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# MPUMALANGA TO CELEBRATE IT'S DIVERSE CULTURAL HERITAGE



*Sibongile Nkosi from DCSR watching the launch festivities from a vantage point*



*Kedibone Mkhabela from Rise FM enjoying photo shooting session with one of her admirers*

**BY THULANE MADALANE**

**PIENAAR** : On Thursday Department of Arts, Sport and Recreation in Mpumalanga launched the 8th edition of the Mpumalanga Cultural Xperience in Pienaar Msogwaba at the swanky night club called Spy 2 Sky owned by a popular radio and club DJ Madumane. The launch was attended by media houses and creatives across the province, key amongst them was Rise FM presenter Kedibone Mkhabela, DJ Sdunkero, Pansela, Brendan and many more. MEC Thandi Shongwe was conspicuous by her absence due to other official commitments however she delegated her Head of Department Mr Godfrey Ntombela who outlined eight pillars of this year's festivities and emphasized the importance of celebrating Mpumalanga's diverse cultural heritage, "this annual event has become a pivotal event in our province's calendar, celebrating our diverse cultural heritage and promoting social cohesion among the people of Mpumalanga" said Ntombela. This event was inceptioned in 2016 and it has bolstered the economic growth of the province, "since its inaugural year in 2016, the Mpumalanga Cultural Xperience has been a catalyst for economic growth, showcasing local talent, and bolstering tourism in our province" quipped Ntombela. Ntombela in his address also assured his captive audience that this year's installment will allow creatives space to express themselves "Members of the Media, let me assure you that in this year's installment,

we aim to ensure that our creatives find space to express their craft and to ensure that this is done in a coordinated manner." Stated Ntombela. Msogwaba Traditional Council was represented Chief Nkosi who encouraged the department to preserve the local talent by organizing lot of talent expression competitions, "We have many local talented young people who need the support of the department to reach stardom level, I suggest that the department should organize more competitions with the view of unearthing more talent in our province" concluded Chief Nkosi. The other significant milestone is that Mpumalanga Gospel Music Awards is celebrating their 10th anniversary under this theme "Decade Of Grace". The CEO of the awards Mr Sandile Ngobe announced the top billing performance by some of the gritots of the gospel music, "I am glad to announce that as we celebrate our 10th anniversary some of our top billing performers will include the legends of gospel music, I am talking about Bishop Benjamin Dube, Derek Nzimamdze and many more" concluded Ngobe. The festivities for 8th edition of Mpumalanga Cultural Xperience will include the following pillars;

- Traditional Xperience at Mathibela Traditional Authority Bushbuckridge on the 25th November 2023, with a total of 22 artists
- Carnival Xperience at the Promenade Centre in Mbombela on the 1st December 2023, with a total of 22 groups including



*Nokuthula Mabena from DCSR flanked by Communications Brand Specialist Mahlatse Mash Malibe and one of the social media influencers who attended the launch of 8th edition of Mpumalanga Cultural Xperience in Pienaar Msogwaba at Spy 2Sky night club*

2 from the Kingdom of eSwatini and Mozambique respectively.

- Kasi Xperience at Siya Bar in KaBokweni, Mbombela on 1st December 2023, with a total of 22 artists
- Choral Xperience at Lukwatini Community Hall, Chief Albert Luthuli on 2nd December 2023 Lukwatini Hall.
- Soul Session Xperience at Mbombela

Botanical Garden in Mbombela on the 3rd December 2023, with 18 artists

- FILM XPERIENCE at Sasol Club Secunda, Govan Mbeki on the 9th December 2023.
- International Xperience 9th December 2023 Mbombela Communio Church
- GOSPEL Awards Xperience in Mbombela stadium on the 10th December 2023.

# BRICS NATIONS TO ESTABLISH A STUDY GROUP TO TRACK AI

Members of the BRICS have decided to establish an "AI study group" to create and oversee AI governance frameworks. The BRICS countries intend to establish an "AI study group" to track the growth and development of the technology, according to proposals outlined by Chinese President Xi Jinping. The proposal was under discussion on the second day of the BRICS meeting which took place in Johannesburg, South Africa. In an effort to make the technologies more secure, dependable, controllable, and equal, Jinping stated that "we need to develop AI governance frameworks." China pledged to establish a China-BRICS science and innovation incubation park to speed up cooperation among member nations in the area of artificial intelligence, adding that the group's creation timeline would be announced in due course. Barely a month ago, in order to prevent the Chinese military from gaining access to American technology and funding, the US has prohibited US companies from investing in China's quantum computing, advanced semiconductor, and artificial intelligence industries. Although few of the nation's allies support the ban, it is anticipated to go into effect the following year. Debates regarding how AI would affect international relations have been raging as it is predicted that it will be the dominant technology of the upcoming ten years. It is not clear



BRICS countries will establish a study group to track Artificial Intelligence

how the BRICS study group will control international tech giants like Google and Microsoft to follow the directive to make their technologies "secure,

reliable, controllable, and equitable" given that the majority of AI innovation comes from the global north. Moreover, the study group's contribution to ignite

AI innovation in the BRICS member countries will only become visible once the group has been established with a working agenda.

