

UBUNTU NEWSFLASH



Issue 657 | 6 March 2025

WEEKLY ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION

IT'S
YOUR VOICE
Internal newsletter of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation
ubuntu diplomat

UBUNTU
MAGAZINE

UBUNTU
RADIO

If this newsletter doesn't load or images don't display, go to www.dirco.gov.za/ubuntu-newsflash.



DEEPENING A CULTURE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & HUMAN RIGHTS

#HumanRightsMonth2025 #SocialJusticeRights4All

#GovernmentZA



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Tel: +27 12 351-1000 (24-hours)
www.dirco.gov.za

Download the Travel Smart App now from the
Apple App Store and Google Play.



Travel Smart with
DIRCO



#TravelSmartWithDIRCO



PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA RECEIVES PRESIDENT CHAPO OF MOZAMBIQUE

President Cyril Ramaphosa on Tuesday, 4 March 2025, received His Excellency President Daniel Chapo of the Republic of Mozambique for a meeting at his Official Residence, Genadendal, in Cape Town.



WATCH THE VIDEO

WATCH THE VIDEO

President Chapo was recently inaugurated as President of the Republic of Mozambique, a close partner and immediate neighbour of South Africa. President Chapo's visit aims to strengthen political cooperation at the bilateral, regional, continental, and global levels.

The discussion between two leaders focused on enhancing cooperation and strengthening state institutions. The relationship between South Africa and Mozambique is deeply rooted in a shared historical struggle against apartheid and colonialism. This bond is further enriched by familial connections and cultural similarities that unite the two nations.

Currently, it is estimated that South African companies have invested between R155 billion and R175 billion, creating more than 42 000 job opportunities.

Several key South African companies recently established the South African Chamber of Commerce, promoting trade and investment between the two nations. Mozambique is also a vital energy security partner for South Africa.

The bilateral meeting gave effect to President Ramaphosa's commitment in the 2025 State of the Nation Address that South Africa will leverage its international relations to advance the well-being of humanity, strengthen trade relations around the world, and leverage strong and diverse global alliances to make South Africa's economy more resilient.

President Ramaphosa said, "We came together to continue strengthening the bonds between our two countries and, in many ways, how we can turn a new page of cooperation at a political, diplomatic and economic level and how we can entrench political stability in Mozambique following the elections. And also, how we can create a conducive environment for businesses to operate in both countries."

President Chapo said, "We are here to explain that our situation in Mozambique is good, and now we are working. Tomorrow, we will meet with the opposition to sign an agreement on talks we are going to have about the many issues impacting our country, including discussions on our electoral laws. We are also here to talk about how we can grow our economy." – Source: www.thepresidency.gov.za

PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA ATTENDS FUNERAL OF FORMER NAMIBIAN PRESIDENT SAM NUJOMA

President Cyril Ramaphosa on Saturday, 1 March 2025, joined other Heads of State and Government in bidding farewell to the late former President of the Republic of Namibia, Dr Samuel Shafishuna Nujoma.

This, as he attended the State Funeral of President Nujoma who, passed away at the age of 95 on 11 February 2025 while receiving medical attention in Windhoek.

Arriving in Windhoek, President Ramaphosa reiterated, on behalf of the government and people of South Africa, his deep condolences to the government and people of Namibia.



“South Africa and Namibia enjoy excellent bilateral relations due to the fraternal and historical relations cemented during the fight against colonialism and apartheid. The two countries established diplomatic ties in March 1990,” The Presidency said.

Dr Nujoma became involved in anticolonial politics during the 1950s and was the founding member and the first President of the Southwest Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) in 1960. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

PRESIDENT WISHES MUSLIM COMMUNITY WELL OVER RAMADAN

President Cyril Ramaphosa has extended his best wishes to the Muslim community as they observe the fasting month of Ramadan.



“For our Muslim brethren here at home and around the world, this is a sacred time of reflection, prayer and performing acts of charity—values that unite us all,” President Ramaphosa said on Saturday, 1 March 2025.

In his statement, the President added that South Africa is a country united in its diversity, “and this is our greatest strength as we work together to build a better South Africa of equality and opportunity for all.”

For the world’s approximately 1.9 billion Muslims, the month of Ramadan is observed by fasting from sunrise to sunset, performing special prayers, and feeding the needy.

“As a country, we laud these acts of compassion, empathy, and generosity by the Muslim community [as they] are even more sorely needed in today’s troubled world.

“Even as this is a time of fraternity and spiritual growth for Muslims, we are keenly aware that [the] suffering peoples in Gaza, in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in the troubled Sahel region will experience little cheer this Ramadan,” said President Ramaphosa.



The President also reaffirmed the country’s solidarity with oppressed peoples everywhere and a call for an end to intolerance, conflict, and war.

“We are grateful to be a nation where many cultures and faiths co-exist in harmony—may this also be a time for outreach and building bridges of tolerance and understanding between our different communities,” the President said. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

SOUTH AFRICA CONDEMNS ISRAEL’S REFUSAL TO ALLOW AID INTO GAZA AND ITS ONGOING MILITARY OPERATIONS IN THE WEST BANK

South Africa strongly condemns the refusal of Israel to allow humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip and its closure of border crossings at a time when the people of Gaza are experiencing immeasurable suffering and urgently need food, shelter, and medical supplies.

