



# ANC TODAY

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Conversations with the  
**President**



## AGRICULTURE IS A VITAL PART OF OUR GROWTH STORY

■ By **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA**

**A**GRICULTURE is one of the most important sectors in our economy. The goods and services produced across the agricultural value chain underpin our country's food security and account for a significant portion of South Africa's exports.

According to data from the Agbiz, last year South Africa's agricultural exports reached a record \$13.7 billion. These agricultural exports are diverse, with 44% of these products exported to other African countries, 21% to Asia and the Middle East, 19% to the European Union and 6% to the Americas.

The value and volume of the farming sector has more than doubled since the dawn of de-

mocracy in 1994. This is testimony to the ongoing efforts of both Government and industry to ensure that South Africa products access as many export markets as possible.

Beyond the role of expanded export markets, agricultural economists have attributed the sector's growth to Government's embrace of science, allowing the private sector to register better seed cultivars and genetics to boost productivity.

The agricultural sector remains ripe for investment because of its recognised growth prospects. In addition, the revenue the state collects from agricultural enables Government to provide services that improve the lives of our citizens. The sector is a

major source of employment. By the end of 2024 approximately 924,000 people worked directly in agriculture and over 200,000 worked elsewhere in the agriculture value chain.

The health and growth of our farming sector is vital to supporting small towns and keeping rural South Africa vibrant.

Given the critical role of agriculture in our national life, Government is working with all stakeholders to ensure the survival, sustainability and growth of this sector.

In collaboration with partners in the industry, we are undertaking growth-enhancing measures such as the sectoral master plans. The Poultry and



Sugar Master Plans were the first steps, culminating in the Agriculture and Agro-processing Masterplan that was signed by organised agriculture and other partners in 2022.

The Department of Agriculture has launched a blended finance instrument in collaboration with the Land Bank to help farmers who require capital to continue growing the sector.

As this labour-intensive sector expands, more work opportunities will be created in the most vulnerable areas of the country, particularly rural areas. This in turn will support their economic rejuvenation.

Agriculture, like other sectors, is affected by municipal service delivery challenges, and by the poor state of key infrastructure such as roads, rail and ports. This constrains the delivery of agricultural goods to markets.

The structural reforms that started during the sixth administration are making progress towards addressing the port and

rail challenges. Several road transport and bulk water infrastructure projects are underway that will boost the growth of agriculture.

We cannot talk about sustainable agriculture in South Africa without addressing issues of equity and inclusion in farming and land ownership.

Transformation remains a challenge in agriculture. In his book, *A Country of Two Agricultures*, economist Wandile Sihlobo notes that black farmers currently only account for around 10% of the commercial output in South Africa's agriculture. Our

growth agenda must therefore have a bias towards the empowerment of black farmers.

The inclusion of black farmers in commercial agriculture necessitates that land is made available to them. The ongoing land reform process and release of Government land will continue to benefit emerging farmers and ensure that they too add to the growth of South Africa's farming economy.

This is an effort that requires multi-sectoral collaboration. The Land Bank and other commercial financiers will need to collaborate by providing capital. Organised agriculture can come on board to deploy the necessary training.

The farming sector of South Africa is vital to our growth agenda. It has shown resilience in the past and will likely continue along this encouraging and promising path. It will therefore be critical that the sector embraces the onward march of transformation.

It is in the interests of all South Africans that we have an agricultural sector that is representative and inclusive, that contributes to the growth of our economy and that produces the food our country needs. ◀



# Sports and arts play a critical role in nation-building and promoting social cohesion

REMARKS BY **DEPUTY PRESIDENT PAUL MASHATILE**  
AT THE **EASTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL SOCIAL COHESION DIALOGUE**

**L**AST month, I had an opportunity to be part of the launch of the 2024 South African Social Cohesion Index. The 2024 Index, which was conducted by the Inclusive Society Institute, offers a clear picture of where we stand in our collective journey towards social cohesion.

It provides us with insights into the strengths and challenges facing our nation, highlighting areas where progress has been made and areas that require urgent attention.

For instance, according to this research, the overall level of social cohesion in South Africa as a whole was found to be moderate at 53.3 points. It went through a steady, though slow, decline from 53.5 points in 2021 to 51.7 points in 2023.

Over the period from 2021 to 2024, social cohesion has improved only in the North West and Eastern Cape Provinces. I, therefore, encourage the Eastern Cape Province to continue on this path, since strong social cohesiveness strengthens the



ability of communities to develop resilience generally and contribute to issues of economic, social and political significance.

Considering the effects that social cohesion has for the well-being of citizens, it should be continuously nurtured and platforms such as these must be encouraged and normalised.

There are various factors that contribute to social cohesion, which include social activities,

such as sports, and a fair opportunity for education. Sports and physical education can enhance social cohesion by offering a platform for interaction among people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, thus contributing to vital intercultural exchanges.

Having served as the Minister of Arts and Culture, I have witnessed the significant role that sports, and the arts play in nation-building and promoting social cohesion.

Throughout history, sports have consistently served as a powerful tool for bringing people together, breaking down barriers, and creating unity. It continues to play a critical role in uniting people across racial, social, and economic divides.

In South Africa in particular, where our history has been defined by division, exclusion, and institutional injustice, sports has played an important role in forging bonds and establishing a new, shared national identity.

It is thus clear why, shortly after assuming the Presidency of South Africa, Tata Nelson Mandela opted to attend a football match at Ellis Park Stadium in Johannesburg to witness South Africa's victory over Zambia, rather than participating in the inauguration celebrations as the new President.

Madiba's decision underscores the significance of sports in uniting individuals from diverse backgrounds. In 1995, President Mandela presented the award to the victorious Springboks Captain Francois Pienaar, symbolically wearing the green shirt bearing Pienaar's number 6.

These moments were more than sports events, but are symbolic acts of reconciliation, showing the potential of sports in bridging historical divides.

It is such moments that have shaped history and helped accelerate healing in a South African society, torn apart by years of political dysfunction and inequality.

We have seen similar moments in years that followed; our triumphs in the 1996 African Cup of Nations, hosting a successful 2010



FIFA World Cup, winning the Rugby World Cup trophy twice, and most recently, the inspiring performances of our athletes in various global competitions.

Each of these achievements has reinforced our collective identity, demonstrating that when we play together, we win together. At the inaugural Laureus World Sports Awards in 2000, Nelson Mandela declared that:

*“Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to unite in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination. The heroes sport creates are examples of this power. They are valiant, not only on the playing field but also in the community, spreading hope and inspiration to the world.”*

I am reflecting on Madiba because I believe this dialogue aligns with Nelson Mandela's ideals of a socially cohesive society. This generation must persist in fostering social cohesion to establish a truly equal, united, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist, and prosperous South Africa.

Building a socially cohesive society requires dedicated effort to promote positive social relationships that unite us.

This dialogue must therefore guide us on how we can further use mediums such as sports, arts and culture to build a cohesive society, and how we can use these as platforms where we can stand together to deal with social challenges that confront us, such as drug & substance abuse, Gender-Based Violence and Femicide as well as racial division, inequality, tribalism and poverty.

We need to engage in ongoing

discussions about accelerating sports transformation to guarantee equal opportunities for all. It is important that we work towards creating an inclusive and diverse sporting environment where everyone, regardless of race, religion, or background, has equal opportunities to participate, grow, and excel in their sports careers.

The Eastern Cape Province must promote sustainable growth in the sporting and creative sectors while preserving South Africa's culture and rich heritage, thus reaffirming our commitment to a socially cohesive society in line with the National Development Plan 2030. As you are aware, we are a few years away from 2030, and it is critical that the government in all its efforts speeds up the execution of the programme outlined in the NDP and the Medium-Term Development Plan.

The province must further implement and support transformative programmes towards ensuring the inclusion of women, children, people with disabilities and youth in sports, recreation, arts, and cultural activities.

Together, we need to coordinate our efforts to ensure that culture and sports activities bring us together, and that they not only demonstrate the ideals of equality and fair play, but they also serve as effective catalysts for transformation at a global level.

Furthermore, our programmes of social cohesion, in sports, arts and culture, cannot afford to leave communities living in rural areas behind. We must incorporate rural communities into all sporting codes to ensure fair competition and equal opportunities for people from underprivileged and marginalised geographical back-



grounds. In short, let us invest in sports infrastructure in rural areas for the betterment of the people.

During his State of the Nation Address last month, President Cyril Ramaphosa emphasised the importance of the National Dialogue in fostering unity and cooperation among South Africans. The President reminded us that the National Dialogue must reaffirm that every citizen has a role to play in building the nation through various initiatives, including sports, arts, culture, and heritage protection and promotion.

In this fashion, we will be able to bring diverse voices together to address the country's challenges and work towards a shared vision of a prosperous and inclusive South Africa.

Part of that process should be channelling investments in our sports programmes, infrastructure facilities as well as support systems so that we are able to fully unlock the potential of sports in building greater social cohesion.

For sports to truly serve as a tool for social cohesion, we must shift our mindset from viewing it as an elite pursuit to embracing it as an everyday activity for all. This means investing in school sports, grassroots development, and community-based programmes that make

sports accessible to everyone.

As we celebrate Human Rights this month, we should remember that sport is anchored in human rights values. It promotes fairness, non-discrimination, respect, and equal opportunities for all. As it reaches billions, including young people, it is an instrument for societal change through empowerment and inclusion.

