunnel. As long as we remain vigilant and act intensively, particularly on vaccinations, the continent is on track for controlling the pandemic," she said.

Dr Moeti reflected that the past two years had been "extremely difficult" for the continent.

"But against all odds, Africa is weathering this terrible storm. The continent's long history and experience with large outbreaks, along with an accumulation of learning and expertise since the onset of COVID-19, have seen the response become more effective with each new wave," she said.

According to Dr Moeti, the first wave of infections lasted 29 weeks as compared to the fourth wave, which lasted for some six weeks.

Deaths as a result of the virus have declined from 2.5 deaths per 100 people in the first wave to less than one during the sixth wave.

Dr Moeti emphasised that although the declines were a show of progress, the devastation of the pandemic still loomed over the continent.

"[The] pandemic has taken a brutal toll with tens of thousands of lives lost and incalculable damage brought to African economies and communities. The World Bank estimates that the pandemic has pushed up to 40 million people in Africa into poverty.

"Controlling this pandemic must be a priority if we are also to end the destruction and disruption and begin regaining control over our lives," she said.

The regional director said countries must continue to focus on capacity-building in order to fight further infection outbreaks or waves.

"When we move into the next so-called control phase of COVID-19, or living with COVID-19, the capacity of countries to reduce and control incidents of infection will be key. The ability to promptly prevent, diagnose and treat cases is what will mitigate the long-term consequences of future infections.

"We also need to maintain the groundswell of political will that we are now seeing in support of local manufacturing of vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics. Increased access and affordability are the only solution to the vaccine inequity witnessed since the start of this pandemic," she said.

Dr Moeti said although these factors remained vital in the fight against COVID-19, vaccination remained Africa's best defence with some 85% of Africans yet to receive a single dose.

"To reach the levels of immunity achieved in other parts of the world, vaccine uptake needs to be significantly accelerated across the region and urgently.

"A steady supply of doses is now reaching our shores, so the focus needs to be on translating those into actual shots in people's arms,"

she said.

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

UNITED AIRLINES TO FLY BETWEEN CAPE TOWN AND NEW YORK ALL YEAR LONG FROM JUNE

United Airlines (UA) recently announced its plan to start flying non-stop from New York / Newark to Cape Town International Airport (and back) all year long. “Nonstop to Cape Town, now year-round!” tweeted the airline.



The service will begin on 5 June, ahead of schedule, and will include three non-stop flights per week between the United States (US) and South Africa.

The City of Cape Town welcomed the announcement, with Wesgro pointing out that UA's continuous services will add a big boost to the Western Cape economy. A projected R191 million worth of direct tourism spend will be generated by United's direct route to the Mother City for the current season ending in March 2022. With a year-round service, the route is expected to generate R523 million worth of direct tourism spend within its first year of operation, Wesgro said in a statement on Thursday, 10 February 2022.

Historically, the US has been Cape Town's third-largest market for international travel, with two-way passenger volumes between the US and Cape Town equalling 213 000 passengers in 2019.

Apart from the non-stop flights, it also provides an easy one-stop connection to more than 85 US cities, providing international travellers with easy access to South Africa for the upcoming season.

"The economic benefits of the route also reach beyond tourism, as the added capacity on the route will further boost the total air cargo trade value between the US and Cape Town. In 2021, this value stood at R7.5 billion, making the US the top trading partner for air freight value in 2021," said the statement.

Western Cape Minister of Finance and Economic Opportunities, David Maynier, said the announcement showed promise of continued expansion of international arrival numbers.

"Cape Town International Airport's international terminal performance statistics show an impressive 35% recovery rate for international passenger volumes achieved for the period of 1-30 January 2022, in comparison to the same figures in early 2021.

"The recovery of the Western Cape economy is dependent on international travellers visiting the province, both for business and leisure purposes, and especially during our peak tourism season in summer. The resumption of United Airlines flights to Cape Town earlier than expected means that many more international visitors can enjoy the natural beauty, award-winning food and wine, rich cultural heritage and diverse and affordable travel options available to all in the Western Cape. This is good news for the Western Cape, good news for our tourism and hospitality sectors, and good news for our economy."

The City's Mayoral Committee Member for Economic Growth, James Vos said: "United Airlines' earlier-than-expected return signals that there is a great demand from American tourists to visit Cape Town. This direct route holds great opportunities for the Mother City with up to 24 000 potential inbound passengers from New York and numerous more travel and trade possibilities that will be of significant benefit to our economy."

Mark Maclean, Regional General Manager of the Cape Town International Airport Cluster, said: "The Newark to Cape Town route is a very popular travel route, which has recorded good growth. We are therefore very pleased that United Airlines has decided to return to Cape Town ahead of schedule."

– Source: www.sapeople.com

THE 10 SOUTH AFRICAN CRICKETERS SOLD IN IPL AUCTION



There were 10 South Africans sold in the past weekend's IPL auction.

Kagiso Rabada was the most expensive of the South African contingent after being snapped up for over R18 million.

Anrich Nortje was retained by his Delhi Capitals team, which leaves the total number of South Africans participating at 11.

Proteas paceman Kagiso Rabada secured the biggest deal of the South African contingent, moving from the Delhi Capitals to the Punjab Kings for 9.25 crore (R18.6 million).

Former Proteas Test captains Faf du Plessis and Quinton de Kock found new homes at the Royal Challengers Bangalore and the Lucknow Super Giants respectively for 7 crore (R14.1 million) and 6.75 crore (R13.6 million) each.

Young South African teenage sensation, Dewald Brevis, was also in the news when he was sold to the Mumbai Indians for 3 crore (R6 million).

The 10 South Africans sold in the auction are listed below:

- Kagiso Rabada – Punjab Kings for 9.25 crore (R18.6 million)
- Faf du Plessis – Royal Challengers Bangalore for 7 crore (R14.1 million)
- Quinton de Kock – Lucknow Super Giants for 6.75 crore (R13.6 million)
- Marco Jansen – Sunrisers Hyderabad 4.2 crore (R8.4 million)
- Dewald Brevis – Mumbai Indians for 3 crore (R6 million)
- Aiden Markram – Sunrisers Hyderabad for 2.6 crore (R5.2 million)
- David Miller – Gujarat Titans for 3 crore (R6 million)
- Rassie van der Dussen – Rajasthan Royals for 1 crore (R2 million)
- Dwaine Pretorius – Chennai Super Kings for INR 50 Lakh (R1 million)
- Lungi Ngidi – Delhi Capitals for INR 50 Lakh (R1 million).

Proteas quickie Anrich Nortje was retained by his Delhi Capitals team, which leaves the total number of South Africans participating in this year's event at 11.

The dates for the 2022 IPL are yet to be confirmed but the event is likely to start in late March.

– Source: [news24.com](https://www.news24.com)



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