Preventing food from entering Gaza is a continuation of Israel’s use of starvation as a weapon of war as part of the ongoing campaign of what the International Court of Justice ruled to be plausible genocide against the Palestinian people.

South Africa concurs with Qatar, one of the guarantors of the ceasefire agreement, that halting the entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip is a clear violation of the ceasefire agreement, international humanitarian law, and the Fourth Geneva Convention. South Africa calls on the international community to hold Israel accountable and ensure the safe, continuous, and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid to all areas of the Gaza Strip.



United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres has called for Israel to end its suspension of humanitarian aid to Gaza “immediately” and to allow aid to flow without impediment in an environment ensuring the safety and security of civilians, including humanitarian workers. Guterres has also “urged all parties to make every effort to prevent a return to hostilities in Gaza” and to find a way forward on the next phase of the ceasefire agreement.

South Africa also condemns Israel's ongoing military operations in the West Bank that represent a dangerous escalation and which further threaten the Palestinian quest for self-determination and statehood.

The forced displacement of 40 000 Palestinians from Jenin, Tulkarem, Nour Shams, and elsewhere threatens to erase Palestinian refugee camps and the right of return. The concurrent ban on the UN Relief and Works Agency's (UNRWA) activities in these areas constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and strips displaced Palestinians of essential support and international oversight.

The expanded Israeli military presence, now at its highest levels in the West Bank since 2002, signals an intent to re-establish full-scale military occupation and undermines the Palestinian Authority and its governance.

South Africa supports the Guarantors' continued efforts to address the reported violations of the ceasefire agreement. The delay in releasing the 620 Palestinian prisoners constitutes a fundamental breach of negotiated terms.

South Africa once again calls on the international community to act with urgency and decisive action to address the continued systematic violation of international law and international humanitarian and human rights' law.

South Africa welcomes the outcomes of the Arab League Emergency Summit held on 4 March, which supports a settlement on Gaza that is led by, and inclusive of, Palestinians and that expressly rejects the ethnic cleansing and forced displacement of Palestinians in Gaza. South Africa supports the Arab League's call for a UN international peacekeeping force in the West Bank and Gaza to ensure security and stability.

South Africa also expresses its grave concern over Israel's continuing violation of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity by towns south of Damascus and the southern province of Daraa. Israel's depiction of Southern Syria as a “security zone” and statements that any attempt by Syrian government forces to establish themselves in the zone is in violation of Syria's sovereignty. – Source: www.dirco.gov.za

.....

DEPUTY MINISTER BOTES TO CO-CHAIR POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS WITH SLOVAK REPUBLIC COUNTERPART

South Africa and the Slovak Republic reviewed the state of their bilateral political relations to consolidate and further enhance diplomatic and political cooperation.

Bilateral political relations as well as diplomatic and political cooperation was up for discussion at the meeting between International Relations and Cooperation Deputy Minister Alvin Botes and the Slovak Republic's State Secretary for Foreign and European Affairs Marek Eštok.

The Deputy Minister co-chaired the South Africa-Slovak Republic Political Consultations with the State Secretary on Monday, 3 March 2025 in Pretoria.

“This round of political consultations provides an opportunity for the Deputy Minister and his counterpart to review the state of the bilateral political relations to consolidate and further enhance diplomatic and political cooperation between the two nations.

“The Deputy Minister and State Secretary will also share perspectives and deepen their understanding of regional, multilateral, and global issues of mutual concern,” said the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO).

Bilateral political consultations between South Africa and the Slovak Republic are based on the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Africa and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, signed in 2007 in Bratislava.

Economic and trade relations are conducted through a Joint Council for Economic Cooperation (JCEC).

“Relations between South Africa and the Slovak Republic are cordial and relatively modest, with trade and investment levels remaining at a very low base. Bilateral trade between the two countries in 2024 totalled €287.4 million, representing an increase of 3.1% in comparison to 2023,” said the department ahead of Monday’s meeting in Pretoria.



South African exports to the Slovak Republic in 2024 amounted to €92.1 million, a decrease of 4.8%. Slovak exports to South Africa amounted to €195.3 million, an increase of 7.3% compared to 2023. – Source: www.dirco.gov.za

MINISTER DEAN MACPHERSON CONCLUDES SUCCESSFUL WORKING VISIT TO MIDDLE EAST

Public Works and Infrastructure Minister Dean Macpherson has concluded a successful working visit to the Middle East.



Over a period of seven days, the Minister’s delegation held more than 25 meetings with three ministries, four state agencies, and four sovereign wealth funds worth a combined estimated US\$1.6 trillion.

The Minister said the visit demonstrates his commitment to attracting an additional R100 billion in private sector infrastructure investment during the seventh administration.

“The highly successful visit to the Middle East demonstrates that we are taking concrete action to attract additional infrastructure and real estate investment to South Africa at a time of fiscal constraints. Many of the ministers, state agencies, and companies we engaged with had not met with South African representatives in several years. Encouragingly, many expressed a willingness to sign memorandums of understanding and visit South Africa in the near future. Of particular interest was the Qatari Department of Public Works offering their skills and knowledge to our department through a formal agreement, which we hope to conclude by May 2025,” said Minister Macpherson.

The Minister's visit aligns with his commitment to attracting an additional R100 billion in private sector infrastructure investment during the seventh administration. This investment will support his vision of turning South Africa into a construction site, driving economic growth and creating jobs.