The sports sector also faces many challenges, such as instances of racism, exclusion, and compounded discrimination. We have to work together to promote social cohesion by eradicating racism and other forms of discrimination in sports.

As we engage in thoughtful dialogue and exchange ideas today, let us commit to taking concrete actions that will drive meaningful change in the world of sports.

Let us strive to create a more equitable, inclusive, and accessible sporting landscape where everyone has the chance to shine.

I am confident that through our collective efforts and shared commitment to sports transformation, we can create a brighter and more united future for all.

Let us, therefore, work together to level the playing field in sports and beyond. ◀

# ANC WELCOMES A BUDGET PROPOSAL THAT PRIORITISES JOBS, ECONOMIC GROWTH, AND SERVICE DELIVERY

■ By **ANC SECRETARY GENERAL FIKILE MBALULA**

**T**HE African National Congress (ANC) welcomes the 2025 Budget Proposal as a decisive intervention that prioritises job creation, economic growth, and service delivery while safeguarding the hard-won gains of our democracy. This budget is not just about figures and allocations; it is about the lived experiences of our people, addressing historical injustices, and ensuring that economic transformation remains at the centre of governance. It reaffirms the ANC's unwavering commitment to eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, and building a better life for all, as outlined in the ANC Manifesto and the January 8th Statement.

As we mark and celebrate 70 years since the adoption of the Freedom Charter, the 2025 Budget Proposal embodies the fundamental principle that South Africa's wealth must benefit all who live in it, not just a privileged few. It reflects the ANC's progressive economic vision, ensuring that economic growth is inclusive, transformative, and people-centred. We remain firmly committed to building a developmental state that intervenes decisively in the economy to break the structural barriers of inequality, deepen in-

dustrialisation, and place South Africa on a sustainable growth trajectory.

The budget proposal is an important step in stabilising public finances while sustaining investments in infrastructure, industrialisation, and social protection. It directs 61 cents of every rand

spent towards the social wage, reaffirming the ANC's historic mission of advancing the interests of the working class and the poor. Education, healthcare, and social protection remain central pillars of government spending, ensuring that economic transformation is felt in the everyday lives of our people.



**2025 NATIONAL BUDGET**

**ANC SG FIKILE MBALULA**

**A BUDGET FOR THE PEOPLE:  
ADVANCING TRANSFORMATION**

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**113<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

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## EDITORIAL

The proposed R100 billion investment in infrastructure will repair and expand roads, railways, and ports, strengthening South Africa's industrial base while creating thousands of jobs. This aligns with the ANC's long-standing commitment to integrating rural and township economies into the mainstream economy and dismantling apartheid spatial planning.

The ANC's commitment to ensuring that economic growth is inclusive and sustainable finds expression in the expansion of the public transport infrastructure network, creating new economic opportunities for communities that were historically excluded from economic hubs. The revitalisation of our rail network and freight transport system will further lower the cost of doing business, improve market access, and ensure that industrialisation benefits all sectors of society.

The Presidential Employment Stimulus, which has already provided opportunities for hundreds of thousands of young South Africans, is set to receive an additional R15 billion, reinforcing our commitment to tackling unemployment and ensuring that young people are equipped with the skills and opportunities necessary to enter the formal economy.

This intervention aligns with the ANC's commitment to economic inclusion, recognising that a just transition requires deliberate investment in youth employment, training, and entrepreneurship. It is through these measures that we will ensure that young people are not spectators in the economy but active participants in shaping its future.

The ANC-led government has pri-

oritised expanding the zero-rated VAT basket to cushion the poor from the rising cost of living. The expansion of this basket ensures that essential food items remain affordable, directly addressing food insecurity among the most vulnerable communities.

This intervention, combined with the above-inflation increase in social grants, represents the ANC's unwavering commitment to protecting the working class and the poor from economic hardships. The National School Nutrition Programme has also been expanded to reach an additional 1.5 million learners, ensuring that no child goes to school hungry, because we recognise that proper nutrition is an essential component of effective learning and cognitive development.

The proposed VAT increase of 0.5 percentage points in each of the next two years, bringing VAT to 15.5% in 2025 and 16% in 2026/27, is a carefully measured intervention designed to sustain government revenue without disproportionately affecting the poor. The ANC recognises the concerns of working-class families, which is why mitigation measures – including an expanded zero-rated VAT basket, real increases in social grants, and fuel levy relief – have been prioritised. Unlike opposition parties that are fixated on elite interests, the ANC remains committed to pro-poor economic policies that protect vulnerable households while ensuring sustainable public finances.

The Budget continues to make bold investments in healthcare, ensuring that public healthcare is strengthened and expanded as part of the building blocks for the National Health Insurance (NHI).

This includes the rollout of new hospitals and clinics, the provision of essential medicines, and the employment of 9,300 health-care workers, including 800 post-community doctors. These measures reflect the ANC's belief that access to quality health-care must not be determined by financial means, but by the constitutional right to life and dignity. The NHI will fundamentally transform the healthcare system by ensuring that all South Africans, regardless of income level, have access to the best possible care without financial barriers.

Education remains the most powerful tool for breaking the cycle of poverty, and this budget significantly strengthens basic and higher education. The ANC has ensured that government will retain approximately 11,000 teachers in classrooms, preventing the deepening of the crisis of overcrowding in schools. The expansion of school infrastructure and the continued strengthening of the no-fee schooling system, which now benefits over 90% of learners, reaffirms the ANC's commitment to universal access to quality education. The protection of NSFAS funding guarantees that students from working-class backgrounds will continue to access higher education, ensuring that no child is left behind due to financial constraints.

The ANC remains unwavering in its resolve to transform South Africa into a country that works for all, not just for the wealthy. This budget proposal is a step in that direction, ensuring that public spending remains redistributive, that economic transformation continues, and that government resources are used to uplift the most vulnerable. The ANC will not be deterred by those who

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wish to see South Africa return to the “good old days” of apartheid economic privilege. We remain committed to the people’s aspirations, and we will continue working towards a South Africa that is inclusive, just, and economically transformed.

As expected, the Democratic Alliance (DA) has once again revealed its anti-transformation agenda by opposing this progressive budget proposal. Their opposition is not based on concerns for fiscal responsibility but is instead a desperate attempt to undermine transformation, protect white monopoly capital, and roll back the democratic gains made over the past three decades. The DA seeks to use the budget process as leverage to renegotiate its role within the GNU, not because it has the interests of the people at heart, but because it is determined to advance an agenda that prioritises privilege over progress.

The DA’s demands expose their true intentions – they want labour laws to be scrapped so that employers can fire workers at will, they want black economic empowerment policies to be abandoned, and they want to weaken institutions that have been established to reverse economic exclusion. These are the same policies that entrenched inequality and racial capitalism in the past, and the ANC will never allow such regression. Their opposition to the VAT increase is not about protecting the poor; it is about ensuring that economic policies serve corporate interests at the expense of working-class South Africans.

In their desperation, they seek to create an Israeli-Gaza-type situation using the Western Cape as

# BUDGET 2025

WEDNESDAY, 12 MARCH 2025



A budget that prioritises South Africans – from energy to infrastructure; every investment is about the people!




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their political salvo – a scenario in which African and Coloured people of the province would be treated as subhuman in the land of their birth. This is the reason behind their insistence on Cape Town’s port being conceded – an attempt to carve out an economic enclave where the interests of the privileged are protected at the expense of the majority. They have further demanded changes to labour laws that would allow employers to fire workers at will, without due process or legal recourse, effectively returning the country to the draconian conditions that allowed apartheid to thrive on the exploitation of black workers.

The ANC remains firm in its resolve to build an inclusive and prosperous economy that works for all South Africans. This budget proposal provides a framework for investment, industrialisation,

and economic transformation, ensuring that South Africa’s wealth is shared among its people. The ANC will continue to work tirelessly to advance the principles of the Freedom Charter, ensuring that the economy serves all, not just a privileged minority.

The people of South Africa can see through the DA’s deception.

The ANC stands firm in delivering a better life for all – driving growth, expanding opportunities, and ensuring that economic justice becomes a reality for all South Africans. The ANC remains the only political formation genuinely committed to transformation, economic justice, and the full realisation of the aspirations of the majority. The budget proposal is a step forward, and with the continued support of the people, we will ensure that it translates into real and tangible progress. ◀



# REFLECTION ON THE BUDGET AND PATHWAYS TO DEVELOPMENT FOR SOUTH AFRICA

■ By **PHUMZILE MGCINA**

**T**HE mining industry in South Africa is facing significant challenges that require a proactive government response to address supply chain inefficiencies and unlock Transnet's performance. The budget has provided a crucial opportunity to tackle these mining sector obstacles, which, if resolved, could boost economic growth and create jobs. A primary issue affecting the mining value chain – from production to trading at port terminals – is inefficiency in transportation, including challenges related to Transnet, Eskom, and rail infrastructure.

For decades, the mining industry has felt the strain of Transnet and Eskom's challenges. Minister of Finance Enoch Godongwana's budget outlined a clear strategy to address South Africa's systemic issues through structural reforms. With the country's economy in decline, this is a pivotal moment to reassess economic growth strategies. The Minister's budget prioritizes infrastructure development and the protection of key economic supply components such as energy security and cost-of-living adjustments.

