

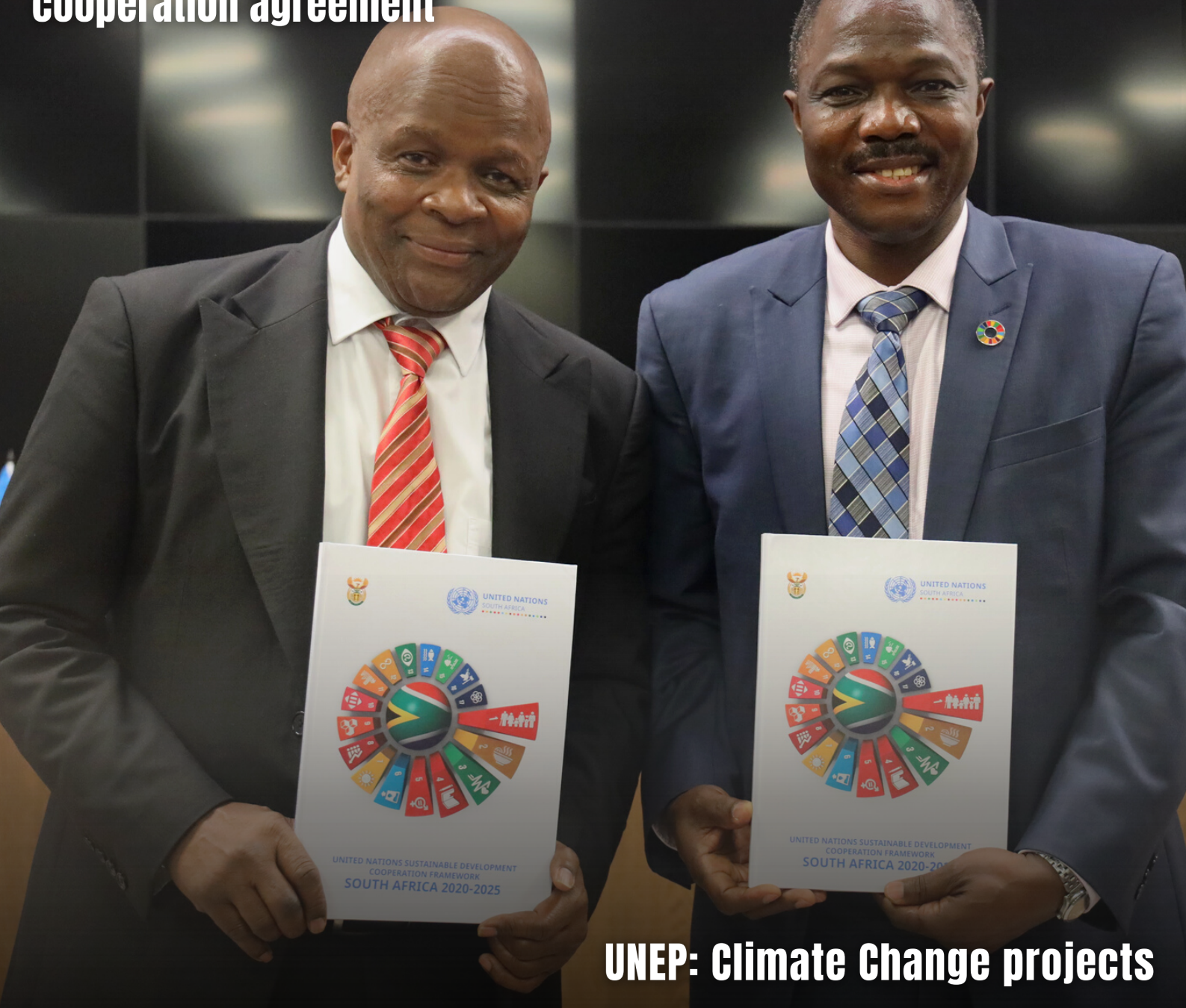
InFocus



A publication of UN in South Africa

Vol 6. Issue 1. June 2022

Government and UN sign cooperation agreement



UNEP: Climate Change projects

UN in South Africa
Assists Flood
Victims in KwaZulu-
Natal Province

HIV "Undetectable =
Untransmittable"
Campaign Launches

Empowering
Communities to
Adapt to a changing
climate

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InFocus

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LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

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Message from the Resident Coordinator a.i.



Dr. Ayodele Odusola
UN Resident Coordinator a.i.

Dear colleagues,

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all United Nations staff in South Africa for your continued commitment to implementing the UN reform agenda. Your commitment and dedication in addressing the unique developmental challenges facing South Africa as well as advancing the UN's coordinated and collaborative approach continue to strengthen our efforts.

As the UN family, we can be proud of our commitment to "Delivering as One". This has resulted in the signing between the UN and the Government of South Africa of the new generation "United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2020-2025".

This comprehensive document is our pledge to the Government and the people of South Africa that we will work with them at all levels along with other partners to "ensure that people in South Africa live prosperous and healthy lives in a safe and cohesive society that protects and values environmental sustainability."

In keeping with this principle, we have also developed a Governance Model aligned to the UNSDCF which has been agreed to by the Government. This is a much-lauded achievement for our partnership with the Government. The overarching principle of this model is that it should reinforce UN

reforms at the countrywide level, serving as a mechanism that promotes greater collaboration between the Government, the UN and other national partners. I believe this coordination mechanism is a crucial instrument for strengthening national oversight and accountability mechanisms. Through the implementation of the UNSDCF, we have seen firsthand, the impact the UN has made in improving the lives of South Africans.

Our partnerships with the various departments at the national, provincial and municipal levels and others have not only enabled us to empower communities to adapt to climate change but to advance the implementation of climate adaptation and mitigation strategies (including the installation of off-grid mini wind-turbine in Upper Blinkwater, Chris Hani Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province. Through the

"To the formidable UN team in South Africa, let us continue the work to support the government and people of South Africa as we build back better."

continued support of implementing partners, we have also launched the Education Plus Initiative to expand access to secondary education for young people and to advance adolescent girls' and young women's health, education and rights in sub-Saharan Africa.

Other initiatives included the donation of dignity kits to victims of the KwaZulu-Natal floods and the Girls Fly Programme Africa to promote drone technology skills development among learners with a focus for aviation and space. Additionally, we have implemented several projects across the country to unlock economic value chains and advance economic empowerment through capacity development and entrepreneurship. These include the handing over of automotive equipment to three TVET colleagues (in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and Western Cape)

and the implementation of low-cost internet access to micro, small and medium enterprises in rural areas in the same three provinces and the Free State Province.

In this issue of *InFocus*, you will learn of many other initiatives which also bore testament that the UN family in South Africa is indeed united behind the principle of leaving no one behind.

Finally, I would like to extend my congratulations to the former Resident Coordinator, Ms. Nardos Bekele-Thomas, on her appointment as the first female Chief Executive Officer of the African Union Development Agency (AUDA) – New Partnership for Development (NEPAD). Ms. Bekele-Thomas's leadership and guidance over the last four years have made it possible for the UN to stand up and be counted amongst those who contributed to building back better and rise to the occasion in times of crises.

More recently, she has challenged the UN family to rally behind the Government in addressing the impacts of the floods in 2017, the COVID-19 pandemic and the unrest that affected communities and businesses in July 2021.

While we at the UN bid a sad farewell to Nardos, we look forward to seeing her energy, passion, creativity and profound sense of justice for the greater good displayed at AUDA-NEPAD. We thank her for living up to the full promise, potential and hope of the UN and for the meaningful contribution she has made not only to the UN system but to the developmental landscape of South Africa.

To the formidable UN team in South Africa, let us continue the work to support the Government and people of South Africa as we build back better.