## MEC MANZINI GRACED THE SAFETP CERTIFICATE AWARDING CEREMONY



Mpumalanga Department of Health MEC Ms Sasekani Manzini commended the commitment of the health workers who completed their South African Field Epidemiology Training Programme

**MBOMBELA:** Mpumalanga Department of Health MEC, Sasekani Manzini attended the awarding of the FETP-Intermediate Course Certificate to health care workers at the University of Mpumalanga Conference Center-In the City of Mbombela. When speaking during the event MEC congratulated and commended the recipients of the certificates, Communicable Diseases Control Unit for their commitment throughout the programme till the end to the South African Field Epidemiology Training Programme (SAFETP) for capacitating our health care workers in the province. As much as we celebrate your achievements, I urge all of you to continue to work tirelessly and be committed to advancing and improving the status quo of the Department with the knowledge and skills you have acquired during this course." Said MEC Manzini. The department started with a front-line course for (3-months) with 18 trainees that were enrolled and a

total of 11 trainees were selected from the front-line course to be enrolled in the Intermediate course which was conducted from September 2022 to September 2023. The 9-month on-the-job programme is aimed to address special skills needed by health professionals (province, district, sub-district) to improving epidemiology and public health response to be able to investigate outbreaks, evaluate surveillance systems, and analyze data for public health action in your work place thus improve public health system. FETP-intermediate is structured in away that trainees spend the minimum time in the classroom and maximum time in the field and covers the following areas: Surveillance system management and evaluation, Outbreak investigation and response, Epidemiology study designs, Data management and analysis, Scientific relevant to communication (oral, written)

## TRUCK DRIVER ARRESTED FOR REFUSING TO BE STOPPED AND CRASHING INTO TRAFFIC OFFICER'S VEHICLE



MEC Vusi Shongwe has welcomed the arrest of a reckless truck driver

**Mpumalanga :** The Mpumalanga MEC for Community Safety, Security and Liaison, Mr. Vusi Shongwe welcomes the arrest of a truck driver on the N4 toll road in Komatipoort towards the Lebombo Border Gate on Saturday for refusing to be stopped by the traffic officers. He also went on to crash the truck he was driving into the vehicle of traffic officers. According to the officers at the scene, he was driving in front of the oncoming traffic when efforts were made to stop him. The 45 year old Mozambican was arrested on the spot. He was charged with reckless driving, failure to comply with the instruction of the traffic official and malicious damage to the state property. The truck was also impounded with its load. He is expected to appear in court soon. MEC Vusi Shongwe condemns the driver's behaviour in the strongest possible terms. He says: "This level of

disrespect towards law enforcement officers and rules of the road will not be tolerated. While we understand the level of frustration that drivers at the border are sometimes subjected to due to long queues, no person is allowed to break the rules of the road or drive in a manner that endangers the lives of other road users including our officials," adds the MEC. Shongwe is also calling on all members of the security cluster to show no leniency towards reckless truck drivers. He says they must not be discouraged by dangerous and reckless truck drivers. Shongwe further states that the department is currently working with various stakeholders to deal with congestion at the border. He explains that since August this year, DCSSL traffic officers are working at night on a daily basis as part of interim measures to ease congestion at the border.



# The Impact Catalyst

## RFP: EQUIPMENT FOR ICT LABS AT SCHOOLS

The Impact Catalyst invites bidders to submit proposals to supply ICT Lab equipment to 20 schools in Lephhalale, Emalahleni and Emakhazeni

The equipment must include 25 laptops, 1 laptop trolley, 1 projector and screen per school.

### Bidders when submitting their proposals must provide the following information:

- company registration certificate;
- tax compliance certificate;
- certificate of good standing (COIDA);
- physical address;
- contact details;
- B-EEE compliance level and;
- bidder's supplier list.

If you are interested, please send an email to: [ictedu.tenders@impactcatalyst.co.za](mailto:ictedu.tenders@impactcatalyst.co.za) to receive the full RFP document with all the details.

All proposals must be submitted to : [ictedu.tenders@impactcatalyst.co.za](mailto:ictedu.tenders@impactcatalyst.co.za).  
no later than: 27 October 2023, 17:00.

Note: Successful applicants will be contacted as soon as the evaluation process is completed. No regret letters will be sent out.

# CLLR TLADI GRADUATES AT MANCOSA



*Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality Mayor Cllr David Tladi has obtained his Bachelor of Public Administration from MANCOSA. Picture Credit: Simon Makua*

The Mayor of Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality, Councillor David Magetle Tladi, has today officially obtained his Bachelor degree in Public Administration from the Management College of Southern Africa (MANCOSA) "It is our duty to lead by example," says Elias Motsoaledi Municipality Mayor Tladi. "My qualification provides a more nuanced study of the interface between politicians and the bureaucracy as well as the public service and the private sector. It capacitates me to understand the need for an effective government and beyond that, how it can be achieved through improved co-ordination and planning efforts of the developmental state by means of a planning entity to ensure faster change" he said. Mayor believes that education is a cornerstone of every leader that seek to inspire the nation and wishes to thank his

wife, family, comrades and friends for the support throughout this journey. He further encouraged young people to seek further education as self empowerment is a foundation to self-reliance and knowledge acquisition forms part of assets that will stay with you for a lifetime. He was accompanied by a diverse group of individuals. His wife, Suzen Tladi accompanied him and gave unwavering support throughout his studies. His elder brother, Patrick Tladi, was there to share in the journey, offering familial guidance. A close friend, Winter Ratlou, joined the group, bringing a sense of camaraderie and adventure to the occasion. Lastly, his uncle, Johannes Makgatha, added a touch of wisdom and experience to the mix, making their shared adventure a memorable one. Together, they formed a varied and supportive entourage.

## SADC TAX EXPENDITURE MODEL CAPACITY WORKSHOP



*SADC hosted Tax Expenditure Model Capacity Building Workshop*

In a stride to raise domestic revenue through efficient and effective tax systems the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat convened a capacity building Workshop on the revised Tax Expenditure Model on 16-20 October 2023, in Johannesburg, South Africa. This is an effort to enhance good governance in the tax area, in particular: decisions on tax incentives, tax collection efficiency, a broader tax base and greater action on dealing with tax evasion and illicit financial flows in the region, in line with the decision of the Ministers of Finance and Investment which was held in July 2023.

The workshop comes as a continuation of work of the SADC Tax Subcommittee towards creation of an enabling investment and business environment

through improvement of tax incentives administration and rationalisation in the SADC region, supported by EU - Support to Improving the Business and Investment Environment in SADC Region programme (SIBE).