These priorities align with the ANC's manifesto, which em-



phasizes resolving structural challenges to support economic growth. The budget highlights three key drivers for economic growth, Labour, capital stock and infrastructure.

Major global economies, such as China, have already balanced capital stock and labor in their economic growth trajectory. However, South Africa still needs to stimulate growth by protecting the supply side of the economy, mitigating economic risks, and

implementing policies that drive productivity, job creation, and overall economic expansion.

## **Macroeconomic Stability**

Macroeconomic stability involves maintaining balanced economic performance in areas such as output, inflation, interest rates, foreign exchange rates, and the balance of payments. The budget's focus on macroeconomic stability is driven by factors such as high inflation, unsustainable



debt levels exceeding 75% of GDP, and financial market volatility – all of which contribute to job losses and increased poverty, thereby threatening the forecasted economic growth of over 1% in 2025.

Achieving macroeconomic stability is a prerequisite for sustained and inclusive development. The Minister's budget outlines policies aimed at maintaining stability through prudent fiscal management, stable prices, lower interest rates, and resilience against external economic shocks. Key initiatives include:

- **Operation Vulindlela**, which aims to stabilize electricity supply, create a competitive and efficient freight logistics

system, reduce digital communication costs, ensure a stable water supply, and reform visa regulations to support skilled immigration and tourism.

- **The Freight Logistics Roadmap**, which introduces private sector participation and third-party rail access to improve logistics efficiency.
- **E-visa programs** for 34 countries to enhance tourism and investment.
- **The Trusted Employer Scheme**, which fast-tracks visas for major investors.

Despite tax increases not being the preferred route for revenue generation, balancing education, health, and defense funding while servic-

ing national debt remains a priority. Effective macroeconomic stability will require strong policy coordination, particularly in local government finance and governance, to enhance service delivery.

### Implementing Structural Reforms

Another key takeaway from the budget is the commitment to structural reforms. These reforms are essential for both immediate economic growth and long-term sustainability. They also play a vital role in unlocking fiscal and monetary policies necessary for poverty reduction, social equity, and sustainable growth.

Earlier this week, JPMorgan downgraded South African equities from "overweight" to "neutral," citing concerns about economic slowdown and the effectiveness of policy reforms. This underscores the need for structural reforms to boost investment confidence. As Minister Godongwana stated:

*"Implementing structural reforms removes impediments to growth and creates a solid foundation for high and sustained economic expansion."*

Notably, energy reforms have created a 22,500 MW pipeline of



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projects, with over 10,000 MW formally registered with NERSA – key steps toward alleviating power shortages. However, while structural reforms encourage investment, South Africa must also stabilize its foreign policy. Current global dynamics – such as misinformation on land expropriation, the ICJ case, and affirmative action – have strained relations with the U.S., creating uncertainty for South Africa’s domestic assets and economic activities.

A commendable initiative is by Presidency and Treasury to identify waste, inefficiencies, and underperforming government programs. This initiative is crucial for optimizing government spending and improving service delivery.

### Accelerating Infrastructure Investment

Infrastructure development is central to the budget, with over R1 trillion allocated over the next three years. Key investments include:

- **R402 billion** for transport and logistics.

- **R219.2 billion** for energy infrastructure.
- **R156.3 billion** for water and sanitation.

The South African National Roads Agency (SANRAL) will invest R100 billion in maintaining the national road network, while provincial road departments will reseal over 16,000 lane-kilometers of roads.

However, beyond new infrastructure investments, maintenance of existing infrastructure is critical. President Ramaphosa recently highlighted Johannesburg’s deteriorating infrastructure, a reflection of South Africa’s broader infrastructure neglect.

Poor maintenance significantly shortens infrastructure lifespans and increases long-term costs, discouraging investment. For example, a paved road should last 10-15 years, but inadequate maintenance reduces its lifespan, increasing costs for businesses and the state.

### Conclusion

This budget is crucial for unlocking South Africa’s economic potential. The country’s infrastructure development strategy must incorporate sustainable solutions, including transitioning to eco-friendly materials like green steel and cement. Innovative approaches, such as hydrogen production with carbon capture and storage, offer potential but require further exploration.

The focus on infrastructure, macroeconomic stability, and structural reforms presents a pathway for economic recovery and growth. However, successful implementation will require policy coherence, efficient governance, and proactive collaboration between the public and private sectors. If these strategies are executed effectively, South Africa’s mining industry and broader economy can achieve significant growth and resilience in the coming years. ◀

**Phumzile Mgcina** is Deputy Minister of Mineral Resources and Petroleum and ANC Youth League Deputy President.





# Africa's pivotal moment: Ushering in a more determined era of gender equality at CSW69

■ By **PRECIOUS BANDA**

**A**S the 69th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) commences, Africa is poised to illuminate the global dialogue on gender equality. This year's session, taking place from 10 to 21 March 2025, represents a remarkable milestone, the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

*"The main focus of CSW69 will be on reviewing and appraising the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly. The review will assess*

*current challenges affecting the implementation of the Platform for Action, gender equality, women's empowerment, and contributions to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."*

As the world reflects on the strides taken since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, Africa's voice must emerge with power. We must showcase our commitment to creating an environment with no violence against women and children, and our contributions to the CSW69 must be compelling.

Part of the work of the CSW69 must be to explore the modern chal-

lenges that affect the realization of the Beijing Platform for Action and the pursuit of gender equality and women's empowerment. With only five years remaining until the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals deadline, the global community must unite more than ever to tackle the enduring disparities in gender equality. Africa must internalise the call for intersectionality and inter – generational solidarity and collaboration if we want to improve our pace for building equality across our nations.

African nations should emphasize the critical need for swift action to bridge the existing gaps towards

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gender equality. We are firmly advocating for stronger investments in education, health, leadership, and economic empowerment initiatives that uplift women and girls across the continent.

As we begin this vital commission of the CSW69 in 2025, we are reminded that the quest for gender equality is not merely a moral obligation, but also a crucial economic and social necessity. When women and girls are uplifted, entire communities thrive. This should be the appreciation in all sectors of society.

We are calling for the swift implementation of the AU Convention on ending violence against women and children. It is essential for African governments to unite in the noble endeavour of enacting the Convention. The realities of young women and girls on our soil are depressing. African girls and young women face alarming rates of GBVF which affects their health, dignity and potential.

It is them that are subjected to child marriages, Female Genital Mutilation, Sexual Violence, human trafficking, hunger, cyber crimes, and other forms of violence. These forms of violence also perpetuate vicious circles of poverty, inequality and social injustice. It is essential that our leaders rise to the occasion through this convention and create safer and more equitable nations for us to thrive.

African governments hold the vital duty to craft and execute action plans that propel advancement in essential areas like education, health, leadership and economic empowerment like the Beijing+30 Action Plan and now the AU Convention to end Violence Against Women and Children. We need steadfast dedication to gender



equality where our governments, civil society, and the private sector unite to harness resources and provide support. It is essential that we persist in amplifying the voices of African young women and girls, ensuring that their perspectives and experiences are cherished in decision-making processes.

By uniting our strengths and concentrating on what takes our continent forward, we possess the power to craft a great future for the

young women and girls, a future where we can thrive and realize our utmost potential. The journey ahead may present obstacles, yet with Africa's participation at CSW69, we have an opportunity to usher in a more determined era of gender equality.

The biggest thing for us in Africa is that we must leave no one behind in our engagements on the CSW69. We must also use the IWD and month to celebrate the unseen Pillars of Africa who are women by honouring their unwavering Strength and resilience. In the heart of Africa, where the savannahs stretch far and wide, and the rhythms of life beat strong, there exists an unbreakable spirit embodied by the women who toil, labour, and persevere against all odds.

These are the *"hewers of wood"* and *"toilers of the land,"*. The ones who still walk very long distances not by choice, symbolizing the resilience and determination of African women who, despite limited resources and infrastructure, persevere to access basic necessities like education, healthcare,

# WHAT IS

# #CSW69

It is the United Nations' principal platform for **shaping global gender equality policies.** This year marks 30 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (**Beijing+30**), global commitment to advancing the rights of women and girls.

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 An infographic with a pink and blue background. It features a white ribbon icon in a yellow circle at the top right. The text reads: 'HIGHLIGHTS OF SA'S REPORT...', 'BEIJING +30' with a colorful flower-like icon, and 'GBVF remains a national crisis requiring urgent intervention. South Africa's response includes:'. Below this is a list of four bullet points.
 

**HIGHLIGHTS OF SA'S REPORT...**

**BEIJING +30**

**GBVF remains a national crisis requiring urgent intervention. South Africa's response includes:**

- National Strategic Plan on GBVF
- Thuthuzela Care Centres
- GBVF Response Units
- Strengthened legal frameworks and policies

and economic opportunities like markets and selling places. The mothers who carry our continent and raise giants, the pillars of our families and communities, nurturing and guiding the next generation of leaders, innovators, and change-makers and these are the countless African women who, driven by economic necessity, migrate to foreign lands in search of greener pastures, often facing exploitation and hardship along the way.

The street vendors, selling goods to make ends meet. The informal traders, working tirelessly to provide for their families. The domestic workers, often toiling in the shadows without recognition or protection. The rural women, living in isolated areas with limited access to basic services. The women with disabilities, facing additional barriers and discrimination. The refugees and internally displaced women, struggling to survive in the face of conflict and displacement and those living in

extreme poverty, struggling to access basic necessities like food, water, and shelter.