With my deepest gratitude, respect and best wishes to you all. 🌍

Yours sincerely,
Ayodele Odusola



United Nations assists victims of the KwaZulu-Natal floods

By: Zeenat Abdool



Site of the damage caused by floods in KwaZulu-Natal Province

“Shattered, yaaah hey,” sighs the taxi driver who picks me up from the Durban airport, as he expresses the emotional turmoil residents of KwaZulu-Natal suffered following the devastating floods that besieged the province in early April this year.

Bheka, 52, says he has never experienced flooding of this nature before. Born and raised in the province in Kwamashu suburb, where he has lived and worked all his life, he described the fear and anxiety he felt during the three-day non-stop rainfall.

“My wife and I were so frightened, we heard loud noises. We could literally see homes being destroyed from our window,” says Bheka.

“We weren’t even sure what to do, should we stay or should we leave and if we leave, where must we go because the rain wouldn’t stop and the roads were flooded. Sometimes we saw fallen trees laying on the street. It was absolutely frightening.”

As he describes his experience, it is evident from his facial expressions that in addition to the physical destruction the province suffered, there is emotional trauma that needs to be dealt with too.

I’m part of the technical team from the United Nations in South Africa that is in the province to assess the damage to infrastructure and the needs of the local communities in the aftermath of the floods. Discussions were underway before the visit to identify funds to be used for humanitarian assistance in the province.

On the last day of our visit, through the Media in Education and Training organization, I travel to Dr. Macken Mistry

Primary School in Sea Cow Lake. The images before my eyes left me speechless. Apart from a brick structure that once resembled classrooms and offices, it is difficult to feel anything other than shock, bewilderment and sadness following a walk through the school.

Textbooks, extra workbooks and stationery for the entire school for the remainder of the year have been destroyed, including computers and printing machines. Sensory-motor materials for the students in the Early Childhood Development phase had been destroyed beyond repair.

Desks are beginning to rot after swelling from water damage. Ironically, the school had just reopened this year following closure from the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. The principal, the teachers and their assistants have joined the cleaning staff to clean up the school and remove all the debris as a strong stench permeates the air.

“We knew we were to expect heavy rains,” says the school principal, Pompey Sukool, adding, “On that Friday, we sent the kids home early. We told them to leave their books at school thinking it would be safer as many live in the surrounding informal settlements. “I instructed the teachers to put the students’ bags and books on their desks so that nothing would be on the floor in case water seeped in.”

“I never anticipated that the flood of water would be so high that the desks would be floating in the classrooms or that the doors of the classrooms would swell to such an extent that we had to break the doors down in order to get into the classrooms.” says Mr. Sukool.

“Our security guard almost lost his life. We found him sitting on the roof the next morning,” he adds as he introduces me to the security guard, Michael, who lives at the school. Michael sustained injuries to his knees and his back trying to stay safe.

According to Michael, “The water got onto me and I had to protect myself by climbing onto the roof to keep myself safe. I stayed there from 10 at night until 6 the next morning.

I was very afraid because there was lots of water, and I was scared that anything could happen to me because the water was already reaching past my knees and the rain wouldn’t stop.

I got hurt on my knees and back but I’m glad to be ok because I was very, very scared.” Ms. Meghu, a grade one teacher at the school said that water boats were unable to reach the school to rescue Michael. There were tears from many of the teachers as we walk around the school. The school runs a nutrition programme for the students and the recently revamped kitchen with all food products have been destroyed together with ablution facilities and parts of the school hall.

I sit with a group of teachers who describe the image that faced them following the floods. “The school was actually submerged in water,” says a teacher for the intermediate and senior students. “It took us over a week to get rid of the sludge.”

“We were just slipping and sliding initially and we really had to clear up the sludge.” Another teacher added: “We retrieved absolutely nothing, there is nothing that we can use again, everything is gone.” The teachers have tried to use online schooling but the digital divide has proved challenging too.

They explain that these floods could not have come at a worse time, with some saying “this is the worst devastation of them all,” after the pandemic and the looting in the province over the past two years. The teachers express genuine concern over the welfare of their learners, adding that they are worried about what

their students are eating, whether they are ok and what is going to happen to them now following reports of a mudslide in the informal settlement areas. Many of the students are from impoverished homes.

Most of the teachers have been with the school for over a decade, describing the school as a school of excellence.

A quick internet search brings up the many achievements that the school has attained despite the challenges.

Following the trip to assess the needs of the local communities, the acting head or Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in South Africa, Ayodele Odusola, said the UN would provide R21 million (US\$1.3million) of its projects budget to support the Government's efforts in the hardest hit communities. 🌍



A car remains stuck in the ground two months after KZN floods damage

UN SOUTH AFRICA CONTRIBUTES RELIEF FUNDS

Over the coming months, the UN will work directly with Government departments to implement various activities in affected communities. It will also participate in the Provincial Disaster Risk Coordination structures to integrate UN programmes into existing sector plans and to ensure inclusion of its reporting into current structures.

The UN plans to complete all its support within three months and submit a final report to the Provincial Government of KwaZulu-Natal detailing its work. "The floods, compounded by the ongoing socio-economic challenges facing the people of South Africa, is both an opportunity and ultimatum for us all. It is a clear sign that the impact of climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time," said Mr. Odusola.

Premier Sihle Zikalala welcomed the UN support adding the province is "grateful for the commitment by the UN outlined by the Resident Coordinator and thank you for the network that has been established and the resources that you have mobilised to assist us.

This has been a very painful experience and the worst catastrophe we have seen, so the support you have brought is welcomed."

The UN will also work with the eThekweni Municipality to build on existing work with the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs through the District Development Model and KwaZulu-Natal's own Operation Sukuma Sakhe, which aims to accelerate service delivery, assess progress on repairs to infrastructure that was damaged by recent storms and assist in providing humanitarian support to affected communities. 🌍



The Government and UN sign the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF)



UN and Government officials at the UNSDCF signing ceremony

The Government and the United Nations in South Africa formally signed the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) in Pretoria, on 19 April 2022.

The cooperation framework is a document that comprehensively spells out the work of the UN for the period 2020-2025 in the country in cooperation with the Government and other partners.

The ceremony, led by the Minister in the Presidency, Mondli Gungubele; the then Resident Coordinator for the UN in the country, Nardos Bekele-Thomas; and the acting Resident Coordinator, Ayodele Odusola; began with a moment of silence for communities that were affected by the recent floods in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

The UNSDCF was the result of broad consultations among strategic partners that included the private sector, civil society, academia and research institutions, women

and youth. In her remarks at the signing ceremony, Ms. Bekele-Thomas spoke of the need for “coherent and critical results-based programming based on national needs and priorities,” noting that “our dream is becoming a reality today.” Delivering the keynote address, Minister Gungubele emphasized the commitment

of the Government to implement the cooperation framework while highlighting this “truly consultative process that is an integration of global, continental and national goals.”

Following the actual signing of the Framework, Mr. Odusola, emphasized South Africa’s unique relationship with the UN before reminding those present that “effective implementation of the cooperation framework will depend on strong accountability mechanism.”

He further noted that “coherent coordination and collaboration is why it is very important for us to deliver together.” The UN General Assembly considers the UNSDCF as “the most important instrument for planning and implementation of the UN development activities at country level in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”



Minister in the Presidency, Mondli Gungubele and Ayodele Odusola, UN Resident Coordinator a.i. signing the UN cooperation framework

The UN General Assembly considers the UNSDCF as “the most important instrument for planning and implementation of the UN development activities at country level in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”

UNEP-LED CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PROJECT



Mt. Fletcher Dam in Eastern Cape

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in South Africa and its partners, as well as the *InFocus* team, recently visited Eastern, Western and Northern Cape provinces to assess their pilot project on climate change adaptation. The following coverage provides an insight as to how the projects have been received by local communities. 🌍

RAISE THE GAME ▲
FOR CLIMATE ACTION



Using green and grey measures to adapt to climate change

By Zeenat Abdool



Team from Conservation South Africa

"We received a donation from one of the local businesses and this is so great", says Rosie Fortuin with excitement as she leans down to open a black crate. Thanking God, she shows us the donation which includes a three-tool garden kit with a rake, spade and fork, ten packets of seedlings for growing onions, carrots and other vegetables, and two rolls of refuse packets.