Tax expenditures have a significant impact on Member States' ability to mobilise domestic revenue and if not monitored closely and assessed consistently, they may jeopardise the transparency of national budgets and lower the effectiveness of tax systems. The SADC Tax Expenditure Model was adopted in 2015 to enable Member States to estimate the tax revenue costs (revenue foregone) of tax incentives offered in their jurisdictions. The tool is designed to measure the benefits and effectiveness of tax incentives in meeting their intended objectives.

# LONG WAIT FOR THE TRUTH ABOUT KILLER FIRE AT LOHATLA TRAINING CAMP

**BY MONTSHO MATLALA**

It seems South Africans and the world would have to wait longer, possibly up to early next year before knowing more facts about the runaway veld fire that burnt to death six SA National Defence Force (SANDF) soldiers who were part of the troops on rigorous combat training exercise at Lohatla base in Northern Cape on October 6.

The raging fire which killed the warriors consisting four men and two women, reportedly started at round 10 am on Friday the 6th October at Boshhoek and Khumani disused mines.

By the afternoon strong winds fueled the flames to the other side of N14 highway where over 3000 personnel and equipment were deployed for the annual intensive combat training exercise dubbed Vuk'uhlome. The fire caused horrific havoc to the base.

But the truth as to whether the deadly incident was an attack or just veld fire gone out of control would remain speculation, at least for now pending revelations by the Board of Inquiry (BOI) headed by Maj Gen Peter Kobbie which commenced on October 8, a day after the outbreak. "To be on the safe site, the time frame for the BOI to look into anything related

to fire is approximately three months," said SANDF spokesperson Mr Siphimwe Dlamini in an interview with Timeless News.

"Terms of reference of the BOI include determining the exact location of the outbreak of the fire and how it rolled over into the training area and the damaged done on both human and equipment," added Mr Dlamini.

The spine chilling inferno not only claimed the lives of Staff Sergeant Abraham Desember Morajane, Staff Sergeant Siphon Berrington Cele, Corporal Sithembiso Wiseman Ndwalane, Corporal Noxolo Faith Ngubane, Lance Corporal Prince Michael Mthethwa and Lance Corporal Londiwe Purity Zulu but also burned military equipment to ashes.

According to sources burnt army equipment at Lohatla Training Base on the fateful day include, 15 Samil trucks, about 14 Casspir, armoured vehicles, field hospital containers, fuel storage, ablution trailers, water bunkers, documents, computers, phones, laptops and other crucial vehicles as well as machinery. Damage caused is estimated at more than R5b, another huge hole in the cash strapped army.



*SA President Mr Cyril Ramaphosa and Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Thandi Modise have extended heartfelt condolences to the fallen warriors*

## MALOKO A MOKGATLO WA ANC SELETENG SA SEKHUKHUNE A BEILE TSHEPO YA BONA MAGETLENG A MOGALEADI KA KAABO YA DITIRELO

**BY FRANS MAEPA**

Lehutjo le kaaka legonono go maloko a mokgatlo wa ANC ka mo seleteng sa Sekhukhune gore mmeyara Minah Bahula o tlo tlhisa diphetogo ge a ka fiwa monyetla ka masepaleng wa selete sa Sekhukhune. Kopanong ya bona maabane ka sekolong sa Jane Furse Comprehensive moo shedi ye kgolo e bego e le kaabo ya meetse ka seleteng sa Sekhukhune, bontshi bja maloko ao ba bontshitje go hloka tshepo le kholofelo go mmeyara phethishi wa selete sa Sekhukhune khanselara Maleke Mokganyetji. Ba boletje ba sa metje mare gore ba nyaka go bona mmeyara wa Makhuduthamaga Minah Bahula a tjea marapo ka masepaleng wa selete sa Sekhukhune.

Ge a be a bolela lenaneong la Kgorong mesong ya lehono go Sekhukhune FM,

mmoleledi wa mokgatlo wa ANC mo seleteng sa Sekhukhune Sam Uwane o re mokgatlo wa ANC o gare o kgola tsela ya Minah Bahula, Mogaleadia Hlabirwa, go ya ka masepaleng wa selete sa Sekhukhune ka ge tshepo ya bona e le magetleng a gagwe feela.

"Re kwane re le ba ANC mo seleteng sa Sekhukhune gore re romela Ganda Ganda elego Mogaleadi ka kua seleteng sa Sekhukhune. Meshomo ya gagwe ya kaabo ya ditirelo ka mo Makhuduthamaga e thiba letjatji gomme seo se re fa maatla a gore o tla ya a o besha wa tuka ka kua masepaleng wa selete gomme badudi ba hologa ka meetse. Mo nakong ya ka fase ga kgwedi tje pedi, Mogaleadi o tlo ya ka seleteng sa Sekhukhune ebile re tshepa gore o tlo atlega ka ge ga bjwale go thwetjwe molaodi wa masepala wa sa ruri", arealo Uwane



## INTERVIEW

# Beauty, Brains & Business

This week on our business feature that is meant to promote women in business and we are featuring the Mamone born **Letago Gloria Rantho** who is the emerging businesswoman and a public relations manager graduate from University of South Africa. She also shares her strong views on childhood trauma Writes **Thulane Madalane**.

**Thulane Madalane:** You recently did a tell it all interview on CENTWINZ TV podcast, what inspired you to do that interview?

**Letago Rantho:** I did the interview because its part of my ministry to empower and heal the broken- also wanted my fellow sisters to know that they are not alone in their respective struggles. I had to name and shame the demons that haunts people mentally, spiritually and physically. Unless you name and shame them, they will never stop bullying you.

**TM:** in that interview you mentioned lot of mental issues that you grappled with as a child and into your adult life how did you overcome that challenge?

**LR:** The challenges are still there, its only now that I get to realize the real reason why I had to go through what I went through. Any mental illness is a spirit, honestly people should learn to pray this things off. If you don't pray about these things you will forever be victimized- My favorite scripture is Phillipians 4 :7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all human understanding, will guard our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Depression is a spirit, although mental but it is a spirit. I am saying this because I am able to shake it off by just praying. So in a nutshell "prayer" I pray.

