

The future of astronomy



Writer: Ongezwa Manyathi

Photographs: Courtesy DST

South Africa's bid to host the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) will boost the development of high-level skills and cutting-edge technology infrastructure in Africa, and will also attract expertise and collaborative projects to the continent. Southern Africa and Australia have been shortlisted as candidate sites to host the SKA. The selected site for the SKA will be announced in 2012.

Construction of the project is scheduled to start in 2016 with the first astronomical observations expected by 2019 and the telescope should be fully functional by 2024. South Africa has partnered with eight more African countries in its bid to bring the SKA to Africa. "The SKA is well positioned to benefit from this renewed global interest in Africa. Already multinational companies such as Intel are fostering ICT, energy and other research and innovation partnerships with the South African SKA Project Office. The SKA continues to inspire and amaze", says the Minister of Science and Technology, Naledi Pandor.

As public servants we should all be ambassadors of this project, particularly because of the spin-off projects for Africa and southern Africa.

What is the Square Kilometre Array?

The concept of the SKA was developed over many years beginning in the early 1990s. Astronomers recognised that the next great discoveries in astronomy required a significantly larger facility than previously constructed;

hence they suggested a telescope with a collecting area of one million square meters or one square kilometre. Such a telescope would be 50 to 100 times more powerful than any other ever built and will be able to answer many of the fundamental questions remaining for our understanding of the universe.

The SKA will be the most powerful and most sophisticated telescope ever built. It will utilise cutting-edge technology in electronics, computing, network connectivity, material sciences and engineering. If such a facility is constructed in Africa, it will catapult the continent to the forefront of astronomy for years to come. The SKA telescope will observe, capture and analyse radio signals from the immediate aftermath of the Big Bang. It will search for Earth-like planets and potential for life elsewhere in the universe, test fundamental scientific theories such as the Einstein's theory of gravity, and probe the dark energy of the universe.

The SKA bid process

The International SKA Steering Committee (ISSC) sent out a formal Request for Proposals for sites in August 2004. Four other countries (Argentina, Australia, China and the United States of America [USA]) indicated their intention to also bid, but the USA subsequently withdrew. The bid documents were scrutinised by an Independent Site Selection Advisory Committee, consisting of prominent astronomers from countries not involved in the bids and who had not personally been involved



in the SKA Project. Their report was submitted to the ISSC at its meeting in Dresden, Germany, in August 2006, where the decision was made to shortlist Africa and Australia. A consortium of major international science funding agencies, in consultation with the SKA Science and Engineering Committee, will announce the selected site for the SKA in 2012.

Both Africa and Australia-New Zealand are building pathfinder telescopes the Karoo Array Telescope (referred to as MeerKAT) in South Africa and the Australian SKA Pathfinder in Western Australia respectively. In South Africa, this telescope is Phase One of MeerKAT and comprises seven fibreglass 12-metre dish antennae linked to operate as a single radio telescope.

The full 64-dish MeerKAT is expected to be completed by late 2013 or early 2014. These facilities are being constructed to test possible technologies to be used in the ultimate design of the SKA itself.

In late 2011, a group of international astronomers will analyse the final SKA configurations and costings for both Australia and Africa and make a recommendation on the host country. A decision by governments and funding agencies will be made in 2012 as to where the SKA will be built.

SKA Africa partnership

The African SKA bid has partner countries and associate countries. The former will host the SKA infrastructure and the latter, the associate countries, are either already involved or encouraged to participate in engineering and astronomy training of postgraduate students in South Africa.

The SKA African partner countries, South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, Zambia, Botswana, Namibia, Mauritius, Mozambique and Madagascar meet twice a year. A ministerial meeting of the SKA African partner countries was convened during March 2010 in Cairo, Egypt. The ministers agreed to strengthen cooperation in the project to ensure that all necessary project requirements are met.

A South African Interministerial Committee on the SKA has also been established to provide strategic direction for the SKA on local and international lobbying, site preparation in all SKA partner countries, including regulatory and legal matters, and resolving high-level challenges as the bidding process approaches the final stages.



Minister of Science and Technology, Naledi Pandor, with Carnarvon Learners

Some spin-off projects from the SKA project

"We have chosen an exceptionally good site for the SKA in a remote region of South Africa, a region with very little economic activity. We have provided statutory protection for the site through the Geographic Astronomy Advantage Act. The Act covers existing activities and transmissions, not only new ones. In this we are unique.

Minister Naledi Pandor

New labs for Carnarvon High School, Northern Cape

■ Two new laboratories – a computer and a science laboratory – were launched at Carnarvon High School to boost Science and Mathematics teaching and learning. The small town of Carnarvon is near the area that has been selected as a potential site to build the core of the world's largest radio telescope – the SKA. This is part of the SKA South Africa Project's commitment to building educational resources in the area by forming partnerships with the private sector to support local schools and working closely with the Northern Cape Department of Education. It is hoped the labs will encourage young people of nearby towns, especially Carnarvon and Williston, to engage with Science and Technology and explore the potential of the SKA Project.

Providing education

■ The SKA South Africa Project also funds tertiary students, ranging from artisan apprentices and technicians to university students at all levels. To date, 293 students and researchers have benefited from SKA South Africa bursaries and scholarships, including many students from other African countries. Bursaries go to Physics and Engineering students and a special effort is made to attract women and black students to these fields. There are also bursaries for technician training. Support for artisan training focuses on bringing students from the towns near the telescope site to study at the Northern Cape Further Education and Training Urban College in Kimberley. ®