The Minister was joined by:

- Limpopo MEC for Public Works and Infrastructure, Ernest Rachoene

- Chairperson of the eThekweni Municipality Economic Development and Planning Committee, Themebuhle Ntuli
- Acting Head of Infrastructure South Africa (ISA), Mameetse Masemola.

“However, the real work now begins—turning these engagements into tangible results, such as finalising financing agreements with foreign entities, facilitating knowledge exchange to accelerate infrastructure delivery, and concluding the terms of the memorandums of understanding. It is crucial that South Africans see the benefits of this visit as soon as possible, and I look forward to Infrastructure South Africa and the Department playing a meaningful role in achieving these goals.”

The Minister emphasised his commitment to strengthening South Africa's relationships with the Middle East, highlighting the region's untapped potential for investment into our new government real estate development program, which seeks to leverage government-owned properties for massive private sector development.

Among the strategies under consideration is establishing a more consistent South African infrastructure presence in the Middle East.

“I look forward to visiting the Middle East regularly in the years ahead as we accelerate efforts to attract additional infrastructure investment to South Africa. Our foremost priority at the Department of Public Works & Infrastructure remains driving economic growth to create jobs, which we believe will be achieved through strategic infrastructure investment. By working together, we are building a better South Africa.” – Source: www.gov.za

CALL TO IMPLEMENT G20 ROADMAP FOR MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS

The Group of 20 (G20) has urged Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) to enhance their collaboration and efficiency while working with relevant stakeholders to implement the G20 Roadmap for Bigger, Better and More Effective MDBs.



This initiative builds on the legacies of previous G20 presidencies and aims to strengthen MDBs ability to support global development efforts. The roadmap is designed to assist countries to meet the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as to address global and regional challenges with a renewed sense of urgency and determination.

This call comes as the global community is struggling to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement and advance SDGs, which are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030, all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

According to the G20 Chair's Summary of the first Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' Meeting that took place in Cape Town from 26 to 27 February 2025, the meeting discussed the work plan of the International Financial Architecture Working Group (IFAWG) and its focus on four priority areas.

These include strengthening MDBs and ensuring financing for development; enhancing debt sustainability and addressing liquidity challenges; strengthening the Global Financial Safety Net (GFSN) and reforming global governance institutions; and enhancing financial resilience by strengthening capital flows to emerging market and developing economies (EMDEs).

The meeting recalled that the IFAWG was tasked to work with the MDBs to develop a monitoring and reporting framework, with clear indicators, for periodic updates on MDBs' progress against the Roadmap's recommendations.

“[The meeting] encouraged MDBs to work with developing countries in enhancing domestic resource mobilisation and increasing private capital investment by supporting enabling conditions, addressing potential obstacles to private investment, and scaling up both innovative risk-sharing instruments and country platforms.

“[The gathering] recognised that the roadmap encourages MDBs to take steps towards the implementation of all appropriate outstanding Capital Adequacy Framework (CAF) recommendations, safeguarding their long-term financial sustainability, robust credit ratings and preferred creditor status.

“[It also] recalled that the board of each MDB will be best placed to determine if and when a capital increase is needed in addition to CAF measures to support efforts in addressing global challenges and meeting development needs,” the statement said.

The G20 said that it looked forward to progress with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2025 Shareholding Review in line with the Lima Shareholding principles and recognised the need for enhancing the representation and voice of developing countries in decision-making in MDBs and other international economic and financial institutions.

Transparency and sustainable capital flows

In addition, the meeting looked forward to improvements in the implementation of the Common Framework for Debt Treatments in a predictable, timely, orderly, and coordinated manner, informed by the recommendations from the *G20 Note on the Lessons Learnt*. It welcomed joint efforts by all stakeholders to continue working towards enhancing debt transparency.

“[The meeting] encouraged the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank to continue their work related to feasible options that are country-specific and on a voluntary basis to help vulnerable countries with near-term liquidity challenges whose debt is sustainable.

“[It also] reiterated the commitment to a strong, quota-based, and adequately resourced IMF at the centre of the GFSN.

“[The meeting] acknowledged the urgency and importance of realignment in quota shares to better reflect members’ relative positions in the world economy while protecting the quota shares of the poorest members; and the IMF Executive Board’s ongoing work to develop by June 2025 possible approaches as a guide for further quota realignment, including through a new quota formula, under the 17th General Review of Quota,” the statement said.

Furthermore, the G20 encouraged IMF members with strong external positions, especially those who have not already contributed, to make additional voluntary contributions to the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust and the Resilience and Sustainability Trust.

It continued to invite countries that were willing to voluntarily explore channelling Special Drawing Rights, including through MDBs, where legally possible, while respecting their reserve asset status.

“[The meeting] reiterated efforts to promote sustainable capital flows to EMDEs and foster sound policy frameworks, notably through central bank independence. [They also] recognised the growing importance of non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs) and planned to deepen the understanding of their role in shaping EMDE investment flows,” the statement said. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

.....

WESTERN CAPE WELCOMES LIFTING OF BAN ON VEGETABLE EXPORTS TO BOTSWANA

Western Cape MEC for Agriculture, Economic Development and Tourism, Dr Ivan Meyer, has welcomed the lifting of the ban on vegetable exports to Botswana.



This is after the previous administration of Botswana, led by President Mokgweetsi Masisi, imposed a ban on South African produce to support domestic farmers and reduce reliance on imports, which has since been lifted by President Duma Boko.