**TM:** What kind of family do you come from?

**LR:** I come from a beautiful family, family I am talking my immediate family. I have supportive and protective parents, still both alive. Their love is immeasurable and beyond. They are always there to support and encourage me. Every family has setbacks and atrocities, but mine manages to thrive through God's grace because of a prayerful mother.

**TM:** Who was your child role model and



Rantho on CENTWINZ TV Podcast, sharing some of the traumatic ordeal that she went through growing up and later in her adult life. Picture Credit: Supplied

why?

**LR:** I was unfortunately bruised by my role model. I used to look up to my aunt, my maternal aunt. She had this boldness, was hard working, brave and agile in all she did. Unfortunately, she was one of the reasons I was broken as both a child and an adult. Funny enough, all those elements in her blood were passed down to me. The same attributes she exudes, I also have.

**TM:** What was your dream career growing up and did you achieve that dream?

**LR:** I had no dream career, I was just this person that loved having influence and impact on others. It fulfilled me to make a difference in a persons life. Growing up I was just this giver, I would spot a fellow student with no shoes or decent school blouse and would go tell my mom to help the child. Then I would go back with a pair of shoes to give to that child. I still am that way. I am not a career material. I think I prefer to rather serve than work. There is a difference between the 2. In grade 10 I thought of myself as a singer, I am a singer.

**TM:** What is your current occupation?

**LR:** am currently a Branch Manger for an

insurance company. Been in the role for 3 years now.

**TM:** what advices would you give to someone who wants to pursue the same career as you?

**LR:** Its about the money, now people will do anything to make money. It unfortunately affects the quality of your life. Its target oriented and that can be very daunting. My advise would be to not pursue it unless you are very good with sales.

**TM:** You work in male dominated environment and how did you find a way to build a name for yourself?

**LR:** I have been in sales and marketing for over 15 years now. I had built up a rapport in the fraternity. Influence and networking assisted me to be.

**TM:** You are a businesswoman how do you strike a balance between your work and your personal life?

**LR:** Its not an easy thing to do. I am most of the time very exhausted. My kids stay in another province and it makes it very difficult for me to balance being a business woman and a mother all at once.

I sacrifice a lot of leisure time. Our work allows no one the Monday to Friday, 9 to 5 mindset. We are always working.

**TM:** Gender Based Violence is rife in our communities did experience any growing up?

**LR:** A lot. It all in my book. Chronicles of a wounded healer. I experienced that almost all my journey as a woman. It happened so much. Until I started believing there was maybe something wrong with me.

**TM:** To those women who are suffering in silence what tips can you give them to stand up for themselves and their children?

**LR:** Is to speak to others. People you trust, that will build their strength and courage and standing and fighting. If they don't name and shame monsters in their lives there will be no breakthrough.

**TM:** Recently you have ventured into the business of Podcasting what can we expect from your podcast?

**LR:** am expecting followship and awareness on certain topics I have covered. The book will be out soon as well. I need people to know that there is no way we can heal unless we do something about wanting to be healed. It does not happen on its own. Time does not heal everything. You need to want to heal by working on yourself as well.

**TM:** Who is your target market?

**LR:** Its honestly women and children at most.

**TM:** You are a recording artist which genre describe your music better?

**LR:** Both Gospel and Neo Soul

**TM:** You are busy writing a self-styled autobiography what can we expect from your book?

**LR:** Too much empowerment, inspiration, courage, healing. People will realize that not every storm is meant to break you, some are there to actually build and strengthen you.

**TM:** when is coming out?

**LR:** In November 2023 and the book is called "Chronicles of a wounded Healer"

**TM:** Lastly as a content creator which social media platforms are available on?

**LR:** Facebook - Letago Lee. Instagram - High Heeled Healer LinkedIn Letago RANTHO - Watsap 074 456 4401

## AUC AND PARTNERS CONVENE A WORKSHOP ON ROOTS OF AFRICAN RESILIENCE

During the workshop, the roundtable critically reviewed the Roots of African Resilience (ROAR) document. ROAR was developed through a research project whose aim was to create a resilience conceptual paper and a resilience measurement framework. Participants discussed enhancing Africa's resilience in critical areas: social, economic, environmental, governance and infrastructure.

Mr Gatkuoth Kai, the AUC Technical Coordinator for Disaster Risk Reduction, read the opening remarks on behalf of Mr Harsen Nyambe Nyambe, the AUC Director of Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy (SEBE). Mr Kai noted that "ROAR aims at re-examining the concept of resilience and its critical dimensions in the African context. The increasing number of transboundary disasters caused by natural hazards confirm the IPCC reports that such disasters will continue to increase in magnitude and frequency."

Mr Kai further appreciated the support by UNDP, noting that "I highly commend UNDP for its consistent support to the African Union Commission through major programmes such as the Sahel Resilience Project; the Africa Urban Resilience Programme and the Africa Multi-hazard Early Warning and Early Action Systems (AMHEWAS). These programmes are making a difference in supporting member states to build resilience to disasters on the continent." Mr Kai acknowledged the participation of

the AUC's departments and AU Agencies in the event. He expressed his gratitude to the technical teams from the various departments - noting that "this is a milestone in formulating one AU resilience agenda".

Dr Zeynu Ummer, the Manager of the UNDP Resilience Hub, highlighted the importance of ROAR in strengthening cooperation and collaboration in resilience building. "Resilience building is a collective issue. ROAR is a crucial tool for looking into in-depth resilience building. Some opportunities can enable us to support this initiative. Through existing data and informed research, it's emerging that the majority of the population in Africa will live in urban areas soon. Collaborating with AUC is needed to increase resilience and address risk issues. In this process, we must also align with the existing instruments, including the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, the AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032), and Agenda 2063," Dr Zeynu stated.