SKA SOUTH AFRICA



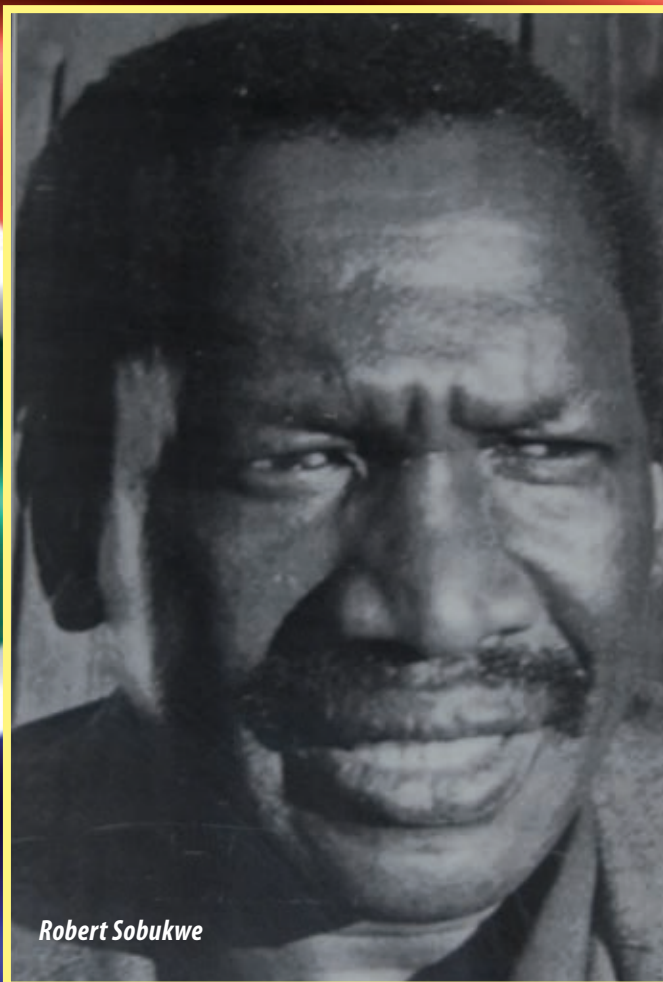
9 THINGS EVERY SOUTH AFRICAN SHOULD KNOW

- 1** The Square Kilometer Array (SKA) is a deep space radio telescope that the world's scientists will use to explore the deepest secrets of our universe.
- 2** South Africa and Australia have been short-listed to be the home of SKA - the largest telescope ever built - and the most exciting scientific project currently underway in the world. South Africa offers the most realistic and lowest cost for this world-leading scientific instrument.
- 3** The SKA is likely to consist of about three thousand satellite dishes, each about 15m in diameter, about the height of a three-storey building, and thousands of radio "fish-eye" lenses, spread out over more than a thousand kilometres.
- 4** The SKA will be about 50 - 100 times more sensitive than any other radio telescope on Earth, able to probe the edges of our Universe.
- 5** South Africa is building the Karoo Array Telescope (MeerKAT) which is a precursor instrument for the SKA, but will in its own right be amongst the largest and most powerful telescopes in the world.
- 6** MeerKAT will be the most sensitive centimetre-wavelength radio telescope in the southern hemisphere and will make significant contributions to astronomy. It will look for gravitational waves and will map the Universe back to billions of years ago, to see how the Universe changes with time.
- 7** The development of the MeerKAT has already created a group of young scientists and engineers with world-class skills and expertise. The SKA will provide unrivalled opportunities for scientists and engineers to engage with transformational science and cutting edge technology and will attract the best scientists and engineers to work in Africa.
- 8** The MeerKAT and SKA demand technologies which push the boundaries - ultra-high speed computing (exaflops), ultra-fast data transport (tens of Terabits per second), huge data storage, processing huge data sets, operating very large, smart networks of sensors, very advanced wireless receivers and signal processing.
- 9** The SKA South Africa Human Capital Development Programme has since 2005 awarded 263 grants for post-graduate and undergraduate study in physics, astronomy and engineering and for technician and artisan training. It is strengthening our universities and building capacity for innovation in next-generation technology and science.





Nelson Mandela



Robert Sobukwe

IN SEARCH OF TRUE HEROES OF THE STRUGGLE

Writer: Sandile Memela

Photographs: Courtesy: Arts & Culutre

African heroes and heroines have lived in South Africa for thousands of years before the arrival of people from the West. In the ensuing war of civilizations we, their descendants, now know nothing of their names, languages, beliefs, wars, memories and leadership.

Try to go back in the pages of history to reconnect with pioneers of the struggle and you will discover a curious thing – the history of this country begins around 1820. For some, it is 1652 with the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck.

To a large extent, very little is known about Iron Age African kings and queens who ruled this country before the arrival of Europeans; and those gallant Khoisan heroes and heroines who not only encountered modernity but fought or bargained hard to protect and preserve ownership of the land of their ancestors.

A lot happened before the arrival of the three ships in 1652 or the landing of the 1820 Settlers from Britain. The historical perspective that has dominated is that of the nature and temperament of colonisation where the lions, so to speak, were always captured or killed by the man-hunters. The lions still have to write their story.

But despite the gaps, there is always something

primordial that beckons one to rediscover and reconnect with those unnamed heroes and heroines whose love and commitment to the struggle was so intense, so deep.

You will find stories of men and women who were fully conscious that they were custodians and protectors of a richness of a beautiful land, sea, air and people.

These were the first heroes and heroines of the struggle who, as early as 1660, fought with Europeans over land and cattle, for instance. They were descendants of the hunter-gathers, the Khoisan people.

Among them were heroic figures who have ultimately been obliterated from memory.

Even if you desired to truly understand the true leaders of the liberation struggle, it is only 20th century male heroes like Chief Albert Luthuli, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Robert Sobukwe and Steve Biko, among others, who emerge. There is little on heroes such as Gqunukhwebe or Ndlambe, for instance.

This begs the question: where are the real heroes and heroines, those self-

sacrificing men and women who loved their land and what it has to offer more than their own lives?

Presumably, they never knew self-aggrandisement, greed and putting individual interest first at the expense of the people and the land.

The mystery of their names can only be unravelled by archeologists and non-partisan historians.

In the encounter with modernity, especially with the arrival of Moravian missionaries, the heat of frontier wars unleashed heroic African figures, largely comprised of the Khoisan and, later, slaves and the Xhosa.

But some of these were men and women who could not resist the evil honey of Western religion and education. With the British take-over in the early 1800s, they opened up the land and their hearts during a century that did not recognise Africans as rightful owners of the land.

This resulted in the gnashing of teeth as – all over the land – these heroic men like King Shaka, among a few, dreamt dreams of African nationalism and unity.

However, in other parts of the beautiful land, there were African heroes such as Ntsikana who made coherent the inherent clashes between African culture and Western religion through exploring the multiple identities of black people, in general. This heroic Xhosa prophet saw visions that no one could understand, that fused the coming together of Europeans with Africans to build a new world.

He was not alone in his wandering as Tiyo Soga, the original father of Black Consciousness and the first African priest trained in Scotland in 1856, began drawing the identity, culture and religion of his people in thick black ink, grounding them in a positive sense of self. There was also Walter Rubusana and SEK Mqhayi and possibly many others.

This was the beginning of the theory of an “African Personality” – later espoused by the pioneering Pan Africanist visionary, Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe.

The African people who were first to embrace the brutality of

modernity in the early 1800s were forced to take a heroic role where they abandoned their way of life to imitate the Western way of life. The greatest hero of this solution was John Tengo Jabavu.

Long before, when the British took over the Cape in the late 1790s, descendants of the Free Burgers – a small group of Europeans who grounded their identity on African soil – had already sworn allegiance to the continent.

The Free Burgers were lifted by a frail whirlwind that saw them begin the Great Trek. This gained momentum in the mid-1830s.

It was these Afrikaner heroes who forced their minds to desert British imperialism and deepened the seeds and convictions for political self-determination and independence. When these winds blew, they touched a raw nerve among the indigenous population who had never stopped to mourn for their land and everything it had to offer.

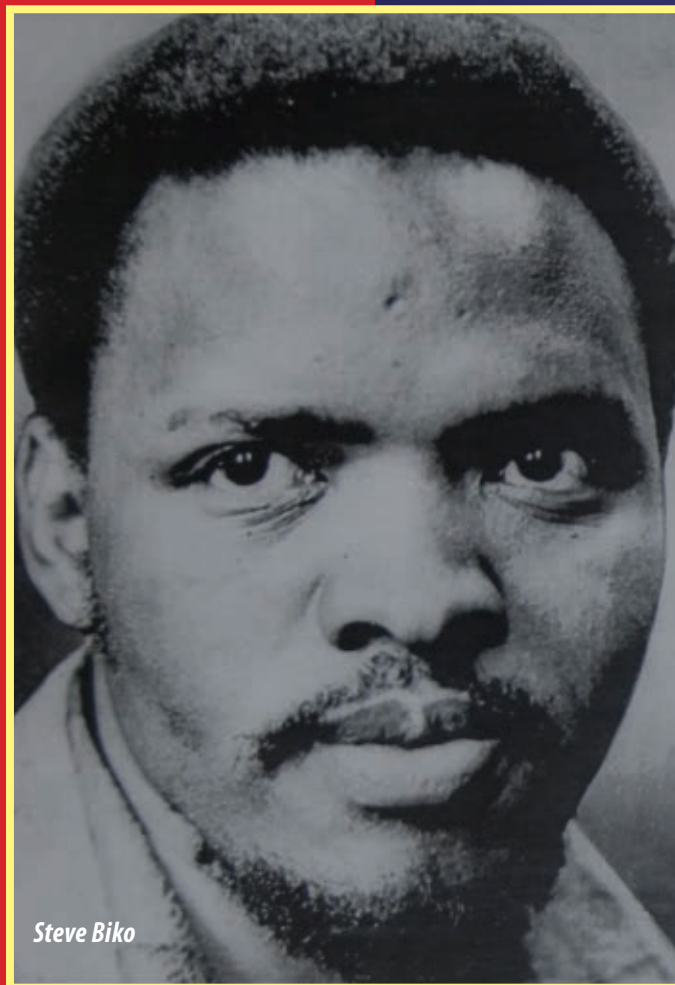
The first political movement was the Organisation of African People, which was launched in the 1880s to lay the foundation for African

heroes to take their rightful place in the leadership for freedom and democracy.

There has always been that vacant space for African heroes and heroines to emerge, to resurrect that desire for self-determination and repossession of the land.

Even before the likes of, among many others, John Langalibalele Dube, were born in the early 1870s, these African heroes and heroines were destined to be stirred by a spirit that had long existed.

The heroism that exploded in the 20th century was ignited by Bhambata, the first Zulu warrior chief gue-



Steve Biko



Sandile Memela

rilla. He would inspire Mandela's Umkhonto in 1960 and also the explosions of what was to happen in 1976 and after. In addition, Bhambata also inspired those heroes and heroines who were to come after him after having waited for over three centuries.