To Rosie and her fellow community members in Leliefontein in the Northern Cape province of South Africa, this is a significant and welcomed gesture adding that "now we can plant and give to the poor households and elderly people at the end of the season, yes, tomorrow we will start planting!"

The Northern Cape province has experienced a severe drought over the past seven years. Last year the communities in the province experienced flash flooding. Between the two extremes, the communities are facing water scarcity as well damage to their homes and livelihoods. The province is known for its desert-like conditions as it is home to the Namakwaland area often hot and dry.

However, over the last decade the temperature has soared to temperatures well over 35 degrees thus forcing communities to adapt to even hotter and drier conditions. Through Conservation South Africa, the community has implemented what is termed "green and grey" measures to adapt to the extreme and unpredictable weather patterns.

Following the flood disaster, community members suffered severe losses due to mudslides and the large amounts of water which seeped into their homes destroying their meagre belongings. On climate change, Rosie says that "we thought

climate change was an overseas thing but now we see it here." Community members have since constructed a gabion to mitigate the damage caused by floods.

"We constructed this gabion in order to stop the strength of the water so that it goes slower and slower," says Rosie as she points to a large construction of rocks and stones near the mountain, further explaining that the gabion construction

provides families with time to gather their belongings should the need arise and hopefully prevent the water from reaching and damaging their homes.

Gabions are one of the green and grey measures used by this community to adapt to weather patterns that have recently caused flooding in the area which has led to soil erosion thus affecting agricultural produce. It is termed a green and grey measure as it uses materials from the earth to protect the earth (such as stones and rock material), or the construction is not harmful to the environment and can, in many instances, be beneficial to the environment and the community.

Through the use of this gabion, not only are communities safer from the catastrophic effects of flooding but there is less soil erosion which means less risk of food insecurity for the season. As the Northern Cape is known for its hot and dry weather conditions, the community have constructed other measures to retain as much water as they can during rainfall. They explain that with the flooding, as it was unexpected and they were unprepared, the damage was extensive but they have now constructed another gabion-like feature along a riverbed trail with the aim of collecting water from the rainfall.

This helps to sustain the land, provide water for agricultural and pastoral use as well as provide water to the community. Conservation South Africa, supported by the UN Environment Programme, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment as well as the South African National Biodiversity Institute mentors and provides training to members of the community in climate adaptation among other issues.

Miranda Gardiner, from Conservation South Africa, says that this community is dependent on farming and the environment "has evolved with grazing and the organization aims to assist the community to become climate resilient against the impact of climate change as the community depends mostly on grants and farming is a supplemental income."

Speaking on the impact of climate change, Miranda says that one of the nearby villages were flooded barely one month apart with floods in December last year and January 2022, "something that anyone who lives there can remember ever happening in their lives."

Climate resilience in these communities through the organization involves a healthy ranch and skilled people who have the correct tools with which to build their resilience.

The organization has introduced indigenous genetics and different breeds of livestock such as meat master sheep as they are more resistant to high temperatures, more resistant to disease and the lambs mature earlier to a marketable age and weight and thus spend less time on the ranch.

The organization and the community agree that climate change is here, it's impact is real and that as the climate changes it is forcing them to become more creative and innovative to sustain their communities and their livelihoods. 🌍



A gabion being constructed to prevent erosion

Interview: Dr. Ayanda Sigwela

Dr. Ayanda Sigwela, 52, was the designated Rhodes University focal point for the UNEP-led (EbA) project. He is a former lecturer on zoology at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, he specializes in restoration ecology.

InFocus's Masimba Tafirenyika interviewed him during their mission to Eastern Cape on his role in the project. Here are excerpts from the interview.

What is your specialty and what does it entail?

My research is on restoration ecology. A restoration ecologist is a person who tries to reverse the impact of land degradation and get it back to its original state. It entails the rehabilitation of degraded areas.

For example, it could be the impact of mining on the land or soil erosion. We come up with ideas of how to mitigate it and how to manage the impacts caused by such human activities.

When did you start working on the UNEP pilot project?

We started working with UNEP between 2014 and 2015. The current pilot project was started in 2019, just before the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

What was your role in this project?

I was mainly an on-ground facilitator. Rhodes University was the implementing entity. I was facilitating and coordinating the implementation on behalf of Rhodes University. I also ensured that water reservoir tanks were purchased, delivered, and installed.

Were you working with other people from Rhodes University?

I was the only one from Rhodes for the direct on-ground implementation. But the university contracted another consultant to ensure that gender-specific issues were taken into consideration in implementing the project.

What would you say were the major successes accomplished while working on this project?

Firstly, the major success was having a collaborative cooperative governance platform, whereby different NGOs, government entities, institutions, and nature conservation agencies could come under one roof with a common agenda for ecosystem-based adaptation.

Some departments and most government offices work in silos, hence this platform was a huge success because of the forged collaboration between different entities. The municipal support unit of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment in the Joe Gqabi District Municipality offered itself as the secretariat for this collaborative platform. The secretariat will see to it that this platform functions even after the completion of the UNEP project. Secondly, most municipalities see themselves as service providers to communities. They do not usually get involved in anything that is not linked to water, electricity or houses and roads.

A huge stride was achieved when ecosystems adaptation was embedded in the municipal policy framework, which is the integrated developmental plan (IDP). Now IDP speaks to ecosystems-based adaptation issues.

Thirdly, respect to communities is important. There is truth that communities do not support projects that don't benefit them financially. This pilot project provided water reservoirs to communities that had no access to clean water and proper infrastructure, where women and mothers were no longer going to walk miles to source water for their families.



Dr. Ayanda Sigwela worked on the UNEP-run adaptation project

We all know that in any human undertaking, there are always challenges encountered along the way. What would you consider the main challenges you faced?

The biggest major challenge we faced was with municipalities. As part of the ground activities, we were hoping that water pipes would have been connected to ensure water supply is delivered to communities. But nothing has been done even today.

This is a huge stress factor for me because I am not sure how to persuade the municipalities to ensure delivery. I believe that I have done all that I could. I communicated with higher officials and on-the-ground officials, but things are just not getting done.

Another challenge is the reference I made to the fact that communities do not engage in anything if there are no tangible benefits like money.

Even though the tanks were to supply water to seedlings in their grounds, the communities always asked if they would be paid in due course. There is seemingly an attitude that whatever is being done even for their own benefit, they expect to be paid. This is a big problem.

To that effect, in future projects we could do better to include such (and other unforeseen) expenses in the budget. 🌍



Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Interview: Sicelo Pongoma

Sicelo Pongoma is the manager of Joe Gqabi District Municipality Water Treatment Facility in Mt. Fletcher in the Eastern Cape Province where he runs water services. Over the past five years, he has provided technical support and guidance to local municipalities on how to use limited water more efficiently. The water treatment facility is prone to siltation from soil erosion in the catchments where three rivers converge. *InFocus's Masimba Tafirenyika* caught up with Mr. Pongoma at the Mt. Fletcher Dam for a brief interview.

Here are excerpts from the interview:



What is your role here at the water treatment facility?

I am the manager of Water Services Authority responsible for water services compliance and planning.

The interesting part about the work that we do here is that water is needed for everyday requirements: for households, for businesses, for industries, for agriculture and food security.

What would you say are some of the challenges you are facing?

The biggest challenges that we have are the misunderstandings over what water supply and services are, i.e., the governance challenges around different institutions that provide water services to communities, and the fact that each one is linked to the other. We are all servicing the same communities, but we need to integrate how we do that so that no one

institution is found wanting because water covers all the other industries.

Do you provide free water to communities or industries?