On his part, Dr Ronald Jackson, Head of the UNDP's Global Team for Disaster Risk Reduction, Recovery for Building Resilience, called for increased attention on strengthening disaster resilience at all levels. Dr Jackson said, "Disaster risk management is everyone's business. Adverse events have far-reaching impacts on a global, regional, and national scale and local communities. The link between sustainability and

resilience is yet to be well articulated.

Emergency and risk management institutions and agencies often lack the resources and tools to respond effectively to crises and emergencies. There is a need to recognise that countries are at different levels in development and resilience."

Dr Paul Ladd, Director at the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), highlighted the role played by the institution. He elaborated, "UNRISD, since its establishment in 1963, has addressed the development agenda, working progress development agenda, particularly on social policy, working with a multi-sector network that comprises academia, researchers and think tanks. There is a need for critical balance between "Speed" (GDP growth) and "Strength" (Resilience) in ensuring a globally balanced environment where long-term development can be sustained."

The ROAR interdepartmental roundtable brought together AUC's Departments of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE); Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI), Infrastructure and Energy, Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development (HHS), Directorate of Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD), Directorate of Women, Gender and Youth (WGYD) and the African Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC). The Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy (SEBE) Directorate of ARBE is the custodian

of the initiative.

A multi-organisational task team was constituted, and it will now review the document based on the recommendations from the roundtable and consolidate the ROAR by finalising the AUC ROAR Common Guideline for Resilience for the next policy steps.

About the Roots of African Resilience (ROAR)

The ultimate goal of the Roots of African Resilience (ROAR) is to strengthen coordination of resilience building on the continent through developing holistic short and long-term effective resilience programmes, policies and projects and measuring achievements and gaps in the fundamental dimensions of resilience across the continent. The ROAR approach is piloted in Mozambique, Madagascar and the Kingdom of Eswatini. ROAR represents a collaborative effort between AUC and the UNDP Resilience Hub in Nairobi, in partnership with the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and with support from the Norwegian Capacity (NORCAP). The partnership is premised on the Aide-Mémoire between AUC and UNDP. On the UNDP side, the ROAR will provide technical guidance for the forthcoming Flagship UNDP Africa Human Development Report, influencing policy formulation for risk-informed development in Africa.

# STLM HOST LONG SERVICE AWARDS IN RECOGNITION OF LOYALTY

BY THULANE MADALANE

**MHLUZI:** On Friday Steve Tshwete Local Municipality hosted a glittering awards ceremony at Adelaide Tambo Community Hall in Mhluzi, in recognition of their long serving employees which were categorized into four segments ; 40 Years: 2 employees, 30 Years: 11 employees, 20 Years: 20 employees and 10 Years: 125 employees. The purpose of these awards was to give recognition to loyal employees of the municipality who continue to offer their selfless service to the residents of Steve Tshwete Municipal Manager Mandla Mnguni took the podium the opportunity to acknowledge the exceptional work carried out by these dedicated employees. From cleaning streets, battling fires, and managing electrical repairs in the face of cable theft to the operation of wastewater treatment facilities, they have faced numerous challenges, including interactions with challenging communities, yet they have continued to serve with pride. Mnguni stated, "Their unwavering commitment, loyalty, and hard work have played a crucial role in our continued success." These long-serving employees have been the bedrock of the municipality, ensuring its prosperity and its ability to serve the community effectively. The event was attended by Executive Mayor Mhlonishwa Masilela who along with council speaker Selape Mathunyane and Members of Mayoral Committee, MPAC Chairperson, Municipal Manager, and Executive Directors, presented certificates to these dedicated employees. In his address, the Executive Mayor celebrated the extraordinary contributions of these individuals, who have not only dedicated their time and expertise but have also served as an inspiration to their colleagues. They are a living testament to the core values and collaborative spirit that define

the municipality, setting a high standard for all. The Executive Mayor also made a bold suggestion that perhaps the municipal council should resolve to absorb the children of their long serving employees after their demise," as someone who cares deeply about our employees and their families particularly their children, I am going to propose to council that as the municipality we should find a way of absorbing the children of our longest serving employees into workforce of the municipality however we have to consider qualifications and skills in the process of doing this, our administration will provide us with proper guidelines on implementing this proposal before we can take it to council for ratification" quipped Masilela. The Executive Mayor also stated they will support suitably qualified matriculants who come from needy families with registration fees for their tertiary education, " We want to assist matriculants who come from impoverished families with registration fees provided they have already gotten bursary approval from NSFAS. We are going to meet with them with their families and share this initiative in order for us to group them according to tertiary institutions of their choice. In my capacity as the Mayor I have engaged the private sector to partner with us in realizing this noble initiative. I will also want to wish our matriculants the best of luck as they are about to sit for their final year examinations." concluded Masilela. Among those honored for their remarkable 40 years of service were Mr. Mfanazonke Mabaso and Mr. Johannes Mohlala from the Physical and Environmental Development department, exemplifying the steadfast commitment that Steve Tshwete Local Municipality holds dear. Mohlala spoke Timeless News on the sidelines of the awards encouraging younger employees to remain committed in serving the residents of Steve Tshwete amid challenges that might



*Mr Johannes Mohlala one of the long serving employees of Steve Tshwete Local Municipality accepting an award from the Executive Mayor Cllr Mhlonishwa Masilela for Serving the municipality for 40 years*



*Mr Mfanazonke Mabaso expressing joy after receiving an award from Executive Mayor Cllr Mhlonishwa Masilela for giving the municipality 40 years unbroken and loyal service*

be facing, " I would like to urge younger employees of our municipality to listen to their superiors and show eagerness to learn all the times in the midst of all sorts of challenges. When I started 41 years ago my monthly salary was R60 but I remained committed and served the municipality diligently until today. I want to thank our leaders for going out of their way just to

recognize us for the service that we have given to the people of Steve Tshwete" said Mohlala. This recognition not only serves as a well-deserved honor for these employees but also sets a positive example for the entire organization, emphasizing the value of dedication and loyalty in contributing to its success.