Meyer believes this move will encourage increased trade among Southern African Customs Union (SACU) members, who view the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as a critical tool for developing regional value chains and enhancing exports.

According to the MEC, Botswana’s gradual lifting of vegetable imports will occur in two phases.

Phase 1, which began in December 2024, includes vegetables such as turmeric, patty pan, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, green peas, sweet corn, broccoli, cauliflower, gem squash, baby marrow, green bean, sweet melon, mushroom, calabash, cantaloupe, and eggplant.

Meanwhile, Phase 2 is expected to start on 1 April 2025 and will see an easing of restrictions on beetroot, butternut, cabbage, carrot, garlic, ginger, green melon, herbs, lettuce, onion, potato, sweet pepper, tomato, and watermelon.

The MEC said the Western Cape accounted for 37% (or R3.3 million) of South Africa's vegetable exports to Botswana in quarter four of 2024.

Regarding the contribution to Phase 1 nationally, Meyer said the provincial share has steadily increased during the period under review, reaching 63% in quarter 3 of 2024 and dropping to 55% in quarter 4 of 2024.

"It is expected that with the lifting of import restriction for vegetables listed in Phase 2, there will be an improvement in South African exports to Botswana, including those from the Western Cape," Meyer said.

The MEC has since encouraged fair trade between SADC partners, saying the lifting of these restrictions is a move in the right direction.

"Our trade relations with our regional partners are mutually beneficial," he stated.

Meanwhile, he said an improvement in exports to Botswana takes the province closer to the Western Cape Government's Growth for Jobs plan, which aims to triple the value of Western Cape exports of goods and services, including tourism, to R450 billion by 2035. – Source: SANews.gov.za

SOUTH AFRICA PARTICIPATES IN EXPEDITION ALONG THE AFRICAN COASTLINE

The South African Environmental Observation Network (NRF-SAEON), a long-term environmental observation and research facility of the National Research, is participating in the Around Africa Expedition, the National Research Foundation (NRF) said.

Led by global ocean exploration non-profit organisations, OceanX and the newly established Ocean Quest, Around Africa Expedition is a pioneering collaborative expedition along the African coastline and is an endorsed action programme of the United Nations Ocean Decade framework (2021-2030) for its contributions to capacity building and scientific understanding of the ocean.

"Its journey began on 30 January 2025 in Moroni, Comoros aboard OceanX's state-of-the-art research and media vessel, *OceanXplorer*. The first leg of this expedition, conducted in collaboration with NRF-SAEON, aimed to map and conduct biodiversity surveys of Indian Ocean seamounts on the Madagascan Ridge and Agulhas Plateau," said the NRF.

The guest science team onboard included established and early career researchers from South Africa, Madagascar, Mozambique, Kenya, Tanzania, Comoros, Portugal, Brazil, and Saudi Arabia.



In its statement, the NRF said the measurement of both the physical features and biodiversity at these seamounts will advance scientific knowledge and help to guide informed decisions on conservation and restoration efforts in these remote ocean areas.

"Although these seamounts are located in the high seas, far from any human populations, their contribution towards serving as larval transport corridors are critical and can influence population connectivity across vast ocean distances, supporting ecosystem resilience and replenishment of fisheries in both deep-sea and coastal environments."

South African benthic ecologist, Dr Lara Atkinson from NRF-SAEON is part of the team leading the exploration of seamounts, including Walters Shoal and the Africana II seamount.

"A seamount is an underwater mountain that rises from the seafloor but does not reach the ocean's surface. Seamounts are formed primarily by volcanic activity, often at tectonic plate boundaries or hotspots.

"Their height can range from hundreds to thousands of meters, depending on the intensity and duration of volcanic activity. They play an important role in influencing ocean currents, creating nutrient-rich upwelling that supports diverse marine life, including plankton, corals, sponges, fish, and marine mammals," said Atkinson.

Meanwhile, a group of Cape Town high school learners from Luhlaza, Ocean View, Bulumko, Masiphumelele, and Usasazo High Schools had the privilege to join a live-streamed session from *OceanXplorer* on its journey towards Cape Town, as researchers onboard conducted a Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) dive on Walters Shoal seamount.

The curious learners in attendance were fascinated by the live view of the seabed at a depth of nearly 500 m and this inspired them to ask many interesting questions to gain further insights about the science being conducted during the expedition. Thabo Mbuyazi, a technician from the South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity (NRF-SAIAB), explained the importance of ensuring that all scientific equipment is maintained to the highest of standards to be able to collect data for researchers.

He introduced the learners and educators to the two submersibles onboard the vessel, Neptune and Nadir. These three-person submersibles hosted some of the research team during deployments to 500 m depths during the expedition. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

FIRST WILD CAPE VULTURE SIGHTING IN OVER 30 YEARS—A HOPEFUL SIGN FOR CONSERVATION

In a thrilling turn of events for conservationists, over 80 wild Cape Vultures have been sighted on a farm just 40 kilometres outside Mountain Zebra National Park, near Spitskop, Cradock.



This is the first time in over three decades that these magnificent birds have been spotted in the region—a remarkable moment for South Africa's endangered vulture populations and a sign that ongoing conservation efforts are paying off.