By 1910, these African heroes and heroines had taken the struggle to greater heights when Sol Plaatje and others prostrated themselves before the British King to ask for what belonged to them in their own land.

The day of revelation came in January 1912 in Bloemfontein when many of the heroes chose to liberate themselves from the darkness of disunity and lack of a common vision. For the next five decades, the African National Congress strolled, and even walked, in slow motion. For they intuitively knew that history and the future were on their side.

At Kliptown in 1955, they made the declaration that "the land belongs to all who live in it, black and white". Some among them, especially Sobukwe and other Pan Africanist radicals, felt this mad decision was taking the indigenous owners of the land nowhere. These Pan Africanist radicals broke away to form a rival ideological organization, the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), which espoused "Africa for the Africans, the Africans for humanity and humanity for God".

In a well-considered gesture, in December 1961, Mandela turned Umkhonto We Sizwe towards armed resistance while his friend and brother in the struggle, Oliver Tambo, went into exile to garner support and solidarity from the people of the world.

The super-Afrikaners – who had taken over political power in 1948 – hunted down self-sacrificing heroes and heroines of the struggle but were to be defied even by women in 1956 and children in 1976 and 1985.

The position of heroic leadership lay vacant as fear ruled the land until a young Steve Biko

emerged to sprout the seeds of Black Consciousness in the 1970s which promised an early harvest. But he died a martyr. It was in this time that a new generation of very young heroes and heroines were driven to action by the young and charismatic Tsietsi Mashinini and others in the Soweto Uprising of 1976.

Their fists and blood were the final attempt to unburden African people of the weight of having lost their land, its wealth and their own culture.

What does it mean to be a hero or heroine of the struggle after 1994?

The joy of living in what has been dubbed an "African century" by those who know, is the thought of modeling heroic figures of rebellion, in thought and in act.

This desire for genuine freedom and democracy keeps itself alive, year after year and century after century, even when descendants of the dethroned African kings and queens fail themselves and their history through greed and corruption.

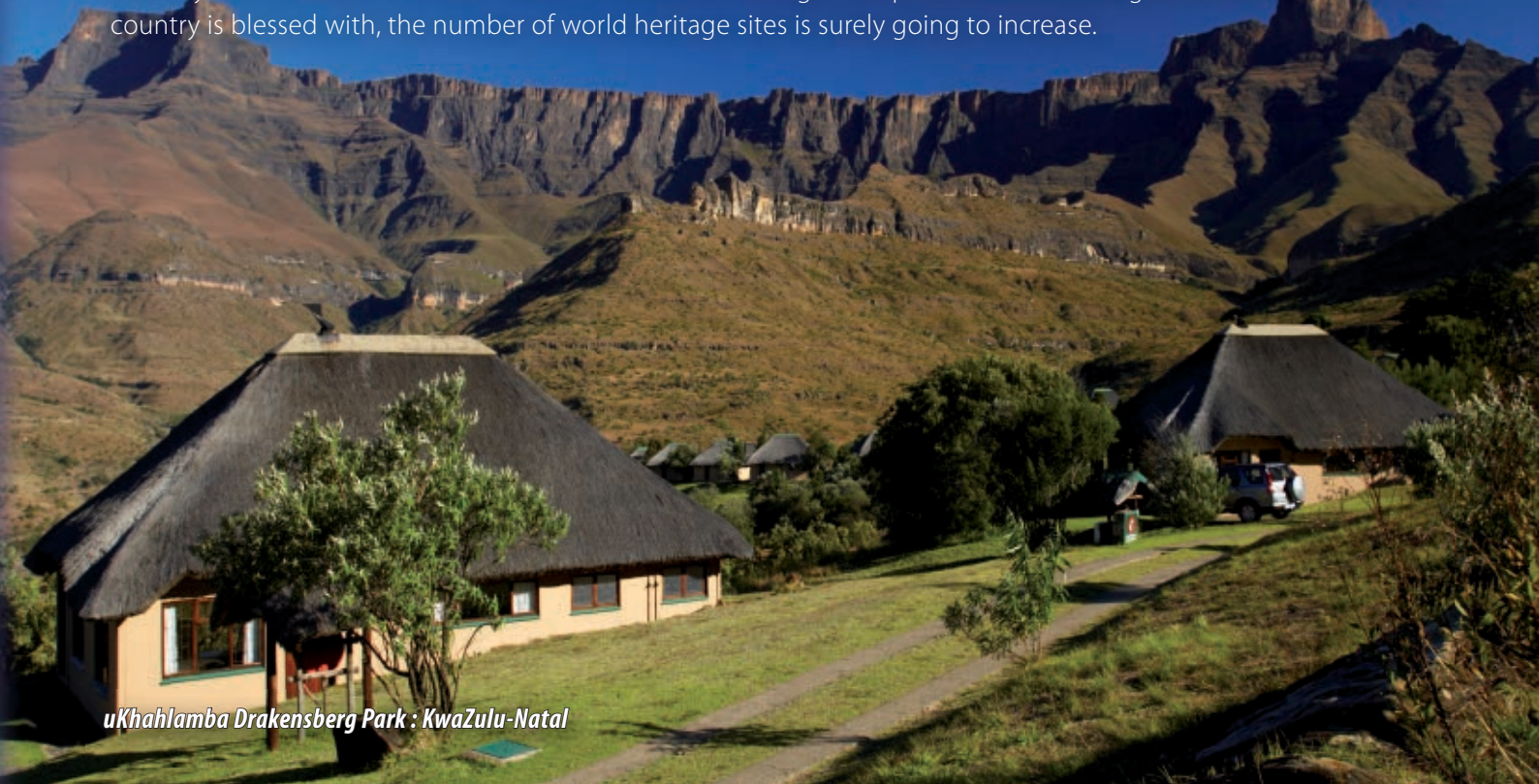
Consider how it felt like, if you can imagine it, to be a hero or heroine of the liberation struggle over the centuries. Listen to the marching of Makana, Sekhukhuni, Sol Plaatje, Charlotte Maxeke, Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Ruth First, Braam Fischer, Anton Lembede, Onkgopotse Tiro, Joe Slovo and many others.

Then you may understand what it means to love Africa more than material. This is the point where the story never ends. We, the living, are the inheritors of everything that the heroes and heroines of the struggle lived, fought and died for. Will the heroes and heroines of the new struggle, please, stand up? 🙏

*** Sandile Memela is Chief Director: Marketing and Public Relations at the Department of Arts and Culture. He writes in his personal capacity.**

HERITAGE SITES

Since 1999, South Africa has ensured that the World Heritage community recognises the outstanding universal values of eight properties within its territory. Of all these sites, four are cultural, three Natural and one mixed. Given the diversity and abundance of both natural and cultural heritage with potential outstanding universal values that the country is blessed with, the number of world heritage sites is surely going to increase.



uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park : KwaZulu-Natal



Cradle of Humankind: Gauteng



Robben Island: Western Cape



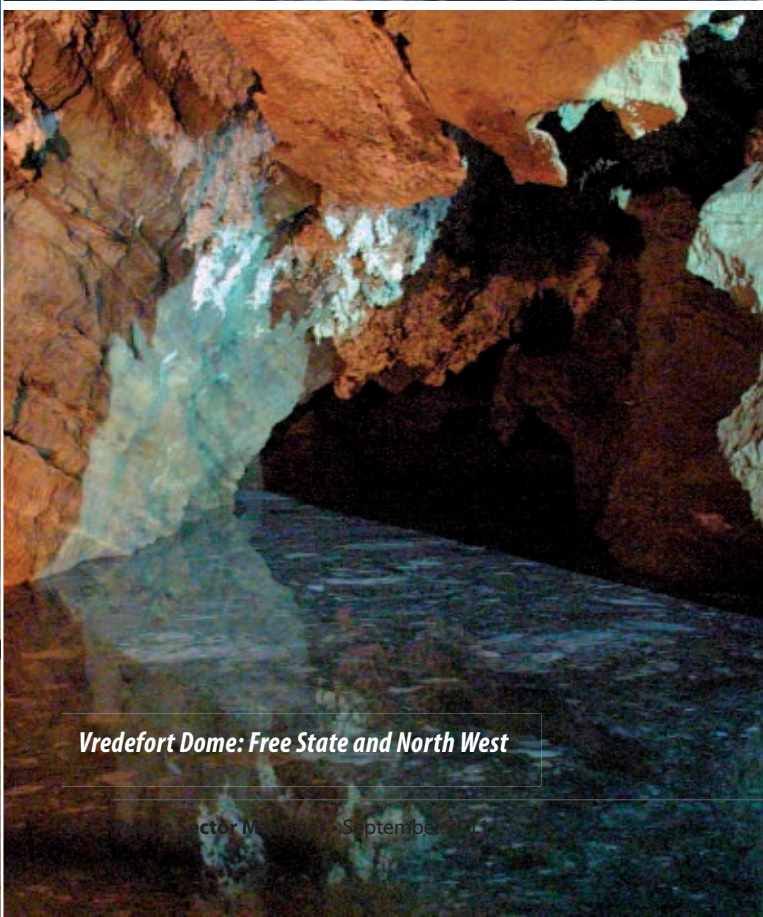
The Veyane Cultural Village at Isimangaliso Wetland Park: KwaZulu-Natal