## IMF STAFF COMPLETES 2023 ARTICLE IV MISSION TO EQUATORIAL GUINEA

**MALABO, EQUATORIAL GUINEA :** An International Monetary Fund (IMF) team, led by Mr. Mesmin Koulet-Vickot, visited Malabo during September 26-October 5 to hold discussions for the 2023 Article IV consultation. At the end of the visit, Mr. Koulet-Vickot issued the following statement: "In 2022, economic indicators registered improvements after a long recession. Real GDP grew by 3.2 percent on account of both oil and non-oil economic recovery. Thanks to high oil prices, both fiscal and current account balances were in substantial surpluses, and part of the oil windfall was saved. The non-oil primary fiscal deficit deteriorated somewhat in 2022 relative to 2021, in part reflecting de 7M Bata reconstruction-related expenditures. "However, the recovery was short-lived, and the medium-term prospects are negatively affected by the projected decline in oil production. "Equatorial Guinea's economy would fall back into recession in 2023, with expectations of a 7.8 percent contraction in economic activity, reflecting a resumed decline in oil production and the subdued growth in the non-oil economy due to persistent domestic payment arrears and underlying structural weaknesses. "The overall fiscal surplus in 2023 would drop to 0.3 percent of GDP from 13.6 percent in 2022, while the non-oil primary fiscal deficit is projected at 23.3 percent of non-hydrocarbon GDP, up from 22.7 percent of non-hydrocarbon GDP in 2022. The external current account balance is projected to turn into a deficit of 3.9 percent of GDP in 2023 from a surplus of 9.6 percent of GDP in 2022. "In the years ahead, the economy is projected to remain in recession with a further continued decline in oil production and a lackluster non-hydrocarbon economy held back by a challenging business environment and weak human capital. Against this backdrop, an acceleration of transformative reforms and prudent macroeconomic management are required to

reverse negative trends Fiscal policy will need to balance growth and poverty reduction considerations with the need to ensure fiscal sustainability in the face of the trend decline in oil production. To this end, the fiscal framework needs to be anchored on the nonhydrocarbon primary balance and be focused on boosting nonhydrocarbon revenue collection and reducing non-priority spending while improving spending efficiency and social outcomes—particularly in health care and education—and supporting vulnerable households through a well-targeted social safety net. The 2024 draft budget appropriately targets a reduction in the nonhydrocarbon fiscal deficit by about 3.2 percentage points of nonhydrocarbon GDP. To achieve this, the authorities are planning a series of impactful measures. On the revenue side, they intend to (i) pass a new tax code to enlarge the tax base and streamline tax exemptions; (ii) deploy the IT customs system in additional offices in the country; and (iii) fully implement the single window for vehicle clearance. On the spending side, they are committed to phasing out regressive fuel subsidies, reducing non-priority capital expenditure, and streamlining public entities. The steadfast implementation of these revenue and expenditure measures, along with strengthened debt management, will help ensure the achievement of the authorities' fiscal adjustment targets against the background of the projected depletion of hydrocarbon reserves. "It is crucial to restore the soundness of the banking sector to limit fiscal and systemic risks and promote private sector-led growth. There are encouraging signs that significant progress will be made in the coming weeks for the large systemic bank. To minimize the cost to taxpayers, the restructuring and recapitalization measures should be followed by efforts to recover assets. Additionally, the mission encourages the

authorities to prioritize and accelerate repayments of bank-financed domestic arrears in a transparent manner (see below) to shore up the financial situation of the two undercapitalized private banks. "It is crucial to restore the soundness of the banking sector to limit fiscal and systemic risks and promote private sector-led growth. There are encouraging signs that significant progress will be made in the coming weeks for the large systemic bank. To minimize the cost to taxpayers, the restructuring and recapitalization measures should be followed by efforts to recover assets. Additionally, the mission encourages the authorities to prioritize and accelerate repayments of bank-financed domestic arrears in a transparent manner (see below) to shore up the financial situation of the two undercapitalized private banks. "Governance reforms are advancing but their pace should be stepped up. Key recent achievements include the allocation of funding for the anti-corruption commission and the adoption of a decree establishing a treasury single account. With funding available, the authorities expect the anti-corruption commission to be fully operational in the first quarter of next year. This, together with the issuance of implementing decrees of the anti-corruption law expected to be signed before the end of the year, would pave the way to further the governance reform agenda, including the asset declaration of senior public officials. The mission encourages the authorities to engage with the EITI International Secretariat in the ongoing process to address feedback received on the previous membership application. Other pending important reforms include enabling the National Financial Investigation Agency (ANIF) to develop and publish a guidance for domestic financial institutions on identifying politically exposed persons and reporting beneficial ownership, adopting a decree limiting the recourse to non-competitive

tender in public procurement, completing the publication of beneficial ownership information of the COVID and 7M Bata-related spending and publishing related procurement documents. "Efforts to foster economic diversification and support sustainable inclusive growth will need to be accelerated. While welcoming progress made so far to settle domestic arrears, the mission calls for a comprehensive plan that sets clear criteria for the repayment and contains strong safeguards to ensure the transparency of the process. Additionally, the mission encourages the authorities to focus on reforms aimed at reducing the regulatory burden for business creation, boosting investment in basic healthcare, education, and sanitation to support development of human capital, and ensuring the well-functioning and efficiency of markets. Policies aimed at supporting specific sectors need to be better justified and tailored to the country's capacity, including sunset clauses that are evaluated periodically. "The IMF team wishes to thank the authorities for their hospitality and constructive discussions." During the visit, the IMF team met Minister of Finance and Budget, Fortunato Ofa Mbo Nchama; Minister of Planning and Economic Diversification, Gabriel Mbagha Obiang Lima; Delegate Minister of Treasury and State Patrimony, Milagrosa Obono Angüe; Minister of Mines and Hydrocarbons, Antonio Oburu Ondó; Delegate Minister of Education, University Education, and Professional Training, Purificación Boari Lasaquero, Vice-Minister of Education, University Education, and Professional Training, Vicente Nsue Nsue; Vice-Minister of Finance and Budget, Pedro Abeso Obiang Eyang; National Director of BEAC, Genoveva Andeme Obiang, State Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Budget, María Ebiaka Mohete, and other senior government officials and of the general state administration.