Vulpro, Africa's only vulture-dedicated conservation organisation, has been working tirelessly to prevent the extinction of these misunderstood birds. Their efforts, which include rescue, rehabilitation, captive breeding, and education, have made a tangible difference in vulture numbers. Seeing Cape Vultures return to historical roosting sites is an undeniable victory, though conservationists caution that the fight is far from over.

“While we are starting to see some vultures return to historical roosting sites, the rate of decline is still shocking and very worrying, which is why we can’t stop our conservation efforts now,” says Kerri Wolter, CEO and Founder of Vulpro. “Sightings like this one near Graaff-Reinet show that the work we are doing is making a difference, which motivates us to keep working around the clock to curb further vulture species declines.”

Cape Vultures, once abundant across South Africa, have faced a steady decline since the 1980s. Between 1992 and 2007, populations plummeted by as much as 70%, leading to their classification as “threatened.” By 2021, their status was upgraded to “vulnerable” as numbers showed signs of improvement, yet vultures remain among the most at-risk birds in Africa. Some species have seen catastrophic declines of up to 80% in recent decades, prompting conservationists to refer to the situation as the “African Vulture Crisis.”

The recent sighting follows another major milestone for Vulpro: the return of wild vultures to Shamwari Private Game Reserve, where they were seen feeding on a carcass for the first time in nearly a year. The slow but steady return of vultures to these once-abandoned habitats is a major step forward for their survival.

Why vultures matter

Often misunderstood, vultures are nature’s most efficient clean-up crew. By rapidly disposing of carcasses, they prevent the spread of deadly diseases such as anthrax, botulism, and rabies. Without vultures, scavengers like feral dogs and rats—far less effective at preventing disease—would take their place, posing a serious risk to both human and animal populations.

Vulpro has been at the forefront of vulture rehabilitation since 2007, achieving a 75% survival rate for rescued birds. Their groundbreaking captive breeding programme, launched in 2013, has released 78 captive-bred vultures into the wild, actively contributing to population recovery.

“Vultures are nature’s misunderstood heroes, yet they face devastating population declines due to electrocutions, collisions with energy infrastructure, poisoning, trade for belief-based practices, habitat loss, and negative public perception,” Wolter explains. “By recognising them as crucial ecological guardians, we can rewrite the story around vultures and inspire meaningful conservation.”

The sighting of over 80 wild Cape Vultures isn’t just good news—it’s a sign that with dedication, science, and community involvement, species on the brink of extinction can make a comeback. Vulpro’s continued efforts prove that conservation isn’t just about protecting wildlife; it’s about restoring balance to ecosystems and ensuring that future generations get to witness the soaring wings of vultures in the African sky. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

AFRICA GREEN ECONOMY SUMMIT: A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT

The Africa Green Economy Summit (AGES) took place last week at the Century City Conference Centre in Cape Town. This pivotal event brought together leaders, investors, and sustainability experts to discuss Africa’s transition towards a green economy and strategies to enhance private sector investment in climate finance.

Africa: A land of green potential

Africa possesses 65% of the world’s remaining arable land and vast renewable energy resources, positioning the continent as a potential leader in global sustainability efforts. However, to fully harness these opportunities, increased investment and innovative financial solutions are essential.



AFRICA’S GREEN ECONOMY SUMMIT

Maxwell Gomera, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) South Africa Resident Representative, emphasised the need for inclusive economic growth, stating, “An economy that only works for the few is not an economy.” This sentiment underscores the importance of ensuring that Africa’s green transition benefits all communities, fostering equitable development across the continent.

Financing the future: Attracting private investment

A significant challenge highlighted during the summit is Africa’s limited access to climate finance. Currently, the continent receives less than 4% of global climate investment, with only 18% sourced from the private sector. Addressing this disparity requires strategic approaches to make green investments more appealing to private financiers.

One proposed solution is blended finance, which combines public and private funds to mitigate investment risks. Enhancing data collection and transparency is also crucial, as investors seek measurable outcomes and clear financial projections before committing capital.

Governments play a vital role in this endeavour. By implementing tax incentives, subsidies, and streamlined approval processes for sustainable projects, they can create an environment conducive to private investment. Additionally, debt-for-nature swaps—where countries exchange debt obligations for commitments to environmental conservation—emerged as a promising strategy during the discussions.

Kevin Anderson, Head of Strategic Initiatives at Climate Fund Managers, advocated for a paradigm shift, stating, “We need to move away from the idea of development aid to private capital mobilisation.” This approach aims to unlock substantial funding for Africa’s green initiatives, transitioning from dependency on aid to sustainable investment models.

Showcasing transformative green projects

A highlight of the summit’s first day was the project pitching session, where entrepreneurs presented innovative sustainability projects collectively valued at over US\$1.5 billion. These initiatives span various sectors, including renewable energy, waste management, alternative fuels, and green infrastructure, demonstrating the diverse opportunities within Africa’s green economy.

The event’s matchmaking platform further facilitated engagement, with numerous confirmed meetings between investors and project developers. This active participation underscores the growing momentum and interest in Africa’s sustainable investment landscape.

From dialogue to action: Advancing a greener Africa

The summit emphasised the necessity of transitioning from discussion to tangible action. South Africa's Deputy Minister of Electricity and Energy, Samantha Jane Graham-Maré, highlighted the importance of government collaboration with the private sector to drive sustainable initiatives. She also noted the potential benefits of carbon markets for the continent, which can provide financial incentives for reducing emissions.