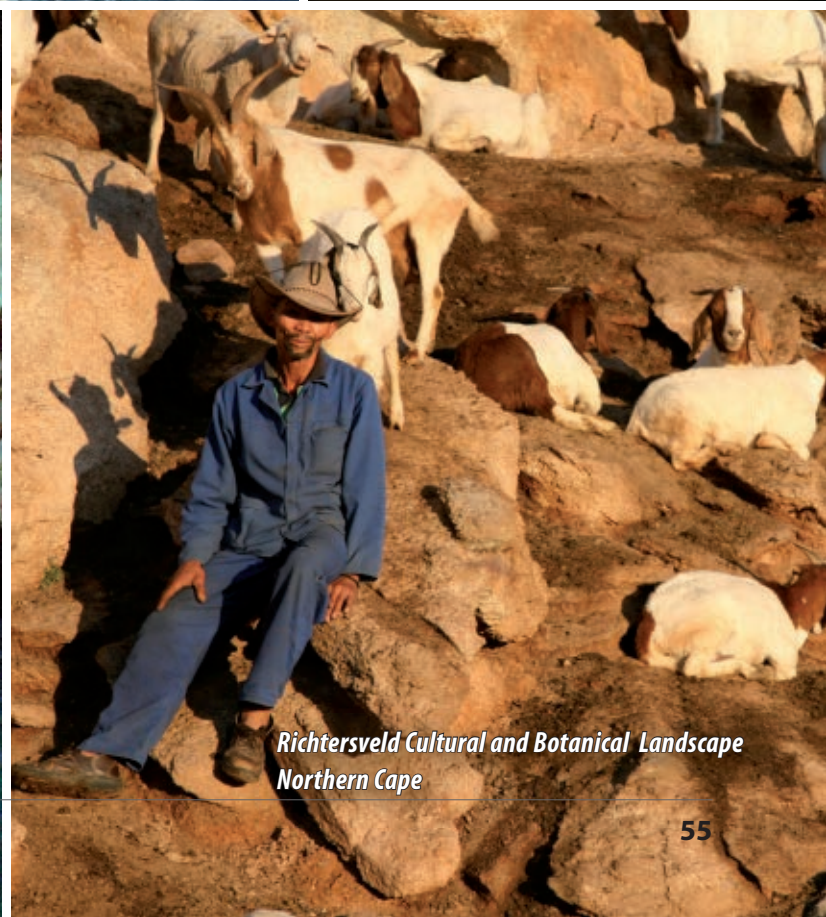
Cape Flora Region Protected Areas: Western Cape and Eastern Cape



Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape : Limpopo



Vredefort Dome: Free State and North West



Richtersveld Cultural and Botanical Landscape Northern Cape

Growing and sustaining our tourism

Writer: Jabu Mabuza *

South Africans are proud of the country's innate ability to triumph in the face of adversity. As economies the world over crashed, and amid immense global pressure and scrutiny, South Africa hosted what FIFA called "the most successful World Cup ever" in 2010.

Without the World Cup tourism buffer last year and with the industry clearly still feeling the effects of the global recession, we've always known this would be the year to work harder than ever before.

Our strong currency, changing travel patterns, including the increasing tendency of tourists to buy more affordable accommodation and other tourism-related products, increasing unemployment in most First World countries and high fuel prices are some of the factors listed as the reasons for lower revenues. The

domestic market has also been weaker than anticipated, which exacerbates the impact of lower occupancies on the very substantial increase in room inventory that happened in the run-up to the World Cup.

But in these challenging times, it is now even more important for us as the entire tourism sector to work even harder as a cohesive and coordinated collective to analyse and react to tourism trends. We need to aggressively promote South Africa locally and internationally as a value-for-money destination, given tourism's significant contribution to our country's economy and to sustainable job creation. Adverse economic conditions in many of our target markets are not

expected to significantly improve over the next two to three years. Unless we succeed in aggressively promoting our value-for-money tourism product offering globally in the face of an increasingly competitive international tourism environment, the sustainability of our industry will come under even more pressure by 2014, when one of our key competitors will have the benefit of the FIFA World Cup.

The current business environment does not necessarily correlate with the consistently good tourist arrivals

Statistics South Africa continues to record.

From January to April 2011, South Africa had 2 750 175 foreign tourist arrivals – up 7,5% on the 2 558 715 recorded over the same period in 2010. This growth came from our core traditional, as well as our exciting investment markets.

Encouragingly, growth from Europe was up by 4,5% with 458 479 tourist arrivals from

January to April 2011 (with our biggest tourism market, the United Kingdom (UK), level-pegging last year's figures with 162 415 tourist arrivals). North America was up 16,8% (with United States [US] visitors up 15,6%), Central and South America increased by 24,1% (with Brazil up 38,4%), Asia was up 29,3% (with India up 51% and China up 25,6%) and Africa grew by 7,3% (with Nigeria up 27,6% and the Democratic Republic of Congo [DRC] up 21,2%).

We believe these tourism figures are an accurate reflection and even more importantly, that the growth shown in the markets we are focused on provide a clear indication we

"The tourism sector is not only a multifaceted industry that contributes to economic growth on many levels, but it is also a labour-intensive industry with a significant capacity for creating jobs". – Minister of Tourism, Marthinus van Schalkwyk



are on the right track with our tourism target markets and strategies. South Africa has a long way to go to grow demand adequately to meet the current oversupply of rooms and counteract the effect of the strong Rand and, in the short term, the industry will continue to bear the effect thereof. We are working hard to alleviate the impact currently being felt, but it is key that we maintain a longer-term strategy and focus on marketing South Africa as a destination.

We are also looking at the African business and leisure travel market with new eyes and investing over R60 million this year on our marketing efforts on the African continent, identifying in particular significant potential for travel and high tourism spend in South Africa from tourists in African air markets such as Nigeria, Angola, Kenya and the DRC. As African economies grow and become more globally competitive with more discretionary spending power, we've seen huge opportunities to market our traditional adventure and wildlife tourism offerings.

The recently launched second phase of our "20 Experiences in 10 Days" global marketing campaign is set to reach over one billion consumers in this financial year. The campaign records the unscripted, authentic travels of couples from the UK, USA, Nigeria and India in phase one and couples from China, Germany, Brazil and Angola in phase two in an advertising campaign that will be rolled out with our global media partners online and also in the heart of our consumer heartland in our targeted tourism markets.

With research showing that word-of-mouth and the first-hand impressions of visitors of their travels to South Africa remain our biggest marketing tools, the campaign has been well received globally. Domestic marketing and the Sho't Left Campaign remain the bedrock of marketing efforts as we continue to entrench a culture of travel within South Africa, with its theme of "There's no Such Thing as a Wrong Turn".

This year, expanding our tourism offering and showcasing our lifestyle, design, fashion and music attributes have been critical, as has been profiling the urbanisation of our cities. To this end, we've heavily invested in and partnered with African Fashion International in events such as the Joburg, Cape Town and Africa fashion weeks, as well as the Cape Town International Jazz Festival, the Macufe Festival and Grahamstown National Arts Festival, to name just a few. We've also been long-term partners of initiatives such as the Design Indaba and more recently the Designing South Africa Project, and are fully behind Cape Town's 2014 World Design Capital bid, which we're confident could be yet another feather in our nation's already-impressive cap.