These women young and old, are the unseen pillars of Africa, holding

up the fabric of our communities with their unwavering strength and unrelenting spirit. They are the guardians of our heritage, the nurturers of our children, and the backbone of our economies. Let us honour their struggles, their sacrifices, and their contributions. Let us recognize their value, their worth, and their dignity. Let us celebrate their strength, their resilience, and their unwavering commitment to building a better future for themselves, their families, and their communities in ways unimaginable. They are the true heroes of Africa, and their stories deserve to be told.

If deliberations at the CSW69 firmly captures the imagination of all these diverse women of our Continent, we will never be the same again moving forward.

Aluta Continua. ◀

**Precious Banda** is President of the Young Women of Africa and former ANCYL National Political Commissar.


 An infographic with a pink and blue background. It features a white bar chart icon in a green circle at the top right. The text reads: 'HIGHLIGHTS OF SA'S REPORT...', 'BEIJING +30' with a colorful flower-like icon, and 'WOMEN IN ECONOMY WHAT'S NEXT?'. Below this is a list of three bullet points.
 

**HIGHLIGHTS OF SA'S REPORT...**

**BEIJING +30**

**WOMEN IN ECONOMY WHAT'S NEXT?**

- Expand women's access to capital & financial inclusion.
- Ensure equal pay & leadership representation.
- Strengthen support for women in agriculture & rural development.

# DA'S PRO-POOR STANCE EXPOSED FOR WHAT IT REALLY WAS

■ By **MAVHUNGU LERULE-RAMAKHANYA**

ON Wednesday the 12th South Africans waited with bated breath in anticipation of what is to come out of the much-awaited Budget Speech by the Minister of Finance in our Country, Mr Enoch Godongwana [MP]. It was waited with much eager, precisely, because many commentators and political parties raised alarms of doom and gloom whilst others used the opportunity to jump into political correctness soon after the postponed tabling of the Budget Speech on the 19th of February 2025.

Parties like the Democratic Alliance [DA] who are part of the ANC led Government of National Unity [GNU] sang on top of their voices, claiming that they would not support the Budget during the debate if the minister was to present a Budget with 2 percentage points. Their reasoning was that it's not a pro-poor budget, and they, as the DA, are the vanguard of the poor. In the absence of any alternative truth, we reluctantly listened and candidly observed the spectacle, but of course our African National Congress leadership spoke clearly on what Minister Godongwana needed to do and the result thereof were delivered on Wednesday 12th March 2025, when the Minister finally tabled the Budget.

As the MEC for Education in Limpopo, I oozed with ease when the

Minister made pronouncement on matters relating to education. Taking note that had the 0.5 % not been announced, this would have dire consequences on the budget allocation for Education, which would have been unfunded for the next MTEF, and this was going to be disastrous.

I must say we welcome the additional R19.1 billion on Basic Education to ensure teachers retention and addition on the ECD spending from R17 per child, per

day to R24 per child, per day is a great intervention.

In exposing itself for what it really represents, we now know that the DA wanted to blackmail the ANC and disguised its acceptance of the 0.5% increase on VAT in exchange of scrabbling transformative interventions like Sector Education and Training Authorities. The African National Congress, the ANC through its conferences, the last being the 1997 Conference in Mafikeng, realized

## BUDGET 2025


WEDNESDAY, 12 MARCH 2025



The image shows a financial chart with several data points and a white trend line. The data points are: 229.81 (+1.63), 114.74 (+1.26), 289.71 (+6.95), 133.49 (+1.29), 337.58 (+5.53), and 13.21 (+0.00). The chart is overlaid on stacks of coins.

**The budget that fights unemployment!**

**Economic reforms are in motion to unlock economic growth to fight unemployment and break stagnation!**




Issued by the ANC, Chief Albert Luthuli House, HQ

the need to close the skills gap in our country, which mainly affected people of African Origin and blacks in particular and decided to establish through government, what we now know as SETAs.

The history of Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) in South Africa dates back to 1998 when the Skills Development Act was ratified by the South African Parliament. This act introduced a new system of sectoral training and education authorities, with the goal of developing a series of sector skills plans within the framework of the National Skills Development Strategy.

Prior to the establishment of SETAs, South Africa's education and training system was criticized for being ineffective in addressing the country's skills shortages. In 1996, experts agreed that the country needed a "skills revolution" to survive in the highly competitive global marketplace.

The SETAs were designed to manage and create learnerships, internships, unit-based skills programs, and apprenticeships within their respective jurisdictions. Each SETA is responsible for a specific sector or industry, and there are currently 21 SETAs in operation.

The introduction of SETAs has played a crucial role in promoting skills development and training in South Africa. By providing a framework for sectoral training and education, SETAs have helped to address skills shortages and improve the competitiveness of the country's workforce.

Now, let's practicalize the importance of SETAs in our society. In the Waterberg District at a Community called Makobe, in ward

two of the Mogalakwena Municipality, hails a young lady, and we will call her Mokgadi in protection of her real identity, though this is a true story. Mokgadi grew up in a working-class family with both parents working, though it was not something beyond the poverty line. She went to school from primary and matriculated in record time. An unfortunate circumstance happened when both her parents passed on almost at the same time. Mokgadi had two other siblings, her being the oldest. This immediately turned her into a young adult and head of family at a tender age.

Despite her dreams being shattered with the demise of her parents, because there was no inheritance left for her and her siblings, Mokgadi proceeded to register with Waterberg TVET college with the help of NSFAS. With the hardships at home, Mokgadi could not complete her studies, and she survived through temporary jobs at the Local Library and at some stage as a Teacher Assistant at the local school until there was a Services SETA learnership on Cleaning and Hygiene that she participated on. She was earning a stipend of R3000 per month, which she used to help her younger sisters.

At the end of the programme, Mokgadi was certificated with an NQF Level 2 certificate. This certificate or qualification gave her an advantage when she was shortlisted for the permanent position as a cleaner at the Department of Education in Limpopo. As things stand, Mokgadi is a permanent employee of the Department based in one of the circuits in Mogalakwena District of Education. And because she is still very young, Mokgadi can benefit through our Human Re-

sources Development unit and get a bursary to pursue a career of her dream.

This is one but many of the examples that our SETAs have done to our people in this country. We as the department of Education, have signed a historic MOU, with ETDP SETA to engage on a skills revolution with our Early Childhood Development Practitioners [ECDs] and we have thus far managed to graduate over 200 practitioners who had lost hope and today they pride themselves with qualifications which will further give them advantage to upgrade up to National Diploma and Degrees.

Of course, there may have been challenges with service providers taking advantage of beneficiaries, but what is good about our country is that there are checks and balances in the system.

For DA to propel a total scrubbing of this important transformative and progressive intervention, can best be equated to an onslaught on the skills gap that our country faces.

In the recent fourth quarter statistics, we witnessed a glaring report that Whites and Indians remain on top in terms of the highly skilled community. Instead of blackmailing the ANC on this, the DA if there is any drop of humanity left in their DNA, they could have opted to improve on the mechanics and systems of the current system as opposed to killing them. ◀

**Mavhungu Lerule-Ramakhanya** is the PEC/PWC of the ANC in Limpopo and also MEC for Education in Limpopo.



# HARNESSING THE POTENTIAL OF SOUTH AFRICA'S DISILLUSIONED YOUTH FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

■ By **MONDLI MVAMBI**

**I**N South Africa, the promise of a bright future often dims for countless young individuals after they complete their matric. With aspirations for higher education and meaningful careers, many face a harsh reality marked by limited opportunities and a saturated job market. This disillusionment is not merely a personal tragedy, it poses a significant threat to the fabric of our society, necessitating immediate action.

The youth of South Africa represent a reservoir of untapped potential – intelligent, innovative, and eager to contribute to their communities. However, without access to meaningful opportunities, their dreams are deferred, leading to discontent and frustration. This alienation can manifest in detrimental ways, including increased crime and social unrest, as marginalized youth resort to disruptive behaviors to express their dissatisfaction or seek survival. In extreme cases, feelings of hopelessness can lead to self-destructive behaviors, such as substance abuse and suicide, further exacerbating societal issues.

Ironically, this disillusionment can also ignite creativity and in-



novation. Faced with barriers, young people often develop entrepreneurial skills, launching small businesses or engaging in the gig economy. Yet, without the necessary support systems – such as mentorship, funding, and access to markets – these efforts can falter. Instead of fostering a culture of innovation that benefits society, we risk breeding a generation that feels alienated and disenfranchised, further straining our social fabric.

To harness the potential of our youth, we must prioritize creating meaningful opportunities that align with their aspirations. This involves investing in education that is relevant to the current job market requirements and equipping young people with essential skills of an evolving global information, communication and technological economy. We must also cultivate an entrepreneurial ecosystem that encourages innovation and provides the resources necessary



for young people to start their own ventures.

Engaging youth in community-building initiatives can redirect their energy towards positive outcomes. By involving them in projects that address social issues, we can empower them to become agents of change. Opportunities in community-based healthcare, for instance, enable youth to become health advocates, promoting wellness and addressing local health challenges. Initiatives such as anti-crime brigades and road traffic stewards can channel their desire for safety into constructive community service, fostering teamwork, responsibility and patriotism.

Moreover, community education programs focused on science and technology can spark curiosity and inspire innovation. By teaching young people from early childhood development

stages about environmental protection, we cultivate a generation that values sustainability and actively participates in preserving their surroundings. These initiatives not only provide valuable skills but also instill a sense of purpose and belonging.