# THE FIRST CASUALTY OF WAR IS TRUTH

The contrast between freedom of the press and the suppression of that right has always been understood along the difference between democratic and despotic forms of governments. A state deemed to be democratic would ordinarily be assumed to be the one which respects individuals and groups rights. Whereas the opposite would hold for states categorised as undemocratic. States which have adopted Constitutions which embodies a chapter on human rights, base their protection of rights on the fact that these have been expressed in their respective Constitutions and charters and therefore should be understood as cast in stone. What however remains unsaid is that the interpretation of these rights is a permanent subject of the courts or parliaments depending on the nature of each state.

The question of human rights is a question cutting across all states. It extends to include those states whose for some reason may have adopted a stance which elevates their independence and places it beyond the dictates of any regional bloc or institutions such as the United Nations and any of its related organs. To some, human rights is seen along the lines of some religious beliefs dominant in the said locality. In the different scenarios and depending on where the opinion maker is located, how information is disseminated will largely be influenced by the circumstances.

Recently the nations of the world had to bear the war between Russia and Ukraine which had so far dragged on for a period more than a year. In the course of the Russia/Ukraine war, a number of freedoms were violated with deadly acts affecting individuals and the future of those states. When the war erupted, nations of the world were affected. Nations harboured their own interests and could only wish for an outcome that would not affect them and the interests they harboured. An outcome that would enable the sustenance of relations, either political or economic, which bound those nations.

An interesting occurrence with the Russia/Ukraine war was when a decision was taken by the European

Union to suspend the Russia Today and Sputnik channels. These channels because of their connection to the state of Russia, which is involved in a war with Ukraine, could have become a threat to the European Union interests in so far as the reporting was concerned. There was no way that a pro-Russia media outlet could broadcast and freely disseminate information conflicting the pro-Europe media.

The Israel/Palestine siege also saw attempts aimed at throttling media with a view to redirecting how information should be reported and how social media should respond during the siege. The Israel/Palestine situation had always carried with conflicting opinions from individuals and states adopting either a 'for-or-against' stances. The Middle East situation in so far as Israel and Palestine are concerned, is not about morals or the economy. It is largely a religious issue. Religion is a universal ship from which the many religious movements exist.

As was the case with the suspension of Russia Today and Sputnik, outlets such as X and Facebook have been reminded by the European Union on the need to comply with the European online content rules. Disinformation should always be scorned at to arrest the dangers it carries. This can only mean one and only thing. It means that the content which these outlets disseminate should serve the position of the European Union which had chosen a side in the Israel/Palestine on-going siege.

The 1948 Universal Declaration of the United Nations in so far as the freedom of the press is concerned provides that "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference, and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers".

The catastrophe of the EU warning on the online outlets is that it places itself about right enshrines in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A right which is a right only if it satisfies the interests of a certain party is no right but a privileged. When consumers of

information are limited from receiving certain information because it goes against the interests of a certain party and their interests, such deprivation can never find justification as it goes against the right receive and impart information.

People are creatures of information and they make their determinations on the basis of contradictions and different nuances. On the Israel/Russia debacle, it seems there has been only a single nuance which the EU had embraced and would prefer to see being the only one to be embraced by all.

The cliché which says 'the first casualty of war is truth' finds application in what we are currently observing. That the Hamas group infiltrated a border and killed hundreds of revellers and kidnapped women and children amounts to a war crime according to international law. Cries for perpetrators to be punished had been heard and are justifiable. However, the displacement of a people, bombing of buildings coupled with the killing of women and children gets to acquire a different meaning of "right to self-defence" since the perpetrator is a different party. In times of war, is the moment when the independence of the media is challenged. It is the moment when those with power get to exercise it and create a narrative suitable for them. A great communications team therefore becomes critical. At this point, by 'great' is not meant a perfectly objective team. Rather is meant a team capable of influencing and shaping the public opinion.

Independent media outlets, depending on the regulatory framework unfortunately stand to find their reporting leaning more to the regulation makers and political subjectivity is therefore bound to triumph.

Those to have read the Animal Farm by George Orwell, will recall the character named Squealer. He mastered communication on behalf of Napoleon the leader, perfectly painting the person of Napoleon to the extent that even the good taste of water was attributed to him. Outside of the Animal Farm, George Orwell had this to say about the freedom of the press, that "if it means



*Phillip Darkie Mpanyana is the Director of DM Solutions, a former legal practitioner and a community activist writing in his personal capacity. Picture Credit: Facebook*

any anything at all, means the freedom to criticise and oppose". To criticise and oppose are freedoms of the present. They cannot be exercised ex-post-facto. The events which unfolded in the Middle East in the recent, though largely viewed on the 'for and against' eye, have exposed how power can be used to advance a narrative. As alluded previously in this piece, it cannot be correct to proffer a different meaning to crimes against humanity for the 'for' camp and proffer another for the 'against' camp when all elements of the crime have been met in both scenarios. The two instances of war which have been cited in this piece, both happen to have history behind them. In both of these instances, history is a great influencer to what is unfolding. With the said history being contested, it is common cause that there will always be a contestation on which is the correct narrative reflecting history and which narrative should reach the public. However, when only a single narrative is forcefully sponsored, truth will remain evasive.