We will continue to strive to increase our tourism numbers, support the efforts to create the 225 000 new jobs targeted for our industry and sustain existing ones, while also working with provinces and city partners on highlighting the critical importance of – and encouraging – domestic travel among South Africans to all nine provinces.

We take our lead from the formation by the national Department of Tourism of the National Tourism Stakeholders Forum, comprising government in all its spheres, the business sector and all tourism role players to work together to take collective ownership – and responsibility for – growing our critical tourism industry and meeting the important targets set out in the National Tourism Sector Strategy and the National Growth Path. 🇿🇦

Fast fact: South Africa aims to increase the number of foreign tourist arrivals to South Africa from seven million in 2009 to 15 million by 2020, tourism's total contribution to the economy from R189 billion in 2009 to R499 billion by 2020 and to create 225 000 new jobs by 2020.

*** Jabu Mabuza** Chairperson of South African Tourism



Sonwabile Mancotywa

Ubuntu:

the foundation of our heritage

Writer: Sonwabile Mancotywa*

The country's amnesia about its history and consequently its lethargic appreciation of its heritage continue to erase the nation's public memory. On many occasions, a search for the history of Africans in this southern part of the continent results in scant facts that have survived through oral history. Some critical information has also endured alteration as it is transferred from one generation to the other. The memory about significant people, events and places faded with time. The traces of this distorted history that could have been part of the defining elements for nation-building and national pride still lingered in the material of the then Bantu education until the 1990s. The community that was probably able to prove its preserved literary expressions is the Khoisan people with their rock art. Heritage practitioners are still preoccupied with decoding the Khoisan messages.

South Africans cannot have a scapegoat for not documenting, preserving and reviving their heritage, especially not with the abundant means to do so. The use of technology and its rapid developments should not escape us. We need to stay relevant with the future in mind. The Timbuktu manuscripts that date back to the 13th century, some of which cannot be regenerated, should not be the example for South Africa and the continent. I agree that some of the heritage is

appreciated in retrospect as one definition by Ashworth and Turnbridge (2001) qualifies it:

Heritage is that which is constructed in the present from remains of the past. But we are fortunate to have the foresight to shape the heritage – be it cultural practices, symbols, landmarks, legends or any other. What is, however, most central to defining the character of this strong nation of South Africa, is our national identity. The cultivation of the character of a South African can be inspired by our cultural value system, which is the heritage that has survived all odds.

These cultural values that have profoundly seeded themselves in every South African form the soul of the nation – Ubuntu.

Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe made a profound proposal recently at the Memorial Lecture of the late struggle heroine, Ruth First, on 17 August at Wits University, where he said: "We may need to

begin exploring creative ways of introducing subjects related to ethics into our school curriculum very early in the development of the learner".

Ruth First was among many charged in the Treason Trial in 1956, when the African National Congress and other organisations were charged with trying to overthrow the Government. In 1963, she was arrested, imprisoned and released on condition that she would leave South Africa permanently. She writes about this in the book *117 Days*. She eventually settled

The generation of this century should consciously avoid the amnesia or deliberate forgetfulness to catch up with the next generation. The question should be: "What are we leaving for future generations?"

in Mozambique, with her husband, prominent anti-apartheid activist, Joe Slovo. On 17 August 1982, she opened a large manila envelope sent from a United Nations agency and was instantly killed by the explosive device that had been placed in it. Her funeral in Mozambique was attended by thousands and was addressed by President Samora Machel.

Deputy President Motlanthe's call echoes a statement made by then President Thabo Mbeki on Heritage Day in 2005: "... we need to answer the question as to what it is that distinguishes a South African from other people, be they Chinese or American. What are the characteristics that inform the manner in which a South African approaches a variety of matters and challenges?"

"We have to answer these questions because a Heritage Day that is celebrated by all our people should suggest that indeed we do have a past to be proud of; we do have a heritage that helps us face modern challenges and we do have a value system that guides our behaviour at the individual, family and community levels.

"A superficial answer to these questions may suggest that it is not possible to speak of a single South African character and identity which derives from a common value system because we are a diverse society. Indeed, there is no dispute about the fact that we are a diverse society and all of us have consistently urged that we should use this diversity as a strength that should unite our people.

"However, within this diversity there are dominant values and ethos that bind communities together and ensure social cohesion. These values and ethos drive community members to act in solidarity with the weak and the poor and help members of these communities to behave in particular ways for the common good.


"As we know, the African people in this country have over many centuries evolved a value-system of Ubuntu with its basic tenet aptly captured by the saying: *motho ke motho ka batho*. Many of us have been brought up to uphold values based on this old-age African adage. Through socialisation, many Africans have ensured that our families and communities are themselves

grounded on the value system of Ubuntu.

"A close examination of the central tenets of the values that drive the behaviour and approach of the Afrikaner, Indian and Jewish communities reveal that there are many elements that are consistent with the value system of Ubuntu."

Today, government as well as civil society, use elements of this value system of Ubuntu in their approaches to the day-to-day challenges. Some of these examples are the Government's Batho Pele Campaign that seeks to place the interests of the public at the centre of government's work and the delivery of services. The Moral Regeneration Movement is one initiative aimed at constantly reminding us of the values of humanity.

The missing piece of the puzzle of cultivating positive values in society will be almost complete with the introduction of ethics in schools and early learning centres. The measure should not be viewed as coercive without acknowledging that South Africans are an emotionally wounded nation that needs healing. Building an Ubuntu nation therefore requires a much more concerted effort than just leaving it to a natural process. I believe that ethics should be introduced to society across all spheres, starting with the family. Our responsibility as a nation is to take responsibility of holding the hands of the "future families" in defining the moral fibre of our future nation through Ubuntu.

This is a value system that freedom fighters upheld and relied on to achieve our country's freedom. Had it not been for their sense of Ubuntu, the ideals for nationhood and human excellence for all South Africans would not have been a reality. This Heritage Month is dedicated to celebrate the heroes and heroines of our struggle and liberation. While the political aspirations of rescuing the nation from the tyranny of the oppressors during apartheid is realised and celebrated today, it is important not to isolate the central value system that made this possible – the universal values of humanity that bound these comrades together. 

*** Sonwabile Mancotywa is Chief Executive Officer of the National Heritage Council.**



A network of Heritage sites telling stories of South Africa's liberation struggle

WE INVITE ALL THE FRIENDS

of South Africa. If your country or area has traces of any connection with the liberation struggle of South Africa, the National Heritage Council would appreciate to hear from you. email us on liberation@nhc.org.za

Domus Building, Office no. 016
57 Kasteel Road (corner of Kasteel & Ingersol Road) Lynnwood Glen, South Africa, 0081
Email: nhc@nhc.org.za, Phone: +27 12 348 1663/8233, Fax: +27 12 348 2833



Climate talks: no time for hot air

Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Edna Molewa with Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane addressing the media.

Writer: Chris Bathembu

Although the upcoming climate talks in Durban are unlikely to produce a legally binding agreement, it is important that the world's major greenhouse emitters set voluntary and tangible emission reduction targets as part of their moral obligation to curb global warming, experts say.

This comes as calls continue to intensify from developing countries and some environmental groups for an overarching climate accord to address the imminent devastating impacts of global warming.

South Africa is this year's host to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 17) and the country hopes to follow on the relative progress made at last year's negotiations in Cancún, Mexico. It is expected that approximately 20 000 people will attend the event in Durban from 28 November to 9 December.

The conference takes place at a time when the expiry in 2012 of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which bound nearly 40 countries to specific emission reductions targets, looms.

The UN-led negotiations have in the past been

reduced to rich-poor rivalries with arguments focusing on how to manage financing for poorer nations to adapt to climate change and curb their greenhouse gas emissions and the best way to deliver and manage funding.

Developing countries demand that the Kyoto obligations be extended and that new targets be adopted while industrial countries have been pushing for emerging economies to accept similar binding commitments as those applicable to them. Decisions on the future of the treaty were deferred until the Durban summit, hence its particular significance. It remains to be seen whether countries will sign up for a second commitment period to cut emissions beyond 2012.

But South African negotiators are unequivocal about their stance on the importance of the Kyoto agreement. Xolisa Ngwadla, Chief Director and Ministerial Adviser in the Department of Environmental Affairs, explains why the Durban event needs to ensure that the treaty is renewed.