In a rapidly changing world, the multifaceted concept of renewal must guide our collective commitment to set our country on a new

trajectory of sustainable growth and development. Economic renewal through investments in green technologies and local businesses can stimulate job creation. Social renewal requires addressing deep-rooted inequalities, ensuring access to quality education and healthcare for all. Environmental renewal is crucial in combating climate change and protecting our natural resources.

In conclusion, the youth of South Africa are not merely a demographic entity to be pitied, they are a powerful force for change. By investing in their potential and providing meaningful opportunities, we can transform disillusionment into innovation, steering our society towards a more cohesive and crime-free future.

The time to act is now! the future of our nation depends on it. Embracing a framework of socioeconomic and political ethical values as our guiding principle will empower us to transform challenges into opportunities, ultimately fostering a prosperous and equitable society. ◀



*“I admire young people who are concerned with the affairs of their community and nation, perhaps because I also became involved in struggle whilst I was still at school”*

*Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela*

*#YOUTHDAY*



# Lessons for the ANC from German elections: THE POOR CONTINUE TO DECIDE IN DEMOCRACIES

■ By **DR WESLEY SEALE**

**S**ITTING, chatting to a young Black South African woman working in Germany recently, one enquired whether she, an economist, would ever come back to South Africa. “Definitely!”, she responded almost immediately. To her, who had lived in a number of western countries, she had become tired of these countries in which wealthy, White males were hegemonic and which were largely individualistic.

## German election results

The recent German results however tell a telling tale and has lessons for the ANC. Much has been made of the fact of the upswing in the far-right party, the Alternative for Germany (AfD), which

doubled its votes and came in second after the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Christian Social Union (CSU) coalition. While the CDU, the party of Adenauer, Kohl and Merkel, is itself center-right and signed up former Nazis in the aftermath of the Second World War, the AfD has hitherto been isolated by mainstream German political parties. Unbelievably for a western democracy, the turnout for the election was at 80%.

But the results from these recent German federal (national) elections are interesting. Firstly, and worryingly, nearly half (45%) of young voters, between the ages of 18 and 35, voted for the AfD<sup>1</sup>. Secondly, when looking at the 2025 election results map of Ger-

many, we immediately notice that this could have been the map of Germany during the Cold War. The mainly black part, the traditional color of CDU, is what was formerly West Germany and the AfD part, blue, is what was formerly the German Democratic Republic or East Germany.

German scholars have attributed this division along Cold War lines in German to former east Germans feeling more and more isolated from the ruling German elite. “*People in the eastern states will feel they are not represented,*” warned Joachim Behnke, a professor of political science at Zepelin University<sup>2</sup>. Even 35 years after reunification, wages are still lower in the east than they are in the west while unemployment

## FOOTNOTES:

1 See <https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-election-rekindles-old-divisions/>

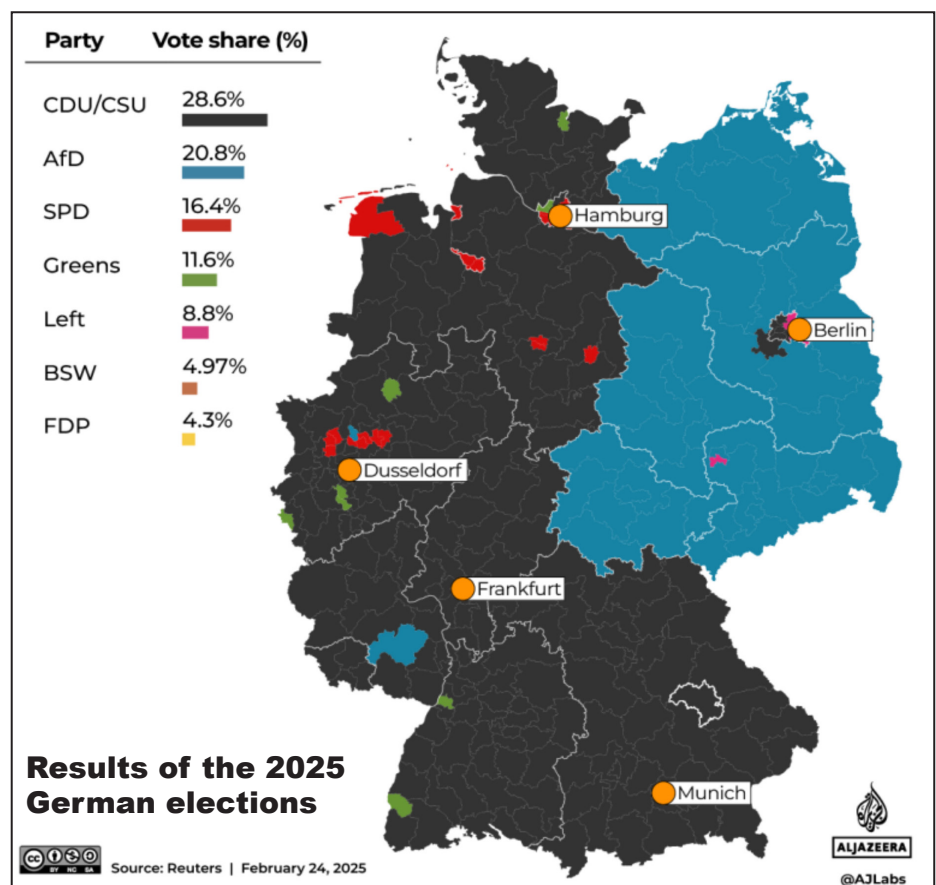
2 *Ibid*

in the east is higher than it is in the west. Migration, the economy and the war in Ukraine, were further reasons why people supported the far-right in the east in particular<sup>3</sup>.

### Lessons for South Africa and the ANC

There are a few lessons from this election for South Africa. Firstly, based on our 2024 election results we could safely conclude that given the low voter turnout, 58% and the lowest for national and provincial elections since 1999, a large number of voters and especially young people feel alienated from the mainstream political parties. In fact, while 42.3 million people were eligible to vote in February 2024 only 27.2 million were registered at the same time. Of these only 16.2 million voted on 29 May 2024. In other words, more people did not participate in the elections, 26.2 million or 61% of the eligible voting population at the time, than those who voted.

Secondly, these who feel alienated by the political system are often the ones who also have strong feelings on the economy and migration. Even more so, they often come from the poorer parts of the country. In our four 'rural provinces', i.e. where there are no Metros, the average voter turnout was 55%, lower than the national average (58%). Unlike in Germany though where the far-right won in poorer areas, it would seem that our poorer provinces are voting for the ANC (centre-left) whereas the (centre-)



right<sup>4</sup> parties are found moderately in Gauteng (41%) and Kwa-Zulu-Natal (32%); the provinces with the highest GDP in South Africa. The province with the third highest GDP but with the highest number of voters leaning towards the center-right is the Western Cape (71%). In other words, the ANC remains hegemonic among those who are not voting and amongst the poor; even though the poor are moving towards the right in Germany.

Thirdly, the poor matter in elections. While the ruling elite might have won in Germany (CDU/CSU), it is the poor that put them in office, but the poor want decisive leadership which both the AfD is giving.

Therefore, during the 2026 Local Government Elections, this decisive leadership by the ANC must be communicated to the people especially of: Soweto, Tembisa, Katlehong, Umlazi, Soshanguve, Khayelitsha, Mamelodi, Ibhayi, Sebokeng, Manguang, Ivory Park, Botshabelo, Alexandra, Kwa-Mashu, Vosloorus, Mdantsane, Etwatwa, Meadowlands and Tsakane. These are the ones who feel politically most alienated, adversely affected by the economy and have a negative view on migrants. The last one the ANC will have to be creative about. ◀

**Dr Wesley Seale** is a member of the PEC in the Western Cape.

#### FOOTNOTES:

<sup>3</sup> See <https://news.sky.com/story/german-election-results-show-stark-east-west-divide-decades-after-fall-of-berlin-wall-13316403>

<sup>4</sup> Included in the classification of (centre-)right parties would be: the Democratic Alliance, Inkatha Freedom Party, Patriotic Alliance, Freedom Front Plus, ActionSA, African Christian Democratic Party, Build One South Africa with Mmusi Maimane, Rise Mzansi and National Coloured Congress.

# The Peril of Trump's Anarchic Approach to America's Decline

■ By **GODFREY NKOSI**

**A**S a political activist, I have spent my life opposing American imperialism and its superpower dominance. The United States has, for decades, positioned itself as the self-appointed custodian of global democracy and order, yet in practice, it has acted primarily to secure its own economic and strategic interests, often at the direct expense of developing nations. Given this history, one might assume that I would welcome the accelerated decline of American hegemony under Donald Trump, now in his second term in the White House. But the reality is far more complex.

Trump's return to power has hastened America's retreat from the world, but not in a way that creates space for a more balanced and just global order. His administration has taken decisive steps to sever ties with NATO and withdraw from the United Nations, eroding the multilateral institutions that, while flawed, have at least provided some degree of stability in global governance.

His latest push to end foreign aid has stripped many developing nations, including some in Africa, of crucial funding that supported infrastructure, health, and education – funding that, despite its political strings, was still beneficial. In its place, nothing has been



offered but uncertainty and deepened economic crises.