Initiatives like Mission 300, aiming to provide electricity to 300 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2030, exemplify how targeted investments can yield widespread benefits. This ambitious project focuses on accelerating electrification while promoting economic growth and job creation through diversified and cleaner energy sources.

Africa's Green Economy on the rise

The inaugural day of the Africa Green Economy Summit underscored that Africa is not merely responding to climate challenges but is proactively positioning itself as a leader in green innovation. Sustainable projects offer significant business opportunities while contributing to environmental preservation.

As the summit progressed, the focus remained on mobilising financial support, fostering innovation, and enhancing collaboration among stakeholders. These efforts aim to ensure that Africa's green economy becomes a robust driver of growth and sustainability, benefiting communities across the continent and setting a precedent for global environmental initiatives. – Source: thenewspaper.co.za

SOUTH AFRICAN PROFESSOR WINS GLOBAL AWARD FOR REVOLUTIONISING HEARING CARE

Access to healthcare remains a challenge for many, but one South African researcher is breaking barriers and making hearing care available to those who need it most. Professor De Wet Swanepoel, from the University of Pretoria's (UP) Department of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, has been honoured with the prestigious International Award for Hearing from the American Academy of Audiology.



This award recognises Prof. Swanepoel's pioneering work in mobile hearing care, a mission that has seen him co-found the hearX Group, a digital health company dedicated to expanding access to hearing healthcare both locally and globally. His research isn't just about numbers or academic papers—it's about real-world impact, ensuring that millions of people can connect with the world through sound.

"I'm truly honoured to receive this award," he says. "More than personal recognition, it highlights the importance of making hearing care accessible to those who need it most."

For Prof. Swanepoel, hearing loss is a silent epidemic. He believes that waiting for people to seek help is no longer an option. Instead, hearing care must be taken to them, whether they're in a remote village, a busy workplace, or their own home.

"We need to stop thinking of hearing care as something that only happens in a clinic," he explains. "It should happen wherever people need it."

His work with teleaudiology—a field that leverages digital technology to provide remote hearing solutions—is revolutionising access to care, especially in regions like Africa, where only 2% of people who need hearing aids actually receive them. By harnessing mobile apps, artificial intelligence, and digital tools, Prof. Swanepoel is changing the narrative around hearing health, making it more accessible and affordable.

Prof. Swanepoel's impact extends far beyond South Africa. His collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO) has helped scale mobile hearing solutions globally. One of the most groundbreaking achievements is the hearZA National Hearing Screening app, developed by UP and hearX. This innovation was later adapted into hearWHO, the first-ever global hearing screening app, which has already screened half a billion people worldwide.

"What started as a South African innovation has now screened half a billion people worldwide for hearing loss," he says proudly.

Through this partnership, minimally trained healthcare workers can now conduct hearing screenings under the remote supervision of audiologists, ensuring that even the most underserved communities can receive life-changing hearing support. With an estimated 700 million people expected to require hearing services by 2050, the need for borderless, digital-first solutions has never been greater. Prof. Swanepoel is at the forefront of this transformation, ensuring that innovation is not just a concept but a lifeline for those in need.

“Hearing connects us,” he reflects.

“It is how we share stories, emotions, and relationships. Making sure no one loses that connection is what drives my work.” – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

PREVIDAR ICONS INAUGURAL COVER WITH DR ESTHER MAHLANGU

“Previdar” has unveiled “Previdar Icons”, a new editorial series honouring cultural pioneers whose influence extends beyond their craft, shaping history as they go, with Dr Esther Mahlangu to inaugurate the platform.

Dr Esther Mahlangu is a woman whose brush has painted history, redefined legacy, and ensured the vibrancy of Ndebele art on a global stage. A living legend whose art speaks a language older than words, yet as fresh and relevant as the moment we find ourselves in.

She is a figure that exists beyond the confines of time, their presence so immense that it weaves seamlessly between the past, present, and future.

Shot through a lens that captures more than just her artistry, this cover is a testament to the power of heritage, preservation, and the gift of passing knowledge forward.



In conversation with Sheila Afari, Dr Mahlangu offers rare insight into her lifelong commitment to teaching younger generations, her upcoming global exhibitions, and the release of *Esther Mahlangu: To Paint is in My Heart*, a book that immortalises her journey.

“In my community, art is not something you do alone. It’s part of life, passed down from one generation to the next,” Mahlangu shares.

At 89, her work continues to inspire, not only through exhibitions in Miami, London, and Switzerland but also in the hands of the young artists she mentors—ensuring that the patterns of her ancestors are never forgotten.

For *Previdar*, an online lifestyle publication, this cover is more than a moment; it is a statement. A declaration that icons walk among us, that they are here, shaping the world in real-time.

And that their stories deserve to be told with the reverence they command. – Source: www.bizcommunity.com

SOUTH AFRICAN COMPANY CREATES WORLD’S BEST RESTAURANT INTERIOR

A South African company, Design Partnership, has earned all the bragging rights following their internationally award-winning design for the World’s Best Restaurant Interior.

Following Design Partnership’s win in the Best African Hotel Restaurant Interior, the team went on to scoop the international win for Best Restaurant Interior from the International Property Awards. This, for their design of the ever-spectacular Blue Marlin Restaurant at Beachcomber Paradis in Le Morne, Mauritius.