"I think the Durban negotiations are primarily about the Kyoto Protocol; everything will revolve around how the Kyoto issue is resolved, so it's very important that we are clear on that. The agreement still remains the pivotal element of any deal, recognising that the commitments that can be made under the Kyoto Protocol will be influenced by how much progress we make in terms of how categories



Xolisa Ngwadla

of countries commit to global emission reductions," says Ngwadla.

He insists that cooperation among developing countries during the negotiations will be vital for a "desirable" deal to be achieved.

"I think South Africa's approach is recognising how the multilateral process works and part of our approach as a country is to ensure that there's a strong voice of Africa in the negotiations.

"Africa is on the receiving end of climate change impacts and any deal that satisfies the interests of Africa is likely to address a broad range of stakeholders among developing countries. So, the approach is about ensuring that there's a strong engagement by Africa and that the continent tries to be a bridge builder among developing countries as well as across the divide to developed countries," he says.

Ngwadla dismisses criticism that South Africa may be falling behind, as reported by some media, in its preparations for the event at Durban's International Convention Centre. "I think we are doing pretty well, there is a lot of work that is involved in this event. I would say the atmosphere leading to Durban has been very optimistic and everyone is on board," he says.

He goes on to say that South Africa's round of negotiations faces tough challenges considering that some of the political issues that were not resolved in Bali in 2007, have remained outstanding.

"So, Durban has to resolve these issues because there are

legal implications if we don't solve these. People are optimistic because of what came out of Cancun but at same time they are cautious because there is an understanding that these are very difficult issues politically that need to be addressed."

Will Durban save the Kyoto Protocol from a premature death?

International Relations and Cooperation Minister, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, thinks there is a strong possibility that COP 17 may result in a new treaty that will represent the start of a pledge-and-commit situation.

"We don't want South Africa to be the death of the Kyoto Protocol," she says. "This is mainly because the Kyoto agreement is probably the only contract that obliges nations to quantify and monitor efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ensure important measures that enable cost-effective mitigation."

"In order to achieve a balanced outcome, South Africa will inter alia require the operationalisation of the Cancun agreements as well as commitment to deal with unfinished business ... we have every intention to utilise all opportunities to advance the COP 17 process to ensure Durban is a success," she explains.

A new climate green fund was agreed to at Cancun to transfer money from the developed to developing countries to tackle the impact of global warming but no figure was put on how much money will go into it.

Nkoana-Mashabane insists that Durban "is clearly the end of the line" for postponement of key financial and political issues.

"Durban must be different; there is no room for postponements.





We have to agree on tangible goals. As Team South Africa, that will include the business sector and indeed the continent. We must commit to a balanced discussion so that we can have a satisfying outcome.”

But experts have argued that previous climate talks have been weakened by the lack of a formal role for businesses or investors. As witnessed at the Bonn negotiations, there is a growing appreciation of the emerging role of business in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Joanne Yawitch, Chief Executive of the National Business Initiative, says a key challenge facing business in South Africa leading up to the COP 17 event is the fact that there is a need to recognise that South Africa is an energy-intensive economy and none of the discussions will be easy.

“Despite all these challenges, it is very important to say that business sees climate change as both an opportunity and a challenge. We will be monitoring very closely the issues around the new commitment phase because we think the issue of adaptation and mitigation are very crucial going forward,” she says.

Yawitch, who was part of South Africa’s delegation to both the Copenhagen and Cancún, former Director-General of the Department of Environmental Affairs, affirms that business is ready to tackle the issue of climate change.

“In my assessment, there is willingness by business to take action, that is why we are hoping for some kind of a deal in Durban,” she says.

Regarded as the 14th - highest emitter of CO₂ in the world, South Africa has committed to lower its carbon emission

to 34% by 2020 but needs financial support from developed countries to do so. The country recently embarked on several solar and wind power programmes in a bid to fast-track its green economy initiatives.


Ngwadla says despite its energy-dominant economy, the country can still honour its emission reduction commitments.

“While we are continuously changing our energy mix, including the nuclear strategy for the country announced recently, it’s clear that between now and a period of 10 years, we will be changing our energy mix. In the interim you can, for instance, get your reductions from other sectors like improving the use of public transport as well as agricultural practices and so on,” he says.

Local anti-global warming groups have in the meantime insisted on more actions and have demanded that Durban reaches a “conclusive” agreement and that initiatives and commitments be put in place by countries, governments and businesses to curb the impact of climate change.

“If a legally binding agreement doesn’t come out of Durban, then it is because of a lack of political will. For Durban to produce a legally binding agreement, there would need to be significant and powerful political will across both the developed and developing countries to make it happen,” says Greenpeace Africa climate campaigner Melita Steele.

She says the talks in Mexico last December had managed to rebuild “a lot of trust within the UN process” and took some small steps forward, but the involvement of civil society in a meaningful way is still lacking.

“We would like to see the South African talks taking a transparent, inclusive direction – with South Africa showing real leadership and working hard to build bridges in the negotiations. COP 17 needs to take the negotiations a substantial distance forward in order to avoid catastrophic climate change and create a sustainable future for all,” she says. 



Pali Lehohla

Census 20

With government adopting an outcomes-based approach to governance as a robust monitoring and evaluation yardstick, credible and scientifically evidenced statistics are crucial for planning, according to the Statistician-General and Head of Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), Pali Lehohla, writes **Mbulelo Baloyi**.

It has been hard work for the past 17 years for Lehohla. The Statistician-General has been putting in place a credible statistics organisation while simultaneously building capacity to meet the new challenges brought about by the democratic dispensation.

In between the task of building Stats SA, Lehohla has had to continue carrying out the mandate of Stats SA as required of the law. This mandate includes conducting a census every five years and providing a credible consumer price index (CPIX).

Lehohla believes that evidence-based statistics is vital for arriving at crucial decisions. "The new approach of monitoring and evaluation as well as planning enforce the process of using statistics which are based on scientific evidence. This fosters change in a particular direction. It requires of us to have the basic skills, tools and capabilities to manage this scientific evidence in this emerging environment," says Lehohla.

"It puts pressure on Stats SA to come out with evidence. We have become clients of government departments. We provide the statistics, systems and skills."

This is precisely why the Census that will be undertaken in October is so crucial. Stats SA conducts censuses to gather the necessary information to be used to provide government, policy-makers, business and international agencies with data on which to base social and economic development plans and programmes. The data collected from each household include items such as education, demographics, income and employment.

Census-taking is governed by the Statistics Act, 1999, which states that all information provided to census-takers must be held in the strictest confidence. Cooperation with census-takers is also obligatory under the law. Anyone who refuses entry to a census-taker or obstructs the work of a census-taker is liable for a fine of up to R10 000 or six months in prison.

The Statistician-General says Stats SA has put in place measures that will ensure that every person who finds himself/herself in South Africa between 10 and 31 October is counted.

Stats SA has amassed a staggering R3,2 billion for the Census. It is expected that 120 000 enumerators or fieldworkers will visit more than 14 million households. In addition, the enumerators will also visit institutions where people reside. These include hospitals, prisons, army barracks and university residences as well as areas where homeless people live.

Lehohla says between 1 and 14 November, about 30 000 Census 2011 supervisors will conduct "mopping-up" operations in the form of the Post-Enumeration Survey (PES) as a follow-up to ensure that no persons are missed by enumerators or fieldworkers. This will then be followed by an independent monitoring and evaluation process that will interrogate both the Census period and the PES.

"We are trying to bring down the number of people that we miss during counting. It is for this reason we have decided on this course of action," says Lehohla.

He says the censuses of 1996 and 2001 had shown that Stats SA had to make preparations as early as possible to make sure that it reached everybody.

"This time we are targeting a single digit undercount – that is of less than 10% – and the pilots that we have been running indicate that we might have a 25% undercount. We are fine-tuning our preparations to ensure that we achieve our single-digit percentage undercount."

During the 1996 Census – the first under democracy – there was a 10% undercount and five years later, during the last Census in 2001, the undercount percentage rose to 17%, meaning for every five or six people counted there were two people who were not counted. Stats SA has already embarked on an aggressive communication campaign to ensure that everyone is



11 on track


counted, which will intensify from September. A massive "Know Your Enumerator Campaign" will be conducted to ensure that communities get to know the field worker or enumerator who will be counting them in their immediate locality. Enumerators will be recognised by their special uniforms, yellow bibs and a special identification card. People will be able to call a helpline to check the fieldworker's identity number, which will be stored on a database. In addition, Stats SA will distribute posters of the fieldworker designated to work in a specific area so that they can be easily identified.