For those households that are indigent, i.e., those households that are poorer, we provide them with free water. There is a threshold that says if a household earns less than twice the government grant, they are referred to as indigent. This enables them to get water services for free.

How would you describe your job?

It is fulfilling, and it makes you sleep well at night because you can see you have changed someone's life, or managed to help someone improve the economic status of an area by just giving them access to water. But those who earn more than that must pay for the services. Rural areas also receive water for free.

And what about people in urban areas?

For urban settlements we mainly provide free water for houses. But even in these areas, poor households get their water for free from the municipality. Those who can afford more than the threshold of about two times the government grant, they must pay for the services they get.

The biggest misunderstanding is that at times people don't understand why they are paying for water. It's not the water that they pay for. It is the service that is needed to draw the water from the river. We then pipe it, clean it and pump it to bring it to their houses. That's the service we provide and charge for because there is a cost element involved. 🌍



FLIP THE SCRIPT

Empowering communities to adapt to a changing climate

By Zeenat Abdool

“Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for life” is the Chinese proverb that perhaps best captures the Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) programme, in South Africa.

The three-year programme, developed and managed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), funded by the Government of Flanders, and supported by partners including the South African Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment as well as the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) spans across the Eastern, Northern and Western Cape provinces of the country in the hope of equipping and empowering mostly rural communities and outlying areas to adapt to the changing climate that is having a detrimental impact to their farming and agricultural sustenance.

Our journey with UNEP takes me to the Western Cape Province, to the agricultural town of Phillippi. As we drive through what is now considered a semi-urban area, it is evident that the socio-economic conditions of this area are in stark contrast to the tourist-attractive areas for which Cape Town is usually known.

Due to segregationist policies under apartheid, Phillippi, which is part of the Cape Flats area synonymous for crime and gangsterism, has become densely populated and where it was once known for its agricultural and grazing landscape, only about 10% of that is present today. The informal settlements of Langa, Gugulethu and Khayelitsha respectively are neighbours to the residents of Phillippi where food insecurity, poverty, unemployment and overcrowding are rife. However, it is in the heart of this town from which the Dream Factory operates.

We met with Zipho Chihota, the Programmes Manager at the Dream Factory Foundation on a Wednesday morning where the Emergent Academy training is in full swing. Dream Factory Foundation is an awardee of South African Women Entrepreneurs in Climate Change (SiAWERCCA) which is sponsored by the UN Environment Programme. We take a seat at the back of the room with about 30 young ladies aged between 18 and 25 as they discuss the day’s topical issue of food security and the benefits of a food garden.

Food insecurity is a growing challenge in these communities especially after the COVID-19 pandemic when many lost their jobs and subsequently their livelihoods. The young ladies are trained in English and the local language, predominantly Xhosa, on topics such as cultivating on good, fertile soil, planting seedlings, harvesting their crops and effectively feeding their families.

“It’s not only the youth that benefits from this programme”, says Zipho as she affectionately introduces 66-year-old Mama Cynthia Ndlama. Mama Ndlama had come to speak to the young ladies about her food garden that was started by her husband but is now managed by her 20-year-old granddaughter, Liyema, who graduated from the Emergent Academy programme in 2021. The six-month training programme proved a worthy investment in her time and energy as she learnt valuable skills that she took back home and grew the food garden at the creche that Mama Ndlama runs in the Khayelitsha informal township.

“It’s my vision to look after the children, I am worried about children that are on the street, so I started the creche in a shack. And the roof was leaking, but with fund-raising, we were able to fix it and make my vision come true,” says Mama Ndlama as she relays the story of the inception of the creche.

Mama Ndlama says she had no money at the time, but her husband who worked as a carpenter was able to help her fix the leaking

TARGET 2-1



UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO SAFE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD



“shelter after they received donations from the community to buy zinc roofing. She also describes her now late husband as a man with green fingers. The children were hungry, some of them were on the street all the time. I couldn’t see it so my husband started a small food garden, it helped us so much.” Her granddaughter, Liyema is active in growing and sustaining the food garden which now feeds the 50 young children at the creche but is also used to sustain the creche as Mama Ndlama sells some of the produce to the local community and the money helps to maintain and keep the creche functional.

“I used to plough the garden – ploughing broccoli, carrots and all kinds of vegetables and I raised money from selling the vegetables to build a classroom for the children.” Describing the taste of the vegetables that she ploughs, “Ooh it is wonderful, that food that comes from the garden, it is just wonderful,” adds Mama Ndlama.

Asking her where Liyema is now, Mama Ndlama replies, “Liyema, that one, haibo [no], she is so active. Even now if you go and find her you will see her teaching. She is teaching the young children and the old ladies in the community on how to grow a food garden and feed each other. That one likes to teach, she is a brilliant child.”

“This is the essence of the training at the Emergent Academy, the skills learnt here benefit not only the young ladies and their families but they impart the skills that they learn to benefit their communities,” says Zipho to the team from UNEP and partners.

“The training also lends itself to critical thinking in terms of solutions to some of the challenges that are faced by the community in starting food gardens.

One of these challenges is related to space and some are related to the presence of stray animals who feed on the crops and produce. As the groups brainstorm, some of the solutions include planting the seedlings in buckets or trays as a space saver, while also a means to keep animals at bay as buckets and trays are easy to move and can be kept on high surfaces.

Mama Ndlama adds that she is talking with the local church to obtain land to begin a food garden there as she too does not have enough space to extend her food garden. With the overcrowding and dense population, there is a demand for food but not enough land to cultivate the soil to feed the growing numbers.

From the enthusiasm in the training room to the spark in Mama Ndlama’s eyes as she talks about her food garden, it is evident that the EbA programme is doing exactly what it set out to achieve, empowering communities toward food security. 🌱

Turning waste into a business venture

By Zeenat Abdool

To be climate smart we can Reuse, Reduce and Recycle, right? How about UP-CYCLING too? That's precisely the concept behind the Lilly Loompa business brand, up-cycling materials from waste to create eco-friendly furniture and homeware that is unique and decorative for homes.

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP), together with their implementation partners, the South African Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment and the South African National Biodiversity Institute travelled to Paarl, a small town just outside Cape Town to meet with Lizl Naude, the owner of Lilly Loompa. The visit formed part of the review of the five-year long Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) programme spearheaded by UNEP and funded by the Government of Flanders.

UNIC sat down with Lizl at her shop in Paarl, to gain a better understanding of the up-cycling industry and how she and her husband have managed to turn it into a profitable business venture. The following are excerpts from the interview:



Wooden 'Africa' frame made from upcycled wood

How did Lilly Loompa come into being?

My family and I lost everything a few times and for a decade or so we were trying to get out of the financial troubles and mess. At one stage, I literally went on my hands and knees and prayed to God to give me a solution or an idea and that's how I got the idea of waste. So, since 2014, I have been using waste as a means to generate income for my family as well as for my community.

Where did the name Lilly Loompa come from?

Lilly was my nickname when I was a child and Loompa is part of a character from my favourite book as a child, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl, the Oompa Loompas. When I started my business, I knew I wanted a name that would be fun and creative and also carry longevity.

So Lilly Loompa is part of me, my alter ego. My husband says she is our eldest child and was born in 2004 from the time that I was doing jewelry, before the up-cycling business.



Serving platters made from glass bottles



Lizl Naude, owner of Lilly Loompa

So Lilly Loompa transformed over the years into the up-cycling business that we have today.

What does Lilly Loompa produce?

We mainly focus on creating homeware and it's all made with waste and it is all upcycles. We collect our waste from different places within our area such as Paarl, Wellington and Stellenbosch and then we create usable, functional and beautiful home-ware.

I would also add unique because many of the items that we design and produce are not very common and many of the products are unique to us as we have created them.

We are very proud of our range and we have much more to add to the range, so WATCH THIS SPACE for new things!

What does it mean to up-cycle?