Trump has also intensified his assault on the professional US bureaucracy, replacing career diplomats, intelligence officials, and government experts with loyalists who prioritise his personal and ideological agenda over sound governance. His reckless approach to global health security is equally concerning. Having already weakened America's pandemic response capabilities in his first term, he has now gutted what remained, ensuring that future global health crises will unfold without the necessary coop-

eration and preparedness.

As a political activist committed to the transformation of global power structures, I have long argued that the world needs an end to Western hegemony and a shift towards a multipolar world where no single nation dictates international affairs. The ANC, through its history in the anti-apartheid struggle, has always aligned itself with the Global South in seeking an international system that is more just, more equitable, and less dependent on the whims of a single superpower.

However, what we cannot afford

is the anarchy that Trump is unleashing. The decline of American dominance should be carefully managed to ensure that a more balanced world emerges with a stable, rules-based system. What we are witnessing instead is a world where individuals like Trump and Elon Musk – figures who thrive on disruption and chaos rather than structured transformation, shape major decisions.

If the fall of American hegemony is inevitable, then it should happen in a way that allows for the strengthening of multilateral institutions, deeper cooperation among nations of the Global South, and the establishment of economic and political systems that do not simply replicate the exploitative structures of the past.

The Trumpian approach, however, is not about reform; it is about dismantling global structures without offering meaningful alternatives, leaving behind a world that is more fragmented, unstable, and vulnerable to crises.

Rather than celebrating the decline of America under Trump, we should be deeply concerned about the disorder that comes with it. The global struggle for justice and equity requires transformation, not destruction.

As South Africans, as activists, and as part of the broader movement for a fairer world, we must advocate for change that is deliberate and principled, not driven by reckless, reactionary forces that seek only to disrupt. If we allow the future of the global order to be dictated by figures who prioritise personal power over collective progress, we risk creating a world that is even worse than the one we seek to change. ◀



# A True Servant of our Movement till the end

## A Tribute to the Late Veliswa Ndidi

■ By **ANDILE LUNGISA**

**I**N an era marked by monumental change and profound challenges, the life of Veliswa Ndidi stands as a testament to unwavering commitment and passionate dedication. As we reflect on her remarkable contributions to the African National Congress, it becomes evident that her legacy is one of transformative leadership, grounded in the principles that undergird our movement – particularly the commitment to non-racialism and social justice.

Veliswa was not merely a figure in the Youth League; she was a pioneering force during a historic juncture characterized by the

introduction of the white paper on higher education. Alongside distinguished comrades such as Bongani Molo, Thabo Mdukiswa, Nkosifikile Gqomo, Xolani Pizza Sifali, Gege Mbikanye, Simpwe Rwentela, Phumeza Lose, Xola Ngcangca and a number of distinguished comrades, she engaged tirelessly with the pressing issues of her time. This period was not without its complexities, yet Veliswa's vision and unwavering resolve shone brightly, illuminating the path forward for countless young leaders seeking to advance the cause of equity and education.

Her dedication to the people of

the northern areas epitomized her deep-rooted belief in the core values of the ANC. Veliswa did not merely advocate for non-racialism; she lived it daily, working alongside community members to foster unity in diversity. Her approach was one characterized by inclusivity, ensuring that every voice resonated in our struggle for a just society. In her unwavering embrace of community, she fostered spaces where individuals from various backgrounds coalesced around shared aspirations of dignity and opportunity.

As a councillor during critical moments in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro Municipality, Veliswa's leadership assumed a pivotal role in navigating the intricacies of governance. Collaborating with esteemed leaders such as the late Cde Suka, Cde Makwanaite, Cde Ndoni, and Cde Captain, she was an architect of change within human settlements, advocating for policies that transformed lives and redefined communities. Furthermore, her instrumental role in establishing the Youth Council in NMBM ensured that the voices of emerging leaders were not only recognized but prioritized in the political discourse.

In light of her passing, the ANC faces a daunting challenge as it seeks to regain its standing in the metro. The void left by Veliswa is substantial; her visionary leadership and tenacity were instrumental as the party grappled with the complexities of the political landscape. The urgency of the moment calls for her spirit—a fierce commitment to principles and a relentless pursuit of justice — qualities that she embodied throughout her life.

As we navigate the path ahead, let us draw inspiration from Veliswa

Ndidi's legacy. Her unwavering dedication to service, her passionate advocacy for equity, and her resolute belief in the potential of our youth serve as a blueprint for the collective action we must undertake. In honoring her memory, we reaffirm our commitment to the ideals she championed and strive to create a future reflective of her vision — a future where justice prevails, and every individual is afforded the respect and opportunity they deserve.

Veliswa Ndidi will be remembered not just as a dedicated leader but as a symbol of courage and resilience.

A leader who serves our people in the structures of our move-

ment in Nelson Mandela Region ANCYL as Treasurer and Deputy Chairperson of the YL in the Eastern Cape Province. Her legacy remains imprinted in the narrative of our struggle; a reminder that in service, we find purpose, and in our unity, we discover strength. She has left an indelible mark on the hearts of many, and as we continue to forge ahead, let us carry forth her spirit, ensuring that the torch of leadership she ignited continues to illuminate our path.

Rest in revolutionary peace, Cde Veliswa Ndidi.

Your contributions will not be forgotten, and your spirit will forever guide us as we work to build a just and equitable society for all.


 A tribute poster for Comrade Veliswa Ndidi. The background is dark with bokeh light effects. On the right, there is a portrait of Veliswa Ndidi, a woman with curly hair wearing a green jacket with the ANC logo. In the top left, there is a circular logo for the African National Congress Youth League. A white dove is flying in the center. The text is as follows:
 

**Veliswa Ndidi**  
 1 December 1975 - 1 March 2025

**The ANCYL Nelson Mandela Region, mourns the passing of Comrade Veliswa Ndidi, the former ANCYL Regional Deputy Secretary and EC PEC Member.**

**We extend our heartfelt condolences to the Ndidi family, friends and comrades who mourn the loss of this great woman.**

**Rest in Peace Comrade Veliswa Ndidi**

 At the bottom, there is a bouquet of white flowers, the ANC logo, the 113th Anniversary logo, and the text 'Issued by ANCYL Nelson Mandela Region'. A large '2025' is visible in the bottom right corner.

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

# THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

15–21 March 2025

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

### 15 March 1954 Ghetto Act passed

The Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act (Act 28 of 1946) was introduced on 15 March 1946 and passed in June 1946. This prevented Indians from occupying land outside certain exempted areas and forced them to live in certain restricted areas. In return for restrictions on land ownership, Indians were offered a limited form of parliamentary representation, mainly through White representatives. This act, labelled the 'Ghetto Act' caused an outcry in the Indian community. Following it, Dr Yusuf Dadoo, with other younger leaders like G.M. Naiker, formed an anti-segregationist lobby, which soon ousted the older leadership. Naiker became the chairman of the Natal Indian Congress and Dadoo of the Transvaal Indian Congress.

### 15 March 1961 South Africa withdraws from the Commonwealth

The Union of South Africa of 1910 was still a British colony, but in October 1960 a referendum amongst whites was held on whether the country should become a republic, distancing itself from the British monarchy. 52% voted yes, and then Prime Minister Verwoerd informed the British, but still wanted to remain a member of the Commonwealth (an association for British colonies). African member states, as well as India

and Canada objected because of the apartheid policy. Verwoerd on this day announced that South Africa will therefore leave the Commonwealth. South Africa was invited to rejoin the Commonwealth with effect from January 1994.

### 15 March 2010 Malema convicted for hate speech

EFF leader Julius Malema was convicted of hate speech for mocking the woman who accused former President Jacob Zuma of raping her. The case casts light on issues of misogyny and sexual abuse.

### 15 March 2014 First issue of Comic Kwezi published



The first issue of the South African comic, Kwezi, created by Loyiso Mkize was published on this day. The comic features a teenage boy who acquires superpowers.

### 15 March 2015 Collins Chabane dies in car accident



At the time of his passing on this day, Collins Chabane (15 April 1960–15 March 2015) was a member of the National Executive Committee since 2007, a Member of Parliament and Minister in the Presidency for Monitoring and Evaluation. Cde Collins was born in Xikundu, village, Limpopo, matriculated from Shingwedzi High School and registered for a BSc degree at Turfloop University. His commitment to freedom of his people took precedent and he joined ANC underground activities at the age of seventeen (17), went into exile in May 1980 where he joined Umkhonto we Sizwe, received military training in Angola and on his return worked in the underground, until his arrest and sentence to Robben Island from 1984 to 1990. In prison, he resumed formal studies, obtaining a Diploma in Electrical Engineering from



## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Technikon South Africa, started studying aviation, and later completed a Diploma in Management from Arusha in Tanzania. After his release from prison, he served as Provincial Secretary of the ANC in the Northern Province from 1990 to 1998 and was instrumental in the re-establishment of ANC structures in Limpopo Province. After the dawn of democracy, he was a Member of Parliament, served as MEC in the Limpopo Provincial Government in 1998. As an NEC member he served in the Constitutional committee.

### 16 March 1892 Dr JS Maroka born



Dr James Sebe Moroka, medical doctor, landowner and politician who was elected President-General of the African National Congress (ANC) from 1949 to 1952, was born in Thaba Nchu, Orange Free State. He was a great grandson of Chief Moroka I of the Barolong Boo Moroka at Thaba Nchu.