Members of the public have an option of filling in the questionnaire themselves. Alternatively, the enumerator can help complete the questionnaire. The information is aggregated to statistics and is stripped of all data that will allow individuals, organisations or businesses to be identified before it is released into the public domain or to other state institutions. After that, a two-week period is allowed in which every questionnaire that is completed is returned to Stats SA and all staff are withdrawn from the field.

Thereafter, an independent quality and methodology unit will return to the field to carry out a mini-survey in each province to check whether the information is accurate. It is at this stage that undercount figures are often uncovered.

Lehohla says the official results of the 2011 Census will only be released in 2012 once all the data has been reconciled and

he has satisfied himself that the results meet the statistical requirements as envisaged in the Statistics Act, 1999. He says depending on the outcome of the 2011 Census, there is a possibility that the Census will be conducted at five-year intervals as stipulated by law and the next Census could be as early as October 2016.

South Africa's population is expected to exceed 50 million in the 2011 Census. 

For more information on the Census 2011, please contact Stats SA's toll-free number: 0800 110 248



Dr Keneilwe Sebeo

Strengthening

Local government through provincial support units

Writer: Dr Keneilwe Sebeo*

The State has a constitutional and developmental imperative to strengthen cooperative governance and intergovernmental relations (IGR) to improve the lives of the people we govern. According to the Constitution, spheres of government must “cooperate with one another in mutual trust and good faith by fostering friendly relations, assisting and supporting one another, and informing one another of, and consulting one another on, matters of common interest”. To this end, national and provincial government are obliged to assist municipalities. Section 154 indicates that, “The national Government and provincial governments, by legislative and other measures, must support and strengthen the capacity of municipalities to manage their own affairs, to exercise their powers and to perform their functions”. This means that all spheres of government have an obligation to cooperate and work together very closely to achieve national priorities, particularly national and provincial government in their support role to local government. National and provincial government also have a monitoring and oversight role in relation to local government.

How has IGR evolved?

Since 1994, IGR was largely informal and unregulated. With the establishment of the President’s Coordinating Council there was greater formalisation. The Municipal Systems Act, 2000 and the Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 also helped to clarify the roles of national and provincial government as it relates to local government matters and in 2005 the IGR Framework Act, 2005 introduced even greater stability and predictability in the IGR system.

In 2009, government moved to an outcomes-based system. There are 12 outcomes translated into 12 individual delivery agreements between the respective national ministers and provincial MECs.

Intergovernmental implementation forums have been established to monitor these agreements. The evolution of the IGR system has created the need for greater and more innovative ways of enhancing coordination and cooperation. This provides the backdrop for the current initiative to establish provincial support units across all provinces.

What are some of the IGR challenges?

A number of challenges were highlighted in the policy review on provincial and local government and the *State of Local Government Report* released in 2009. These included weak intergovernmental support, monitoring and oversight over local government, a shortage of capacity and skills within and transfer of skills from national and provincial government and a lack of integration and coordination in the work of national and provincial government.

Municipalities are also different across and within provinces. They differ geographically and in population size and face varied service delivery and socio-economic challenges. They therefore require a varied and unique form of national and provincial support and oversight. These factors have a negative impact on the ability of municipalities to provide sustainable service delivery to communities, safe and healthy environments, as well as a culture of public service and accountability among staff. In full, failures in local government can be associated with failures in the intergovernmental system; likewise, failures

and weaknesses in cooperative governance impact negatively on municipalities. It is for these reasons that the Local Government Turnaround Strategy (LGTAS) was implemented. It centrally aims to achieve improved delivery of services, participatory democracy at local level and a better quality of life for our people.

How can the Department of Cooperative Governance respond?

A number of complementary initiatives are needed to improve cooperative governance. They include capacity-building and training programmes for politicians and officials; greater effectiveness and efficiency in the functionality of IGR structures across government; improved implementation, support, accountability, oversight and reporting, based on the current outcomes-based approach; the realisation of a single window of coordination for local government across all spheres of government; and compliance with the existing IGR legislative frameworks.

What will the role of the units be?

The provincial support units (PSUs) will operate within the constitutional framework and principles of cooperative government and IGR, specifically Section 41 of the Constitution. The most important roles of the PSU's are intergovernmental facilitation, coordination and support. This support is aimed at provincial governments and secondly at municipalities. Appropriate support will also be provided to national departments and other state entities. Alignment and coordination of actions across spheres is crucial. The second most strategic role is monitoring and oversight. National and provincial government departments will both be the subject of monitoring and oversight and as partners as it relates to local government. Operationally, the premiers' offices and the provincial departments responsible for cooperative governance, local government and traditional affairs are critical partners for the units.

All activities of the PSUs as it relates to provincial government or municipalities will be undertaken in close collaboration and/or consultation with these two entities in the province. The main areas of focus will include:

- the successful realisation of Outcome 9 on local government
- supporting the implementation of the strategic plan of the national Ministry of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and the department
- mobilising additional and appropriate support from national

government, other provinces, state entities and other non-state partners

- providing appropriate support for the implementation of the other 11 outcomes
- compiling and submitting regular progress reports to the national department and providing regular feedback to the provincial government on the work of the PSU's
- supporting the establishment of results-oriented monitoring and evaluation systems in provinces and municipalities
- facilitating intergovernmental cooperation and actions to address critical threats to service delivery and good governance
- contributing to the knowledge management strategy of the department and government as a whole.

The PSU's will also be involved in coordinating other teams and units within the department and other national departments in response to situations in municipalities. In its strategic and operational roles, the PSU's should be regarded as an intergovernmental partner, with its work complementing and adding value. All these roles and functions will be carried out within the broader context of the national LGTAS and municipal turnaround strategies. The responsibilities of this unit will not exist in isolation; instead they will serve to enhance the implementation and deliverables of the LGTAS and the broader strategic plan of the Department of Cooperative Governance.

How will the units be resourced?

The PSU's will have a pool of expertise in programme and project management, intergovernmental relations and infrastructure and economic development. This team of senior managers will be located in all provinces and are expected to play the support, oversight and monitoring role. The plan is to initially deploy four staff members in each province: a provincial programme manager, a project manager responsible for infrastructure and economic development, a project manager responsible for governance and IGR and an administrative officer. The PSU's will report to the Chief Operating Officer in the national department, while at provincial level their gateway will be the office of the head of the provincial departments of cooperative governance. 

*** Dr Keneilwe Sebego is Chief Operations Officer at Department of Cooperative Governance.**



Communication and South-South cooperation

The Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) was recently invited to deliver a paper at a conference in Spain on *Communication and South-South Cooperation*. Here is an edited version of the paper delivered by GCIS Deputy CEO **Vusi Mona**.



President Jacob Zuma holds bilaterals talks with Indian Prime Minister Singh

Imagine a country ravaged by civil war, poverty, HIV and AIDS and other atrocities – what country comes to mind? Yes – I know, countries in the South. At the same time, think of democracy, freedom and other positive connotations, and I am certain that mostly images of Northern countries appear prominent.

What all of us, including people of the developing world know about the countries of the South, is informed by writers from the Northern countries.

Take Africa, for example. Media from the North splash head-

lines about hunger and starvation in Africa. Coverage of war, civil war, coups, oppression, corruption and violence form the staple feeds into the Northern media. Further, the South is generally depicted as a threat to the democratic traditions of the North.

Findings from communication research conducted after the first FIFA World Cup in Africa showed that the highest negative international perception of the continent was still poverty. We do not contest that poverty is a challenge. The priorities of the electoral mandate of the South African Government and many other governments in Africa place eradication of poverty at the apex of government programmes and interventions.

However, when media from the North try to give backgrounds or explanations about poverty in Africa, they tend to attribute the blame primarily to the “backward policies” and behaviour of Third World nations, organisations and politicians. Such explanations play down the direct or indirect effects or legacies of apartheid in the case of South Africa, Western colonialism, multinational corporate practices, Northern military interventions (such as we are seeing in Libya) and unfair international trade.

their attitude – “if it bleeds, it leads”. The tone of pre-election coverage was riddled with expectations of “blood” and civil unrest. This coverage even saw some of our citizens stocking up unnecessarily on tin foods and fuel in preparation for civil war. However, the resilience and motivation from our leaders and people ensured a peaceful election. Needless to say, those journalists were left disappointed – describing the 1994 election as “uneventful”.