## PREMIER, MTSWENI-TSIPANE OPENED THE STATE OF ART HEALTH FACILITY IN VICTOR KHANYE

**BOTLENG:** Mpumalanga Premier, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane has officially opened the state of the art Botleng Ext 06 Community Health Center under Victor Khanye Local Municipality. This is part of government's effort to strengthen primary health care services for the people, who solely rely on public health care services. The state of the art 24 hour Clinic will provide a comprehensive primary health care services for the community and people from around this area. The facility consists of 12 consulting rooms, which cater for maternity, dental, emergency and pharmacy services. "Speaking for GE Vernova Mr. Emmanuel Thouet said "we are very happy to be part of this project and we will continue to work in projects that are meant to develop communities." Representing Eskom Kusile and Medupi projects GM Ms. Z Shange literally wanted kusina to "dance". I am so happy and we trust the Community Health Centre will be kept in good condition for generations to come. The MEC for Health, Ms Sasekani Manzini before introducing the Premier pleaded with

health workers to treat patients with kindness and care." I do not wish to get complaints from community about bad staff attitudes, and long queues" When speaking during the official opening Premier mentioned the importance of working with Private Sector to improve service delivery for the people. "The clinic is one of the various private-public partnership projects in the province that seek to improve access to health care services. Government alone cannot work in isolation and always welcome and encourages. Other private institutions to come along and partner with government for the benefit of the people at large. " I'm happy to announce that working together with Eskom, we are today able to hand over this clinic. The construction phase was funded by GE steam power in partnership with ESKOM. This is also a right direction towards achieving the universal health coverage for all." concluded Mtshweni-Tsipane

*Premier Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane inspecting some of the wards at Botleng Extension 6 Community Health Centre*





# TIMELESS SPORT

## PIRATES DOWN SPURS TO REACH CARLING KNOCKOUT QUARTERS



Orlando Pirates has qualified for carling cup quarter final by beating Cape Town Spurs 2-0

A goal from the penalty spot from Tapelo Xoki and a well-taken strike by Kermit Erasmus earned Pirates a 2-0 victory against Cape Town Spurs at the Orlando Stadium on Friday night. The Buccaneers coach Jose Riveiro made a few changes to his starting line-up with some of their regulars missing, but they still had a strong squad, which saw the return of Thembinkosi Lorch, while Evidence Makgopa also got a start. On the other side of the field, Spurs came into the game eager for a change of fortunes in terms of results having not won a game this season. The Urban Warriors had an early attempt at goal through Morné Nel but the ball went wide. In the 24th minute, both sides got some very good opportunities to take the lead. It started . Xoki's header from a Deon Hotto cross which hit the

upright, while Spurs' forward Therlo Moosa's shot from inside the box went just wide of Sipho Chaine's goals. A few minutes later, Bucs were forced to make a substitution after Chaine had to leave the field due to an injury, giving Melusi Buthelezi a chance for his first competitive game for Pirates. Pirates could have taken the lead before the break, but Hotto's shot was cleared off the line, while Erasmus' header was not powerful enough to trouble Zama Dlamini at the visitors goals. The game was still tight in the second half, despite some promising attacks from both teams. However, the home side went on to take the lead after Makgopa was brought down inside the box by Spurs keeper – and Xoki stood up to take the responsibility and calmly slotted the ball inside the box to make it 1-0 for the hosts in the 60th minute. Five minutes later, Erasmus extended the lead for the Sea Robbers making it 2-0 for Jose Riveiro's charges. The home side could have scored the third goal, but they let some of their chances go into waste, while the visitors couldn't even get a consolation goal.

## EX-SUNDOWNS DEFENDER SIYABONGA ZULU SIGNS FOR MOTSEPE FOUNDATION CHAMPIONSHIP

Former Mamelodi Sundowns defender Siyabonga Zulu has finally found a new home in the Motsepe Foundation Championship after being unattached for quite a while. The defender has been clubless since leaving All-Stars in 2021 where he had a short spell of six months. The 30-year-old has had a couple of trials in the Motsepe Foundation Championship as he was hoping to secure a contract. The player's representative Gerald Baloyi of Vodia Players Management has confirmed to FARPost Zulu has signed for La Masia. The defender penned a one-year deal and an option to extend for a further year. Zulu is aiming to bring back to life a career that seemed to be gradually fading away. Baloyi says they pulled out all the stops to try and get the left-footer back into the professional game. La Masia has given him an opportunity to revive his career since he has been out of the game for a long time," Baloyi told FARPost. "He is back now. I'm happy for him because we have been working hard to get what he has today. I'm proud of him that he is working now. 'I'd like to see him back on the top-flight because we know what he can do. He has proven himself before.'" During his short-lived stint at Sundowns, Zulu only made three appearances in all competitions before he moved to Black Leopards. He began his career



Former Mamelodi Sundowns defender Siyabonga Zulu has signed a one-year deal with Motsepe Foundation Championship side La Masia

at Orlando Pirates and was in the club's Youth Development until 2011 when he signed a professional contract with them. However, in the same year, he was loaned out to Blackburn Rovers. He also had loan spells with Sivutsa Stars, United FC and Chippa United prior to leaving the Soweto giants permanently in 2015. He moved to Platinum Stars as a free agent when he was 21 years old.

## SA FOOTBALL MOURNS PASSING OF ORLANDO PIRATES' GREAT PHIL JONES



Phil Jones Setshedi celebrating some of the achievements with Orlando Pirates players

South African football has been plunged into mourning again with former Orlando Pirates manager Phil "Mr Jones" Setshedi, the latest of yesteryear legends, to pass on, the club confirmed on Thursday. In a brief statement posted on Pirates' X platform, the club conveyed its condolences to the Setshedi family, but did not give the details on the cause of death. A former Pirates and Bafana Bafana assistant coach at some point, Setshedi was a colourful character, literally and figuratively. The older generation remembers him for

his glowing football career as one of the respected local defenders in the 1970s, including leading the Bucs to the Mainstay Cup in that era. "Mr Clean", as Setshedi was also known, was assistant to the late Clive Barker at Bafana in the team's historic triumph of the 1996 Afcon on these shores. However, these achievements were somewhat overshadowed by the controversies that later followed Setshedi. In 2016, Setshedi - also known for his good fashion sense - was sentenced to eight years on charges related to match-fixing.