### 16 March 1984 SA and Mozambique sign Nkomati Accord

Mozambique signed the Nkomati Accord with apartheid South Africa – a non-aggression pact where the South African government undertook no longer to support the RENAMO rebel group and the Mozambique government under-

took to no longer harbour the liberation movements (ANC and PAC). President Samora Machel signed this accord under great pressure, with RENAMO engaged in a civil war and the SADF incursions into Mozambique. The Nkomati accord did not last long, with further invasions by SADF.

### 16 March 1994 New Flag and National Anthem Unveiled



The Transitional Executive Council unveiled South Africa's new "interim" national flag and *Die Stem* and *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* as joint national anthems, and the flag was first flown on 27 April 1994, when all South Africans went to the polls to elect a government, for the first time in the country's history. The flag and anthem were adopted as national symbols.

### 17 March 1820 British Settlers arrive in South Africa

After the Napoleonic wars, Britain experienced a serious unemployment problem; to solve this problem, it started sending settlers to its colonies. The first British Settlers arrived in South Africa on 17 March 1820, in Table Bay on board the Nautilus and the Chapman, till then a Dutch colony, and started the process of the British takeover of South Africa, espe-

cially the Cape colony and Natal. This first group was sent to Algoa Bay, later Port Elizabeth, now Gherbeba. They were sent to settle in the Eastern Cape, as a buffer against the amaXhosa and to boost the English-speaking population. The settlers were given farms and equipment to support them, near Bathurst. Others continued on to Natal (now KwaZulu Natal). This period saw one of the largest stages of British settlement in Africa, and approximately 4,000 Settlers arrived in the Cape, in around 60 different parties, between April and June 1820.

### 17 March 2000 First National Lottery begins

The first national lottery started in South Africa, with its slogan *Thatha maChance, Thatha maMillions*. A percentage of proceeds of the Lottery goes towards arts, sports, culture and community development, and it is regulated by the National Lottery Commission.

### 18 March 1963 Guinea-Bissau gains Independence



Guinea-Bissau, the home of Amílcar Cabral, launched its war of independence against Portugal (joined by Cabo Verde). Guinea-Bissau is in West Africa, and borders Senegal and Guinea, with a population of just under 2 million

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

people. Historically, the territory was part of the Kaaba/Ngabou Empire (1537–1867), part of the Mali Empire, until being colonized by the Portuguese from the 16th century. Cabral and others formed the Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC), which conducted an armed liberation struggle against colonisation.

### 18 March 1979 Government claims responsibility for Mdluli's death in detention



The South African government admitted responsibility for the death of the African National Congress (ANC) member, Joseph Mdluli (50), on 19 March 1976 and agreed to pay damages to his family. A claim for loss of support by Mdluli's widow against the Minister of Justice and police was settled out of court. She received the amount of R28 616. Joseph Mdluli died of an injury to his neck while being detained in Durban security headquarters. His death occurred just a day after his arrest in connection with the 1976 Gwala treason trial. Four security policemen were charged with culpable homicide, namely Mr Frederick Van Zyl, Col. A.R.C. Taylor, Mr Mandlakayise Patrick Makhanya and Mr Zabulon Ngobese. During their trial, they claimed that Mdluli had tried to escape and had fall-

en over a chair. A pathologist presented evidence disputing the police version. All four accused were acquitted on 25 October 1976, the fifth day of the trial. The presiding judge said there was insufficient evidence to connect them directly to the death. He called for further investigation.

### 19 March 1998 First black cricketer to represent SA in a test match



Makhaya Ntini becomes the first black cricketer to represent South Africa in a test match, played at Newlands, Cape Town.

### 19 March 1999 Gadafi sets date to hand over Lockerby suspects

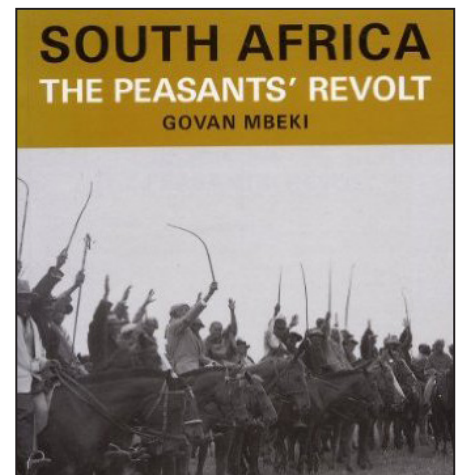
Libya, led by Brother Leader Gadafi sets a date to hand over the two Lockerbie suspects, in a letter to the UN Secretary General by 6 April 1999. The date is confirmed in a letter to the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. This followed engagements on the issue by President Nelson Mandela.

### 20 March 1953 First Mountain Zebra born in Cradock Mountain Zebra Park

The Mountain Zebra is an endangered species native to South Western Angola, Namibia, and

South Africa. It is boldly striped in black and white or brown and white with a white underbelly and no two individuals look alike. Due to overhunting, the Mountain Zebra population came close to extinction, with only 100 remaining in the 1930s. The Mountain Zebra Park near Cradock, Eastern Cape was established, and on 20 March 1953 the first foal was born. This success has continued until today with the Mountain Zebra population now standing at 9 000 mature ones, though it is still regarded as an endangered animal.

### 20 March 1960 The Pondoland Revolts starts



The Pondo people fiercely resisted the rise of the colonisers and their attempts to reshape and re-engineer Pondoland and to co-opt their Chiefs. Violence erupted around issues such as Chiefs who collaborated with the Apartheid state, the land reclamation programme, the Bantu Authorities system and spontaneous revolts against further imposition into the Pondo people's lives. The specific protests which started in the district of Bizana arose from the rejection of the tribal authorities and self-government of Transkei, initiated by the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951. Between

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

August and October 1961, 30 Pondo people were sentenced to death for their participation in the revolt. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) heard details of these events and decided that the remains of the twenty-three men that had been executed in Pretoria and buried in a Mamelodi cemetery, were to be exhumed and returned to Pondoland for reburial. Govan Mbeki wrote a book, *The Peasants Revolt* (1964), about these events.

### 20 March 1993 Passing of renowned artist Gerald Sekoto

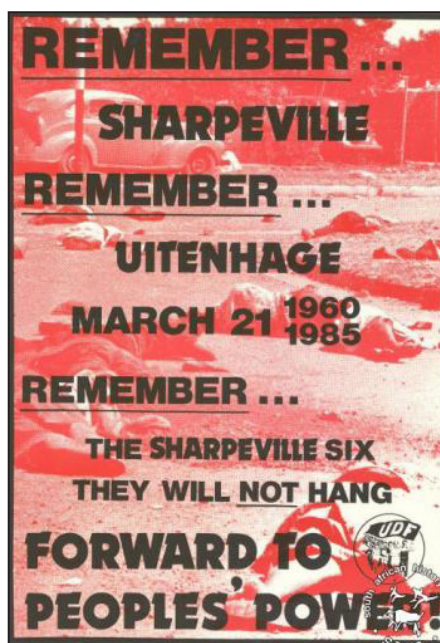
On this day, eminent artist and musician Gerard Sekoto (80) died in Paris. He was the pioneer of urban black art and social realism, and his paintings today rank amongst the top ten most expensive works of art in the country. Sekoto was also an accomplished pianist and composer of over 29 songs.

### 21 March 1903 JB Marks born

John Beaver (JB) Marks, teacher, trade unionist and political activist was born in Ventersdorp, Transvaal (now North West Province) on 21 March 1903. He was the seventh child of an African railway worker, John Thelelwa Marks, and Betty Esau, who was of White descent. He joined the ANC and became president of its Transvaal branch. In 1928 he was recruited to the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) by Brian Bunting, was elected to its Central Committee in 1932, and eventually became its Chairperson. He was also active in the labour movement, elected as President of the African Mine-workers Union in 1942. JB Marks

was one of the leaders of the Defiance campaign, was banned under the Suppression of Communism Act, listed as a co-conspirator in the Rivonia trial and asked by the ANC NEC to leave to help establish the movement in exile, where he served as ANC Treasurer General. He died on 1 August 1972 after a severe illness, and was buried in Russia. His remains were repatriated and reburied in 2015.

### 21 March 1961 Sharpeville and Uitenhage Massacres



During peaceful anti-pass law protests, organised by the PAC, protesters were gunned down by the apartheid government in Sharpeville, with 69 people killed. The massacre became a tipping point in South African history, and in the aftermath liberation movements launched the armed struggle.

### 21 March 1975 Inkatha National Cultural Liberation Movement formed

The Inkatha National Cultural Liberation Movement was found-

ed on 21 March 1975 at KwaNzimela, in Northern Kwa-Zulu. Inkatha emerged, along with the Black Consciousness Movement, to fill the vacuum in Black politics caused by the banning of the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). It was the precursor to the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

### 21 March 1985 Funeral goes shot on 25th anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre

On this day, residents from Uitenhage attended a funeral of one of six residents killed by apartheid police the week before. On the way from the graveyard to the house of a resident in Langa, police blocked attendees with armoured vehicles and opened fire, killing 35 people and injuring 27 others. Ironically, this day was also the 25th commemoration of the Sharpeville massacre.