The team was given a unique challenge: create an exceptional fine dining experience that captivates the unique marine surroundings and honours the rich heritage of the story of the Blue Marlin at Paradis, while retaining the charm and character of the original shingled roof Mauritian structure.

Given the challenges posed by the region's climate, the key to this design was a focus on creativity and innovation to enhance the dining experience.



– Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

With the annual monsoon season in mind, flexibility was key, leading to the development of agile seating arrangements allowing for 90% of the seating to be moved or reconfigured to suit the weather.

In addition to this, the team needed to address the constant sea breeze typical of a beachfront resort. To this end, all materials and finishes were carefully chosen for their resilience, durability and longevity in coastal conditions.

By extending the roof into the courtyard, the team was able to significantly increase the restaurant's indoor seating capacity while preserving the open-air ambiance. The entrance was also reimagined (and relocated) to make for a welcoming courtyard between the bar and restrooms. Not to mention, the open kitchen allowed for a fantastic element of visual dining, while the suspended glass ceiling installation (inspired by the simmering scales of white and blue like a Blue Marlin in motion) added that extra pinch of pizzaz.

ANELE MDODA'S OSCARS DRESS HONOURS XHOSA CULTURE

Amid all the many show-stopping looks that graced the 97th Academy Awards was the gorgeous Anele Mdoda, whose Oscars dress stood out for all the best reasons.

Anele rocked a Xhosa aesthetic—Umbhaco traditional wear—on the red carpet in line with the Xhosa film, *The Last Ranger*, which was up for the Academy Award.

Produced by Kindred Films and supported by Executive Producer Anele of Rose and Oaks Media, *The Last Ranger* tells the goosebump-inducing story of a young and wild Litha (Liyabona Mroqoza) and her life-changing journey through a game reserve as guided by the last remaining ranger, Khuseka (Avumile Qongqo).

The short-film captured audiences with its heart-tugging narrative, and it wasn't long until it was shortlisted for the Best Live Action Short Film category before scooping an official nomination.

For South Africans everywhere, the nomination alone was a huge deal. However, for the Xhosa community, it was even more significant. Even though the film didn't take home the Oscar, its journey this far has already shown the world that there is space for stories like this in the most prestigious places.

As Anele shared, *The Last Ranger* is the first Xhosa anything to be nominated for an Oscar, so I thought it fitting to rock a Xhosa aesthetic."

Director of *The Last Ranger*, "To have an isiXhosa film about rhino poaching in the running for an Oscar makes me so proud."

Anele's gorgeous Oscar dress was made by designer Asanda Madyibi.

"Umbhaco is Xhosa traditional wear, and as you can see, it's worldly and, most importantly, regal. thank you Asanda. Brief nailed," she praised the talented designer. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com



THE MZANSI YOUTH CHOIR IS PART OF NIGHTBIRDE'S LEGACY ALBUM

The Mzansi Youth Choir recently had a special experience. Following a longstanding connection to late singer Nightbirde (Jane Kristen Marczewski), the choir was invited to join Nightbirde's Legacy Album.



WATCH THE VIDEO

Nightbirde quickly became a force of inspiration for many after she hopped on the world's radar.

In 2021, she performed her original song, *It's OK*, which led her to earn Simon Cowell's Golden Buzzer.

Not only is she a talented singer, but the way in which Nightbirde showcased fierce optimism and determination to pursue her dreams in the face of her terminal cancer moved the world and, with it, the Mzansi Youth Choir.

"You can't wait until life isn't hard anymore before you decide to be happy," she once mused.

In a bid to pay tribute to the singer, the Mzansi Youth Choir recorded their own version of *It's OK* that same year. It reached Nightbirde, who shared a heartfelt response with the choir via social media. The choir was later selected to compete in the 18th season of *America's Got Talent*, where they performed *It's OK* once again—this time on the same stage where their hero had left her mark. This followed her passing in 2022.

Their performance made history by earning them the show's first-ever Audience Golden Buzzer, solidifying an emotional connection between the choir, Nightbirde's family, and her devoted fans.

During the Finals of that *America's Got Talent* season, Nightbirde's siblings even flew to Los Angeles to support the choir.

In early 2024, Nightbirde's best friend and manager, Amber Stoneman, got in touch to see if the choir would want to be part of Nightbirde's Legacy Album. The answer was an obvious yes.

The Mzansi Youth Choir and Sidumo Nyamezele (the choir's Music Director) created a beautiful arrangement for the song *Still Got Dreams*—a heartfelt tribute.

"This collaboration stands as a testament to the power of music, resilience, and the unbreakable spirit of those who refuse to let hardships define them," says Choir Manager Dr J Zaaiman.

"Through this album, Nightbirde's message of hope will continue to uplift audiences across the world, and Mzansi Youth Choir is humbled to be a part of this journey." – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

DYLAN NAIDOO DEFIES HISTORY, FLOODS TO WIN THE SA OPEN AT SOAKED DURBAN COUNTRY CLUB

South African golfer Dylan Naidoo celebrated the defining moment of his career when he clinched his first European Tour title at the Investec SA Open Championship in extraordinary circumstances at the Durban Country Club on Sunday, 2 March 2025.

In the process, Naidoo became the first player of colour to lift the SA Open, 62 years after the trailblazing Sewsunker "Papwa" Sewgolum won the Natal Open at the same venue in 1963—the first person of colour to win a professional tournament in South Africa.