Up-cycling means to take the actual material, manipulate it in such a way that it becomes something different that can be used again.

In other words, you prolong the life of the actual use of the material instead of sending it to the recycling bin and the recycling plant where it gets broken down and could possibly become a bottle again if it is for instance a glass bottle.

In our case, we would take the glass bottle and melt the glass bottle that will become something like a serving platter or a spoon rest.

With the little bit of manipulation, and some cutting maybe, we can create something else. With wood, we can take the wood and make into a shape and combined with a metal tin could actually become a light fixture.

It's about manipulation but also using your creativity and innovation to make something different that can be repurposed and reused.

How has UNEP and their supporting partners helped Lilly Loompa to succeed?

In 2020, I was fortunate to win an award called the South African Women Entrepreneurs in Climate Change (SiAWECCA) and the UN Environment Programme was one of the sponsors of the award and that is how I connected with UNEP. I am very proud and very honoured for the support that they have shown me and continue to assist me as well as all the other sponsors. I know that where I am today is because of that kind of contribution from the sponsors of our business. 🌍

Lilly Loompa can be shopped online at www.lillyloompa.com

Interview: Nikolas Bosscher

By Zeenat Abdool

Nikolas Bosscher is the Deputy General Representative of the Government of Flanders in South Africa. He was part of the mission that traveled to the Cape provinces where the UN Environment Programme, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment as well as the South African National Biodiversity Institute have just completed implementing the Ecosystem-based Adaptation pilot programme in the Eastern, Western and Northern Cape provinces of South Africa. *InFocus's* Zeenat Abdool interviewed the representative on his government's role in the project. Here are excerpts from the interview.

Why is the Government of Flanders interested in funding adaptation initiatives to climate change?

Answer: It's been a really nice mission and we have seen good examples of climate change adaptation. Let me first go back to the question of why the Government of Flanders is investing in climate adaptation. Flanders in South Africa has a country strategy paper. We work on a basis of five-year plans based on which both the governments of South Africa and Flanders decide what will be prioritized and the investments allocated to those priorities.

This EbA programme was decided by both governments and has run from 2017 and will be concluding now in 2022. The reason why climate change adaptation is chosen is because our funding is for official development assistance. This means that these resources are used for development cooperation and when we talk about development cooperation there is a social angle.

The intention is to look at how to help people. At the same time climate change, as you know, is a worldwide challenge which needs to be addressed in South Africa too. The two intentions were combined. When we talk about climate change, we speak of two broad categories: where one is climate change mitigation, which focuses on how we can avoid the emissions of greenhouse gases, and the other is climate change adaptation, which focuses on how we can adapt to climate change in the environment.

Of course, both these components come together if we are able to help people cope with the challenges of climate change.

We are seeing an emphasis on the circular economy. What is it and how does it relate to climate change adaptation?

We saw an example of the circular economy on this visit. We live in a society where production becomes very important as producing goods means that you are generating wealth and income but once these goods are produced and used, what does one do?

Do we just discard it into the environment? We visited one small enterprise [Lily Loompa] which is recycling waste materials. In particular, the entrepreneur we visited was very creative and artistic. She used waste products to create art and that art is being sold.

Firstly, she is generating income for her family and secondly it is reducing waste materials. The circular economy is going to be something in the future that is going to gain economic interest because waste is also a resource. How can we make production more sustainable? How can we recycle waste material to reduce the amount of products that are being discarded into the environment.

We also visited the Dream Factory in Phillipi, in the Western Cape. Tell us about the work that's being done there.

On the first day we visited the Dream Factory, where very engaged young teachers are trying to make youth in the environment much more aware of climate change. They also teach them how to operate in that environment and how they can, for example, create food gardens to increase their food security and be more aware of climate change.

We witnessed how knowledge is being passed on to benefit youth as well as their families and their communities. The youth learn about the importance of the soil, what food to plant and also how to overcome climate challenges relevant to their community.

Speaking on the issue of youth, how do we get youth more involved in the EbA programmes?

Indeed, when we talk about the youth, we are talking about the future of tomorrow. That to have to be included is not a question. Young people need to be made aware of climate change and its consequences for them and how they would need to adapt their lifestyle. I think the way that past generations have lived are not sustainable, we know this, there are examples across the world.

The reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have shown that climate change is here to stay. So, it becomes very important for us to concentrate a lot on youth. First, to create awareness that the climate is changing and this will affect their future and how they want to live their lives.

Secondly, it is also important to create knowledge about mitigation, the production habits the past generations have had cannot be continued as it is destroying the environment. We must equip the youth with knowledge and resources on how to create production systems that are sustainable,



Mr. Nikolas Bosscher, Deputy General Representative of the Government of Flanders in South Africa

how to stop the emissions of greenhouse gases and how to stop the extraction of resources from the earth and only use what we need. The youth must know that we need to stop extracting more than what we need and stop depleting the resources and thus reducing the materials that are discarded as waste.

The youth are facing huge challenges and we must prepare them for this. We need to include them in all aspects, climate change adaptation, awareness, building climate resilience for themselves, their families and their communities and produce in a sustainable way that can still generate an income.

We have seen, on this mission, youth already living through climate change and the need for programmes like this. What happens now as it is near conclusion? Unfortunately, it's an inherent fact that projects have a start date and an end date. The important aspect of project sustainability is that it is embedded.

When we went to Namaqualand and we saw farmers farming, the project helped to ensure that their farming practices are more sustainable and more productive at the same time and they will continue to farm using these practices. Even though the project has ended, the good practices continue and are passed on. We have also travelled with the DFFE. So at their level they can also take up the good practices and institutionalize them in the way they operate. In this way, they will also be training communities about sustainable practices.

We met with the district municipality officials here. They are responsible for drafting an integrated development plan and we talked about how to integrate these practices into that plan. So that is the aspect of project sustainability. I sincerely hope that UNEP would be able to tap into other resources because they are doing very good work which must continue and also scale it up with other implementing partners. 🌍

South Africa leads the successful launch of the Education Plus Initiative

The Department of Basic Education and its partners joined five United Nations agencies in South Africa – UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women – in successfully leading the launch of the Education Plus Initiative in Pretoria early this year.

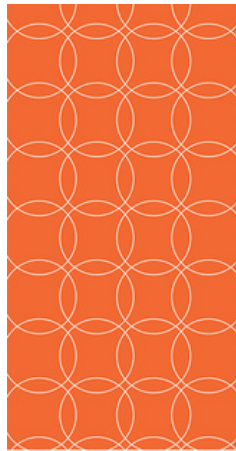
The Education Plus Initiative is a high-level drive to expand access to secondary education for young people and to advance adolescent girls' and young women's health, education and rights in sub-Saharan Africa.

The initiative uses advocacy to secure commitments and investments so that young people can enroll and complete secondary school to improve knowledge, social skills, health and earnings potential.

The initiative is also a rights-based, gender-responsive action agenda to ensure that adolescent girls and young women have equal opportunities to access quality secondary education, alongside key education and health services and support for their economic autonomy and empowerment. This Africa-wide joint advocacy initiative identifies five interventions to which every adolescent girl and young woman should be entitled.

These include completion of quality secondary education; universal access to comprehensive sexuality education; fulfillment of sexual and reproductive health and rights including HIV prevention; freedom from gender-based and sexual violence; and successful school-to-work transitions and young women's economic security and empowerment.

The initiative will build on six pillars of high-level advocacy, strategic partnerships, ensuring young women's leadership, think tanks with researchers and experts, multi-media outreach, and a data hub for advocacy and communication to support decision-makers. In her remarks at the launch, Regina Mhaule, the South Africa's Deputy Minister of Education, called upon all stakeholders to join the ambitious initiative and make it a reality.



THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION,
DR MAKGABO REGINAH MHAULE, MP
CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO THE LAUNCH OF

THE EDUCATION PLUS INITIATIVE

A HIGH-LEVEL DRIVE TO ACCELERATE ACTION AND INVESTMENTS TO EXPAND ACCESS TO SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE AND TO ADVANCE ADOLESCENT GIRLS' AND YOUNG WOMEN'S HEALTH, EDUCATION AND RIGHTS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

DATE: 31 MARCH 2022

TIME: 10H00 – 13H00

VENUE: DBE, 222 STRUBEN STREET, CONFERENCE ROOM B

[CLICK HERE TO RSVP](#)



"On behalf of the Department of Basic Education, I wish to accept the support we are receiving from the UN agencies and further declare our commitment to collaborate and cooperate with you for the greater benefit of the child," she said. The drive to keep girls in secondary education comes in response to many challenges that disproportionately affect young girls in sub-Saharan Africa.

These include alarming numbers of adolescent and young girls affected by HIV-AIDS, unintended pregnancies, gender-based violence and femicide, all of which impact negatively on their further education, well-being, human rights and survival.

Young women between the ages of 15 and 24 are the group most affected by new HIV infections. According to UNAIDS Country Director South Africa Eva Kiwango, "In South Africa, around 200,000 people are infected with HIV every year, including more than 150 new infections daily among adolescent girls and young women aged 15-24 years."

She told the gathering that the Education Plus Initiative recognizes education systems as an entry point for providing knowledge and other resources that adolescents need to become well-rounded adults. The South African Department of Basic Education reckons that 132,000 girls between the ages of 10 and 19 fell pregnant between 2020 and 2021.

According to the department, one in three girls that fall pregnant in the country will not return to school.

"The girl child of South Africa is an extremely challenged human being at home, in the community and religiously through social norms that put them at the bottom of the value chain," said Thembisile Xulu, the Chief Executive of the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC). Ms Xulu welcomed the initiative and pledged the organization's full support and commitment.

"At school, especially in the early grades, is where we have the opportunity to truly shape the mind of a young girl."

[Download brochure](#)

Every adolescent girl in Africa completing secondary school, safe, strong, empowered:

time for
Education Plus



In the spirit of never leaving behind young people in conversations about them, the launch of the Education Plus Initiative was attended by learners from local secondary schools, young people's organizations, including UNFPA's Youth Advisory Panel members, and other youth networks.

The young people also actively participated as respondents following the Deputy Minister's keynote address.

Speaking on behalf of the head of the UN in South Africa, UNICEF Representative Christine Muhigana noted that "the UN system wants all children and young people in South Africa to have equitable access to quality education relevant to a changing society," adding,

"Today we rally political leadership, development partners and communities to fulfill every adolescent girl's rights to education and health by enabling all girls to complete a quality, secondary education in violence-free environments."

Ms. Muhigana called for "universal access to sexual and reproductive health services that are non-judgmental, stigma-free for adolescent girls and young women in all their diversity, including those living with HIV."



The Department of Basic Education officials and UN representatives from UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women at the Education Plus Initiative launch

To achieve the initiative's objectives, partners from the government, civil society and other development partners are expected to work closely with the UN family and other potential donors, including mobilizing investments in education.

Partners will also advocate for policy and legislative reforms to protect the fundamental rights of adolescents and youth, and speed-up the removal of restrictive and gender-discriminatory provisions that undermine the impact of existing investments.

The initiative aims to mobilize coalitions and networks by women, youth and civil society organizations, women and girls living with HIV, teacher and parent associations, and cultural and faith leaders and establish a vibrant platform for adolescent girls and young women to strengthen accountability and ensure the participation of community leaders. 🌍

The importance of Tippy Taps within our communities

By Welcome Mkhize, UNICEF South Africa Volunteer in KwaZulu Natal



Sanitizing to stay safe

Good hand hygiene and proper sanitation go beyond schools and clinics. Edendale, on the outskirts of Pietermaritzburg, has many challenges, including limited access to water and good sanitation. Many households do not have running water and toilets and there are no handwashing facilities in some structures.

Tippy Taps, which are locally made devices to wash hands with running water, play an important role in the community of Edendale as they promote and ensure good hand hygiene. There is a great need for Tippy Taps to be built in the open, for communal use, especially within secured premises such as schools and clinics, as they benefits children and patients in need of handwashing facilities.

Since November 2021, UNICEF Volunteers in KwaZulu-Natal Province visited different schools to get permission from the school principals to build Tippy Taps for their learners on their premises. The principals approved the idea and pledged to support our plans. They realized that the taps would help pupils reduce the chances of getting infected by COVID-19 or other preventable infectious diseases. (continues on page 16...)



Community members using tippy taps to stay safe and healthy

During the same period, we visited medical clinics and discussed our plans to build Tippy Taps within their premises. This idea was also supported by authorities as the Tippy Taps will be highly visible at the entrance to clinics and will help keep the hands of patients and visitors clean as they enter the buildings.

Additionally, UNICEF Volunteers in the Elandskop and KwaCaluza area will provide COVID-19 and vaccine information to patients.

There is clearly an ongoing need to promote handwashing and hygiene amongst learners, patients, and the greater community, so that they can protect themselves against the risks posed by COVID-19. Keeping hands clean should be easy but when there's limited access to handwashing facilities, it's a serious challenge that can impact people's health and wellbeing.

That's why I'm so proud and motivated to contribute to help keep learners and people within my community as safe as possible.

In the coming months, newly recruited volunteers across the province will build more Tippy Taps in their communities, while encouraging and assisting everyone to get vaccinated against COVID-19 by registering them on the Department of Health's vaccine website. 🌍

Join UNICEF's Tippy Tap Challenge



Field demonstration guide

Activating the Tippy Tap Challenge in schools and communities: [Download guide HERE](#)

Eastern Cape Province launches the HIV "Undetectable = Untransmittable" campaign

By Scott Mcquade



Community members, the Eastern Cape Provincial AIDS Council, the Department of Health, the South African National AIDS Council and UNAIDS participated in a U=U march

Hundreds of people living with HIV in Eastern Cape Province are spreading the word that effective treatment can prevent onward transmission of the virus.

Eastern Cape has become the first of nine provinces in South Africa to launch a public information campaign to raise awareness of U = U (undetectable = untransmittable) and to encourage people living with HIV to commence, maintain or resume treatment and achieve and maintain an undetectable viral load.

The innovative campaign celebrates the fact that people living with HIV who receive effective antiretroviral therapy can achieve and maintain viral suppression, which is when their viral load is undetectable using normal testing methods. At this point, extensive trials have proven that they cannot pass HIV to others via sexual activity.

The overall goal of the Eastern Cape campaign is to reduce . As the project in Eastern Cape winds down, five water reservoirs have been constructed, five villagers in six communities trained on how to run them, including 28 municipal officials.

Importantly, the campaign was designed to help Eastern Cape catch up and reach its HIV targets for 2020, under which 73% of all people living with HIV would have achieved viral suppression by 2020. The province reached 58% by 2020. The new global target for viral suppression is 86% by 2025.

The campaign was officially launched with pledges of support from Eastern Cape Premier Oscar Mabuyane, community members and other prominent

stakeholders, including the Eastern Cape Provincial AIDS Council, the Department of Health, the South African National AIDS Council and UNAIDS. The concept of U = U arose from trials in South Africa and elsewhere that found that early antiretroviral treatment of HIV infection can prevent onward transmission.

Campaign leaders hope to inspire similar activities across the country and beyond. "We want this to be a bottom-up approach," said nurse clinician and U = U pioneer Mandisa Dukashe, who first approached the Eastern Cape AIDS Council about the campaign.

"We hope the success in Eastern Cape will inspire other provinces, at the national level and outside South Africa," she said.

Four hundred people living with HIV have been trained as U = U peer educators across South Africa, including 70 in Eastern Cape, who formed the core of the new campaign.