### 21 March 1996 SA Human Rights Commission sworn in

Parliament established the Human Rights Commission to promote and protect human rights. It is empowered to investigate violations and advise government on implementation of human rights. On 21 March 1996, Human Rights Day, members of the Human Rights Commission were sworn in. Dr. Barney Pityana was its Chairman and Ms Shirley Mabusela deputy chairperson. Other members of this first SAHRC include Dr. Max Coleman, Rhoda Kadalie, Helen Suzman, Brigalia Bam, Adv C. De Jager and Anne Routier.



## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

# INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DAYS

15–21 March 2025

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

### 15 March International Day to Combat Islamophobia

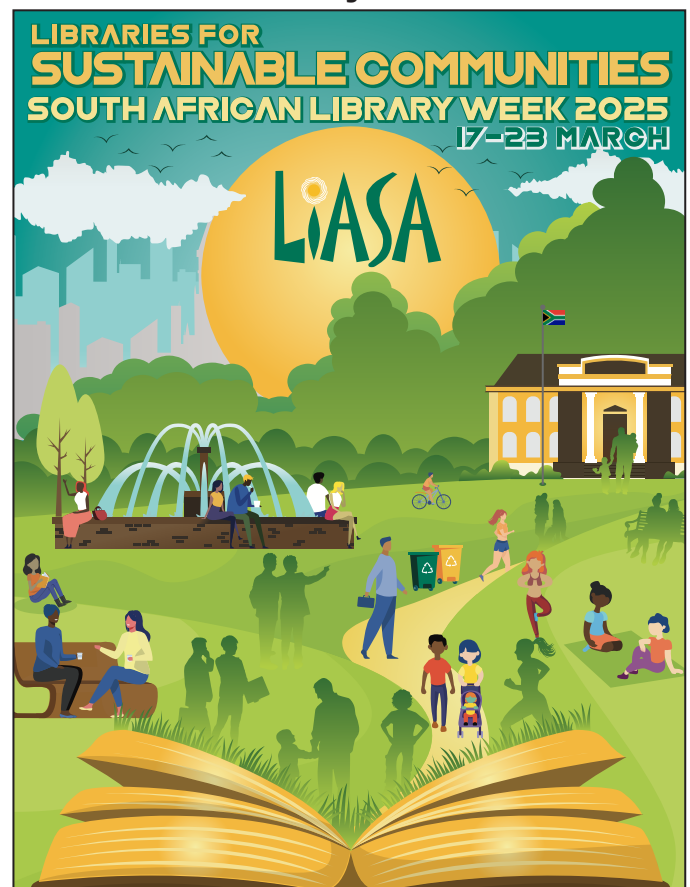
Islamophobia is a fear, prejudice and hatred of Muslims that leads to provocation, hostility and intolerance by means of threatening, harassment, abuse, incitement and intimidation of Muslims and non-Muslims, both in the online and offline world. Motivated by institutional, ideological, political and religious hostility that transcends into structural and cultural racism, it targets the symbols and markers of being a Muslim. A recent report of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief found that suspicion, discrimination and outright hatred towards Muslims has risen to “*epidemic proportions*.”

### 15 March World Consumer Rights Day

The day raises awareness about the rights of consumers, in the face of often powerful companies and brands, which need to be held accountable. This often requires government regulations, for example through the SA Bureau of Standards and/or specific legislation around labeling of products and more generally, the Consumer Protection Act of 2008, in order to “*promote a fair, accessible and sustainable marketplace for consumer products and services*.” The theme for 2025 is **A just transition to sustainable lifestyles**. The theme reminds consumers about the importance of making sustainable and healthy lifestyle choices accessible, available and affordable for everyone. The past decade has been the warmest on record, and extreme weather has become routine in many nations, disrupting lives and livelihoods. At the same time, biodiversity loss and pollution are posing a growing threat to planetary and human health. It is increasingly clear that the impact of these crises is not just environmental, but economic and social too and is undermining prog-

ress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To remain within planetary boundaries, we will need to make fundamental changes to the way we eat, how we travel, how we heat, cool, and power our homes, and the products and services we buy and use.

### 7-23 March South African Library Week



The theme for South African Library Week 2025 is “**Libraries for Sustainable Communities**.” The theme underscores the transformative role that libraries play in fostering sustainability, resilience,

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inclusivity, and accessibility within communities. This theme is aligned with South Africa's commitment to sustainable development and equality, and it further reflects the library's contributions to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 4 (Quality Education). Libraries provide inclusive spaces and access to resources for all members of society, empowering communities through education, social support, and opportunities for lifelong learning. Libraries are among the most inclusive institutions serving everyone, regardless of age, gender, socio-economic status, or background. By offering free or low-cost access to diverse resources and services, they bridge gaps in education and information. In communities where such barriers persist, libraries stand as beacons of opportunity, empowering people at risk of exclusion and fostering equitable access to knowledge. By providing accessible spaces for individuals with disabilities, language challenges and historically excluded populations, libraries ensure a welcoming environment and essential tools for personal and collective growth. This inclusivity strengthens social bonds, which are vital to the development of sustainable and resilient communities. By offering inclusive access to information, learning opportunities, and resources, libraries empower individuals of all backgrounds to enhance their lives and contribute meaningfully to their communities. As centres of lifelong learning and social support, libraries are indispensable in South Africa's journey toward creating sustainable, inclusive, and resilient communities for all.

### 18 March

#### Global Recycle Day

Planet Earth gives up billions of tons of natural resources each year, and her health continues to decline. As humans mainly responsible for this decline, we must reduce waste, reuse items and restore the health of the planet. One vital way of doing this is through the practice of recycling. **Global Recycling Day** is part of various awareness days aimed at raising awareness of our responsibilities as global citizens towards our environment. These focus on the themes Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Recycling day aims to encourage recycling, so that we reduce humanity's footprint on nature, in the context of the struggle for a sustainable planet and against climate change. The Green Times ([www.greentimes.co.za](http://www.greentimes.co.za)) notes that *"the last decade has been the hottest on record, and we are now facing a climate emergency of unparalleled proportions."*



*"If we don't make significant and rapid changes, we will see continued rising global temperatures, the melting of icecaps, continents on fire and rapid deforestation."* We all have to do our part and also to become responsible consumers.

### 19 March

#### International Read to Me Day

*'Every day is International Read to Me Day!'* is an audacious campaign working to build a community where volunteers from around the globe read every ten minutes, 24 hours a day, supporting families by sharing the love of reading! The day aims to (a) empower children to ask for more support, not just from their family but also from their community. Marking a day when kids can ask to be read to is a key part of this strategy. (b) Promote, encourage and inspire reading activities within communities. (c) Showcase organisations which are passionate about improving the literacy standards of the children around them. (d) Address the disparity between resources and where they are distributed, by supporting a book drive and sending the collected books to locations around the world to those who are looking for books! (<https://www.readtomeday.com>)

### 20 March

#### International Day of Happiness

Since 2013, the United Nations has celebrated the International Day of Happiness as a way to recognise the importance of happiness in the lives of people around the world. In 2015, the UN launched the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which seek to end poverty, reduce inequality, and protect our planet – three key aspects that lead to well-being and happiness.



## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

### 20 March

#### World Oral Health Day

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO): Oral health refers to the state of your mouth covering teeth, lips, tongue, palate, etc. Diseases and condition include dental problems with your teeth, mouth cancer, cleft lip, etc. The Global Burden of Disease Study 2019 estimated that oral diseases affect close to 3.5 billion people worldwide. The theme of World Oral Health day 2025 is ***A Happy Mouth is... A Happy Mind***. Prioritizing oral health leads to better mental health and quality of life.

### 21 March

#### International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination



The **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination** is observed annually on the day the racist apartheid police in Sharpeville, South Africa, opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration against apartheid “pass laws” in 1960. In 1979, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a programme of activities to be undertaken during the second half of the ***Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination***. On that occasion, the General Assembly decided that a week of solidarity with the peoples struggling against racism and racial discrimination, beginning on 21 March, would be organized annually in all member States of the United Nation. Since then, the apartheid system in South Africa has been dismantled. Racist laws and practices have been abolished in many countries.

### 21 March

#### World Poetry Day

Every 21 March is World Poetry Day. It is a day to encourage people to read, write, teach, and publish poetry and to recognise the great cultural contribution poetry makes to human society.

### 21 March

#### World Down Syndrome Day

World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD), 21 March, is a global awareness day which has been officially observed by the United Nations since 2012. Down syndrome is a condition in which a person has an extra chromosome (small “packages” of genes in the body). They determine how a baby’s body forms and functions as it grows during pregnancy and after birth.

### 21 March

#### Human Rights Day

The 1960s were characterised by systematic defiance and protest against apartheid and racism across the country. On 21 March 1960, the community of Sharpeville and Langa townships, like their fellow compatriots across the country, embarked on a protest march to protest against pass laws. The apartheid police shot and killed 69 of the protesters at Sharpeville, many of them shot while fleeing. Many other people were killed in other parts of the country. The tragedy came to be known as the Sharpeville Massacre and it exposed the apartheid government’s deliberate violation of human rights to the world. The democratic government declared 21 March **Human Rights Day** to commemorate and honour those who fought for our liberation and the rights we enjoy today. The month of March is a heightened period in South Africa to mark Human Rights Month, commemorated under the 2025 theme, ***“Deepening a culture of social justice and human rights”***.

“

TO DENY PEOPLE  
THEIR **HUMAN  
RIGHTS** IS TO  
CHALLENGE  
**THEIR VERY  
HUMANITY.**”

**NELSON MANDELA**