This scenario taught us that the presentation of facts about



India External Relations Minister Mr SM Krishna, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation South Africa, Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane and Brazil's Minister of External Relations, Antonio Patriota

Northern mainstream news media, because of their resources and global presence, are often the first to break stories – their initial analysis and description set the media tenor and ensuing public discourse. It is the use and often misuse of this power that has led to a negative image of the South.

A brief reflection on history

The words “rainbow” or “miracle” nation are often used to describe the introduction of South Africa’s democratic dispensation in 1994. However, this “miracle” was the result of a long and hard struggle against apartheid.

A few months prior to the 1994 elections, writers from Northern countries, descended upon South Africa looking for news. Unfortunately, the news they were looking for had nothing to do with our hard-fought struggle for democracy or our preparations for the first democratic elections.

These journalists came looking for “blood” which is typical of

Africa (and indeed the rest of us in the South) is focused on the interests and stereotypes of the Northern media.

Perspectives of writers from the North

The resource allocation of Northern media has ensured that they have an established international network. The extent that media from the North consider themselves purveyors of international news, one would anticipate a world information order where we are all informed, at least on a broad level, about key developments in the global community. Of course, this is not the case.

What we are informed about in the global community is based on the perceptions and sometimes falsehoods of writers whose voices serve as opinion-makers and even opinion shifters to the public.

The result of writers from Northern countries being the most prominent voices in the international media has seen percep-

tions of "Africa, the dark continent" being entrenched with specific reference being made to Africa as being the "last of the continents to feel the influence of Western civilization; therefore many people consider it a backward continent".

No one disputes that Africa faces many challenges related to poverty, civil unrest, corruption and other developmental challenges. In many instances, Africa's leaders are the first to admit these challenges and their negative impact on growth and development.

However, Northern media create the impression that these challenges are unique to Africa and use this to discredit Africans as being unable to manage modern democratic states. At the same time, these journalists portray similar incidents in their own countries as opportunities for social transformation and change.

Take, for example, the Parliamentary expenses scandal in the United Kingdom (UK) that took place a few months ago. Such a case, if it happened in Africa, would reinforce negative stereotypes and media reports would give the impression of a continent on the edge of collapse. Incidents of a similar nature in the North are portrayed consistently as blessings in disguise, providing opportunities for rebirth and transformation.

Another example is the phone-hacking scandal in the UK. When UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, announced that there would be an inquiry to look at the failures of press self-regulation, there were no screaming headlines in the North about how that would pose a threat to media freedom. One wonders if the reaction would have been similar if a political leader from the South made a similar announcement.

In fact, when the ruling party in South Africa opined that self-regulation was not effective and mooted the idea of a body that would hold the media accountable, journalists from the North joined, and even led, some of their friends in South Africa in decrying threats to media freedom. However, Cameron's declaration was seen and presented as an opportunity for reflection and transformation but in the South a similar view is seen as a threat to media freedom.

The political will of the South and its muted voice in the media

The political will and determination of the South is evident in current international politics, where countries of the South have organised themselves in calling on countries of the North to be more responsive to the needs of developing countries and for the South to play a more visible role in global affairs.

South Africa is committed to intensify relations with countries of the South and emerging powers through active and strong engagements in forums such as India Brazil South Africa (IBSA) and Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Countries from the South are also working hard to use their membership of the United Nations Peace and Security Council to create a representative, legitimate and more effective council.

Despite the political will and determination of the South, its voice in the media sector remains, to a large extent, inaudible. It is important to contextualise the impact of mass media on the South within the socio-economic environment.

Over the past few decades, the media industry has gone through significant changes which have increased both its voice and influence in society, politics and even the economic sector. Northern media have amassed conglomerates of companies across the media chain. This has led to a domination of not only individuals and companies over others but also views and ideologies which through their sheer economic weight drown the voices of emerging entities, such as those from the South.

Media pioneer, Ted Turner, gave us a snapshot when he said "Today, the only way for media companies to survive is to own everything up and down the media chain ... Big media today wants to own the faucet, pipeline, water and the reservoir. The rain clouds come next."

The influential role of Northern media organisations and their writers in the global arena means that they control news flows. Local media are in no way resourced to compete on any level with Northern media corporations and news agencies. The content and articles from international news agencies and media companies, which are heavily laden with stereotypes, simply flow into local media. Misperceptions and hardened attitudes towards the South by writers from the North are given space in media platforms in countries from the South.

So even in our own countries, media simply reprint or reproduce content from international media organisations. There generally is a lack by the South to examine Northern thinking and news stories about the South for their ideological edge. Unfortunately, this uncritical acceptance of Northern narratives about the South by writers from the South has reduced them into Western or Northern apologists.

Measures towards bridging image discrepancies and understanding the South better

There is an urgent need to adequately capacitate writers from the South to become more knowledgeable about issues in

The influential role of Northern media organisations and their writers in the global arena means that they control news flows. Local media are in no way resourced to compete on any level with Northern media corporations and news agencies.

current affairs to ensure a home-brewed analysis that relates and uplifts the voice of the South. Indeed, the best response to the unfair portrayal of the South by Northern media is a ruthless but systematic deconstruction of Northern media content and meanings.

The South is not obliged to depend on the Northern media. It is important to develop alternative media agencies through media development and diversity programmes to counter the aggressive Northern media to help subdue the monopoly of ideas and opinions and create alternative perspectives on global issues.

But media development and diversity should not be confined to the international stage. Given the dominant narrative of the Northern media in other countries' local media, media development and content diversity should be encouraged in local markets.

The South African Government remains committed to a strong and diverse media, which will support nation-building and deepen and consolidate our democracy. Our Parliament, in recognising the marginalisation of disadvantaged communities and persons from access to the media and the media industry, resolved to establish the Media Development and Diversity Agency to help create diversity of media ownership and content.

Northern audiences must be exposed first-hand to countries of the South, and thereby reduce their dependency on media conglomerates to inform their perception of the South. Many people from the North who have visited Africa are "shocked" by their experience, which is not what is portrayed by Western media.

It would be worthwhile to establish an exchange programme between the regions for both journalists from the media sector as well as senior communicators from the public sector. Countries in the South must seriously consider setting up scholarship funds whereby selected journalists from the North are invited to spend a few weeks as visiting lecturers to experience what it is really like to live in the South.

The use of publications to highlight frequently asked questions and success stories in the South for audiences in the North is another possible intervention. So is the production of experts' columns about the South for publication in Northern media. The reliance of Northern journalists on Northern experts for their stories demonstrates the need for countries in the South to produce directories of experts to be sources

of authority and specialist knowledge.

Conclusion

It would be intellectually dishonest to pretend that there are no problems within the South. The South needs friendly relations and information-sharing within itself – a point recognised by IBSA as an area of cooperation.

One recurring problem in the sharing of information within the South is that Southern journalists know little about each other's countries. We need a continuous dialogue with ourselves as people of the South. News agencies within the South should make sure they receive information about each other's countries as soon as an event occurs.

In the process of sharing information within the South, target groups should be clearly identified so that time is not wasted communicating to unknown groups. Target audiences should include not only the political and business elite but ordinary citizens as well.

The South must publicise successful joint projects on a regular basis and where it does not have platforms for these, it must create them. For example, when the IBSA countries meet, there is an opportunity for them to create platforms that will become regular, aimed at the different target audiences in their countries, communicating trilateral projects and programmes.

Interventions must also involve media and communication practitioners of the South to successfully build South-South bridges. In this regard, we should welcome the Editors' Forum, which took place for the first time during the 2010 IBSA Summit and will also be taking place at the next IBSA Summit in South Africa. This is certainly an initiative that government communicators from the IBSA member states can learn from.

We in the South need to respond with relentlessness, commitment and greater cooperation if we are to deconstruct the images created about us and disseminate what is factual and fair about the South. We have analysed the problem of the flow of information from the North to the South. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation even helped us publish the *MacBride Report* in 1980, which brought world attention to the one-sided flow of information.

We now need action plans to redress and address stereotypes, prejudices and historical baggage about the South. This will have to be done in the South, by the South and for the South. ☺