Campaigners are collaborating in a series of groups to ensure that awareness is raised,

communities are mobilized and service providers are trained. The implications of U = U are that people living with HIV need access to treatment as soon as they are diagnosed and to maintain effective treatment to become virally suppressed. This means that people visiting health clinics and receiving a positive HIV test result need quality counselling, said Ms. Dukashe, who is herself living with HIV. "There is not much time spent now with clients when initiating their treatment and they can get lost in the health system."

The concept of U = U arose from trials in South Africa and elsewhere that found that early antiretroviral treatment of HIV infection can prevent onward transmission. However, people can only know whether they are virally suppressed by taking a viral load test. Viral load levels should be monitored regularly to be sure that the HIV medicines are working, and this requires the active involvement of healthcare professionals.

The campaign organizers want healthcare providers to communicate this information to all people living with HIV.



They particularly hope to inform couples' counselling, especially those in serodiscordant relationships, where one partner is living with HIV and the other is HIV-negative.

U = U can not only prevent transmission of HIV to the negative partner, but can also prevent onward transmission to their child if the couple conceives. Significantly, knowledge of U = U can help to reduce stigma about HIV infection and motivate people to start treatment in order to become virally suppressed and continue follow-up care.

Globally, 66% of people living HIV were virally suppressed in 2020, with South Africa estimated to have achieved 61%. Although some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, such as Botswana and Eswatini, did remarkably well and achieved or even exceeded their targets for 2020, many more countries fell way behind.

Over the coming months, the Eastern Cape Province will spread the U = U message across diverse audiences, through social media, radio and print media. Peer educators are working as HIV ambassadors and sharing their stories to inspire others. The campaign will also use billboards, rallies and community dialogues to reach as many people as possible.

"There is clear evidence that U = U messaging works and helps to bring people back to treatment and reduces stigma and discrimination," said UNAIDS Country Director for South Africa, Eva Kiwango.

"Treatment interruption is a persistent issue in South Africa and this campaign helps remind everybody that having an undetectable viral load when you are taking HIV treatment also stops transmission of HIV to others.

"This is critical for populations at higher risk of infection, such as adolescent girls and young women and key populations, including sex workers and gay men and other men who have sex with men."



Community members at the U=U march

Migrants and local women share skills and knowledge on Sewing and Fashion designing



Ms. Jennifer Mwehaki from Rwanda assisting with sewing skills



Participants at the Lamontville sewing and fashion design project.

Through the Migration Multi Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) women from Lamontville township in Durban - KwaZulu Natal Province, came together to share and transfer their skills and knowledge in Sewing and fashion designing. The project is aimed at promoting social inclusion between South Africans and women from other countries who are residing in Lamontville. The project also aims to encourage women to start their small businesses based on the knowledge they share between themselves.

Expanding the use of Conservation Agriculture in South Africa

Conservation agriculture has proved to increase yields and reduce production costs for farmers in Newcastle and Bergville in KwaZulu-Natal Province



Farmer-to-farmer discussions were facilitated, and opportunities for engagement and knowledge sharing between the participants of the excursion were created.

Makhale Ratshilumela, a farmer from Limpopo – after the field tour – is convinced that CA is the farming system of the present and the future. He is determined to adopt CA and share the experience with his neighbors back home.

“I have observed that the crops are looking healthy, the fields don’t have weeds but most importantly, these farmers have seen an increase in yield since adopting CA. I have been encouraged to adopt CA so that our grandchildren and great grandchildren will also benefit,” Makhale said.

Celiwe Mazibuko, a farmer and a young mother from KwaZulu-Natal Province, increased the yield of her soya beans from 1.2 tons to 2.5 tons per hectare using conservation agriculture (CA). The increase meant more profits coming in. She is now able to use some of the money to purchase her own fertilizer spreader and trailer which saves her production costs and time. Furthermore, she can spend more time with her family.

Celiwe’s success story in CA is one of several shared by farmers in Newcastle and Bergville, during the three-day exchange field visit that brought together fellow CA farmers from Limpopo. Farmers in Limpopo are still emerging in terms of adopting CA, whereas KwaZulu-Natal farmers, mostly in the midlands, have advanced in the adoption of the CA approach and its three principles: minimizing soil disturbance (no-tillage), providing permanent soil cover and diversification of plant species.

Creating awareness of CA

The field visit and CA awareness events were facilitated by the South Africa Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development with support from the project “Strengthening Coordination, Scaling up and Governance of Conservation Agriculture in Southern Africa”. The project is being implemented by UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) with financial support from Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad).

Through partnerships, the project has strengthened the operational capacity of the CA platforms by rallying key CA stakeholders in the country. Conservation Agriculture initiatives are coordinated through a National Conservation Task Force.

In South Africa, the project is complimenting the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development CA outreach initiatives, one of which is the provision of CA implements and mechanization to smallholder farmers.

Farmer-to-farmer knowledge exchange

Conservation Agriculture techniques as well as good practices were presented, discussed and documented during the field exchange visit.

Improving food security and livelihoods

Just like Celiwe, Sibusiso Sithole from Bergville, is reaping the benefits of CA. The system was an unknown to him as in his family they were used to farming in a conventional way using tractors and implements. Sithole practices no-tillage principle that has helped him not only to keep the organic matter high in the soil because there is little disturbance to the soil, but also reduce the cost of fuel related to preparing the land for planting and weeding.

“With CA I have minimum use of the tractors because I do not plough the soil. All I do is rip the soil, plant and control weeds, pests, and diseases. I am able to harvest quality produce every time.

I would encourage other farmers to join CA. This kind of farming has helped me to be able to put food on the table for my family and many other families as many employment opportunities in the country especially in rural areas have reduced significantly,” Sithole said.

Why conservation agriculture matters

Conservation Agriculture improves nutrient use efficiency, and stabilizes and protects soil from breaking down. CA principles are universally applicable to all agricultural landscapes and land uses with locally adapted practices. Agriculture is dominated by rain-fed smallholder production systems which offer little resilience to the dynamics of climate change and variability. CA enables soil to retain preserve moisture and make the crop survive better under drought conditions.

Across Southern Africa, it is common to find productivity levels of less than 1 MT/ha for cereal grains like maize. Such productivity levels are not viable and can neither guarantee farming households with either food and nutrition security or income from sale of surplus produce.

CA partners in Southern African countries have over the years generated CA knowledge that can be shared across the region in order to increase acceptance by farmers. 🌱



Op-Ed: Africa's new harvest - sustainable development by innovation for transformation

By Qu Dongyu

A promising transformation has already started in Africa's farmlands. Family farmers are increasingly using innovative approaches and scientific research, combined with traditional knowledge, to increase the productivity of their fields, diversify their crops, boost their nutrition and build climate resilience.

This shift can go much further with the addition of digital tools, increased links to markets and greater efficiency along agrifood chains, especially if the private sector and national policies also support this shift.

This is the African continent that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is working to promote, together with a broad range of partners, to make Africa's agrifood systems more efficient, more inclusive, more resilient and more sustainable. For this transformation to be achieved, African countries must be in the driver's seat.

From 11 to 14 April 2022, more than 50 African countries will come together at the 32nd Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, to define regional priorities for agrifood systems transformation on the Continent. The Regional Conference comes at a time when 281 million people in Africa do not have enough food to eat each day, nearly three-quarters of the African population cannot afford nutritious food, and drought threatens lives and livelihoods in the Horn of Africa. All this as countries continue to grapple with the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Like the tall ceiba tree on Equatorial Guinea's national flag, which grows around the island of Malabo, we too must stand tall in the face of Africa's many simultaneous and overlapping challenges. The four-day high-level meeting will be held in the same venue where leaders of the African Union member countries committed to transform the African agriculture sector and end hunger in Africa by 2025. Time is running out. Without extraordinary efforts by every African country, it will be difficult to meet these aspirations and the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals

Digitalization and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) can be game changers in this extraordinary effort. At FAO, we see digitalization as a core element of rural development. Our 1000 Digital Villages initiative is currently being piloted in seven African countries, and it aims to equip communities with digital tools and services to fast-track rural transformation and wellbeing. Through this initiative, FAO has already supported countries in using digital tools to create electronic land registries, and apps for pest and disease management, including extension services reaching last mile farmers.