The fourth round was first suspended and then cancelled due to a flooded course, and with Englishman Laurie Canter and Naidoo locked together at the top of the leaderboard on 14 under par after three rounds, a playoff was required to decide the winner.

The pair returned to the 18th at 15:00 local time, with Naidoo's birdie at the first extra hole enough to see him enter the DP World Tour winner's circle for the first time.

Canter, meanwhile, could only send his second shot to 15 feet, and after he missed his birdie try, Naidoo made no mistake with his to spark jubilant scenes around the green as the fans celebrated a sixth successive home victory at this historic event.



Naidoo's victory also earns him a spot at The 153rd Open at Royal Portrush, with Marco Penge and Darren Fichardt also qualifying. Canter, who finished alone in second, now leads the Race to Dubai Rankings and still tops the International Swing standings with one event remaining.

Penge was one shot further back in third, while South Africans Fichardt, Branden Grace, and amateur Christiaan Maas shared fourth place on 12 under.

After his thrilling victory, Naidoo said: "I really don't know what to say. After a lot of really difficult times, a lot of times where I thought I'd do this earlier in my career.

"This is a special moment for me; it's a special moment for everybody here in Durban—it's overwhelming.

"I said yesterday it felt like I was Tiger Woods (due to the bumper crowds following him). There were so many people.

"All the energy that I had, I can't thank everyone enough for coming out yesterday and today. I'm speechless."

Speaking about the chip that ultimately earned him victory, Naidoo added, "That type of shot is my bread and butter; a little low skipper. The boys who play practice rounds with me know that I do that all the time.

"I didn't have a lot of fear on the shot; it was actually a really nice shot for me to have in the moment. I was more worried about the putt. That putter went back a little squiggly!" – Source: www.iol.co.za

.....

“SURFING SAVED MY LIFE”: MUIZENBERG’S PAUL SAMPSON SECURES FIRST PLACE AT AFRICA SURF TOUR EVENT

Paul Sampson’s story is of a young man dealt a hard life as a child but refusing to let it define him. From a challenging past marked by poverty, he has risen to become a champion surfer on the Africa Surf Tour.

From days previously spent on the streets or the Muizenberg mountain caves to becoming a top-tier professional surfer, this Muizenberg-based athlete has defied great odds through his remarkable talent, which shines through in the waves.

According to Surfing South Africa, Sampson has made quite a name for himself on the Africa Surf Tour circuit. His most recent accomplishment is the biggest highlight of his career yet, having secured first place at the prestigious Africa Surf Tour event in Annise, Côte d'Ivoire, this month.

We cannot help but overflow with pride at this young man’s win and undeterred grit for going after his dreams and desires despite enduring poverty with his now-late mom and a very difficult start in life.



"My childhood wasn't perfect; it was quite difficult, but it was all about keeping on going, doing something you actually want to do. Surfing changed me, saved my life," he shared in a Beautiful News interview.

The Africa Surf Tour, organised by the African Surfing Confederation (ASC), was created to give talented African surfers like Sampson more opportunities to compete, earn prize money, and gain valuable heat experience.

ASC hopes to promote African professional surfing and give surfers, especially those who haven't yet been discovered, a platform to shine.

Sampson's victory is a significant step in that direction. His inspiring journey from adversity to triumph serves as a beacon of hope for up-and-coming surfers across Africa. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

RYAN SANDES PREPS FOR HIS TOUGHEST ENDURANCE CHALLENGE YET

Red Bull athlete and world-renowned ultra-runner Ryan Sandes is preparing for his toughest endurance challenge yet, the Cocodona 250, a 250-mile (400 km) non-stop trail race across Arizona, taking place from 5 to 10 May 2025.

This race will be the longest non-stop race of Sandes' career, more than doubling his previous ultra distances. The route traverses rugged mountains, extreme desert landscapes, and relentless elevation gains, making it one of the world's most gruelling foot races.

"I have done lots of running, with a peak week of 30 hours of running. I have been running professionally now for 18 years, so I have a lot of kilometres and experience under my belt, so this has really helped my preparation. I see this challenge as a combination of both a race and an adventure, which I am excited about. I have done a lot of nutrition planning and training to get that dialled in, as well as working on the perfect gear and shoes with Salomon and Red Bull to get me through the 250 miles."



As for what Sandes is looking forward to most on this adventure, he said it is the distance, which is the greatest challenge he has faced so far.

"The distance intrigues me, and there are so many variables to consider. I am excited about this new challenge, and I think it is going to push my physical and mental limits. As this is a non-stop race, I am a little nervous about how I will handle the sleep deprivation, but I will load up on Red Bull when I am fighting the sleep monsters."

On representing South Africa at these major events, Sandes has a lovely view on flying that flag.

“I always feel proud representing South Africa. Running is an individual sport, but when I am out there competing, I feel like I am running for more than just myself. I am running for my country and all the people who have supported me during my career.

“I think it is so important to have fun and enjoy what you do. Don’t get caught up with the numbers or running/riding at a certain pace. That will naturally come—just go out there and enjoy yourself. Consistent training is key, so try to avoid overdoing it and picking up injuries.” – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com



DIRCOza



@DIRCO_ZA



DIRCO ZA



@dircoza



theDIRCOZA



Department of
International Relations
and Cooperation

For back issues of Ubuntu NewsFlash, visit: www.dirco.gov.za/ubuntu-newsflash