In the same way, the AfCFTA can radically transform Africa's rural prosperity. This regional single market, covering 1.2 billion consumers, is a major opportunity to boost economic growth, reduce poverty, and broaden economic inclusion. Swift national implementation, taking into account women and youth, will see this opportunity benefit all.

Indeed, African countries already have a suite of instruments in their hands to speed up transformation of agrifood systems and rural development. Chief among them is the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) – the continent-wide initiative led by African countries to end hunger and reduce poverty through agricultural development.

I welcome the African countries' recent renewed commitment to accelerate CAADP implementation towards achieving the Malabo commitments. FAO stands ready to support this effort, including on strengthening the quality of data used to measure progress as part of the CAADP biennial review.



QU Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Other existing instruments to accelerate progress include the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), which provides a common framework for African stakeholders to build integrated infrastructure to boost trade and jobs; the African Union Climate Change Strategy that aims at achieving the Agenda 2063 Vision by building the resilience of the African continent to the negative impacts of climate change; the Science Technology Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA), which can have enormous benefits for agriculture; and Boosting Intra African Trade to make trade a development driver.

African ownership and African leadership in all of these is vital.

These issues and more will be at the core of the Regional

Together we can transform Africa's agriculture to achieve "The Africa We Want".

Conference. Roundtables will focus on the policy priorities needed to address and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on African agrifood systems; investing in ecosystem restoration in Africa for agrifood systems transformation; promoting trade and investment under the AfCFTA; and ensuring that women, youth and rural farmers are included in the Continent's agrifood systems.

I invite policy makers, civil society organizations, research institutions, the private sector, donor partners and all stakeholders interested in Africa's transformation by innovation in agriculture to follow the proceedings.

Underpinning the discussions will be the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, which supports the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and sets out our roadmap for achieving the "Four Betters": better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life for all, leaving no one behind.

Central to delivering on these objectives are FAO's flagship initiatives such as the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, which identifies gaps in rural transformation and matches countries with partners to deliver tangible results. It is supported by a geospatial data platform powered by FAO's wealth of data on key sectors. So far, 27 African countries have joined this global initiative, and I encourage more countries in Africa to take part and benefit from this unique opportunity.

FAO has also recently launched the One Country One Priority Product initiative in Africa to support countries to develop sustainable value chains and reach new markets.

Our new Green Cities Initiative is underway in several African cities, which integrates urban forestry and agriculture into local planning. This makes for more sustainable cities and shorter routes for nutritious foods to reach markets. All of these initiatives are country-driven and country-owned, highlighting that action at country level is critical. 🌍



Interview: Songezo Mhambi, a beneficiary of UNDP small business initiative



WITH SONGEZO MHAMBI
CEO OF MDANTSANE MOBILE

MDANTSANE MOBILE IS A BENEFICIARY OF THE UNDP-CSIR SMME SUPPORT PROJECT TO PROVIDE LOW-COST INTERNET IN TOWNSHIP AND RURAL COMMUNITIES.



The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), together with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), is supporting small medium and micro-sized enterprises to roll out the TV White Spaces network technology in rural areas under the project, "Support to SMMEs to Provide Low-Cost Internet in Township and Rural Communities."

The TV White Spaces (TVWS) takes advantage of idle or unused spectrum between TV broadcast bands that can then be used to provide broadband without interference to broadcasters. Through this initiative, the SMMEs are providing affordable digital connectivity via Wi-Fi hotspots to individuals, schools, clinics, taxi ranks, digital hubs, and other public facilities in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern and Western Cape, and the Free State.

This initiative forms part of UNDP's ongoing efforts to advance inclusive growth through entrepreneurship and youth development programmes and extend connectivity to remote areas and vulnerable populations.

The approach addresses the digital divide that prevents societies from harnessing the full benefits that information and communication technologies (ICTs) can deliver.

To date – through the project – 100 public Wi-Fi hot spots have been erected, 43 jobs created, 37 public facilities, 470 households and 56 small businesses connected. It also gives access to 4,640 daily concurrent users in public hot spots. Songezo Mhambi, the chief executive officer of Mdantsane Mobile, is one of the ten benefitting SMMEs of the UNDP-CSIR initiative.

His company, established in 2019 as a community Wi-Fi network operating from his grandmother's backroom selling handwritten Wi-Fi vouchers to neighbours, is already serving the community in Mdantsane, Eastern Cape. Songezo shared his success story as a young entrepreneur thriving in rural Mdantsane.

Please tell us why you are in this business?

I'm not only concerned with just Mdantsane or South Africa being left behind in development, but the entire African continent missing out on yet another industrial revolution as we've done in the first three revolutions. I believe the 4th industrial revolution should be Africa's opportunity to showcase that we have the will and the ability to also play a leading role in the world.

Why do you think it's important for citizens in townships and villages to have access to reliable internet? What are the current challenges and how is Mdantsane Mobile filling the gap?

These are the citizens who are normally deprived of accessing several resources, including exposure to valuable information. That is why internet access is vital for citizens in remote areas to give them access to all the critical information at their fingertips. As municipalities continue to adopt digitization, residents will begin to manage all their municipal services online, including library material and other things. Even E-commerce is gaining prominence, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic.

This access and relative opportunities should not only be exclusive to citizens living in urban areas. If citizens in rural areas and townships are able to access affordable internet, they are likely to benefit way more from doing most day-to-day tasks and running errands virtually online.

What kind of support did you receive from UNDP-CSIR?

Through the UNDP-CSIR intervention, we were provided with 15 high-performance outdoor Wi-Fi client stations/hotspots equipment. Included was 12 months' worth of operating capital support for the project.

The CSIR also holds some training seminars to assist all participating SMMEs around the areas of business management and technical training around TV White Space technology. *(continues on page 22...)*

How has your business grown since the introduction to UNDP/CSIR?

The 15 hotspots add to the already existing public Wi-Fi network we had been building.

They have expanded the public Wi-Fi coverage three times. This means we can reach more subscribers in Mdantsane. This is critical as 70% of Mdantsane's almost 200,000 residents have been found to not have adequate access to the internet in the 2011 census report.

Do you think this model is sustainable for your community? With most townships and villages populated with citizens who live below the poverty line, can they afford it?

Yes, it is highly sustainable. We cater for a wide range of subscribers. We have prepaid subscribers who make use of our Wi-Fi vouchers which retail from as little as R25 for 1,5GB and R100 for 10GB. Prepaid subscribers can also share data with friends by linking more devices to connect from the same voucher.

We also have our fixed home Wi-Fi which starts at R499 per month for 10 MBPS uncapped internet. Households pay a once-off installation fee of R999 to be activated and have an internet outdoor dish and indoor Wi-Fi router installed in their home. Other Internet Service Providers (ISPs) charge more than R2,000 for the installation fee of fixed wireless internet and R999 for 10 MBPS uncapped internet per month.

How do you see the internet penetration transforming your community? Any examples of impact?

Schools in the area have been struggling with connectivity for years because of the lack of telephone systems. The internet also presents an opportunity to move the schools'

administration to VoIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) which requires reliable internet access for the telephone to work. Residents will have more, faster access to valuable information and the ability to search and apply for employment online.

Municipal services are beginning to move online with residents being able and encouraged to attend to their municipal account affairs electronically. School pupils are also adopting e-learning along with their educators and, internet access is vital to ensure this digital transition runs smoothly so Mdantsane and other townships don't get left behind in the 4th industrial revolution.

How many people do you employ and how many of them are women?

I employ a total of nine staff members, five of whom are women.

What are your plans for the future?

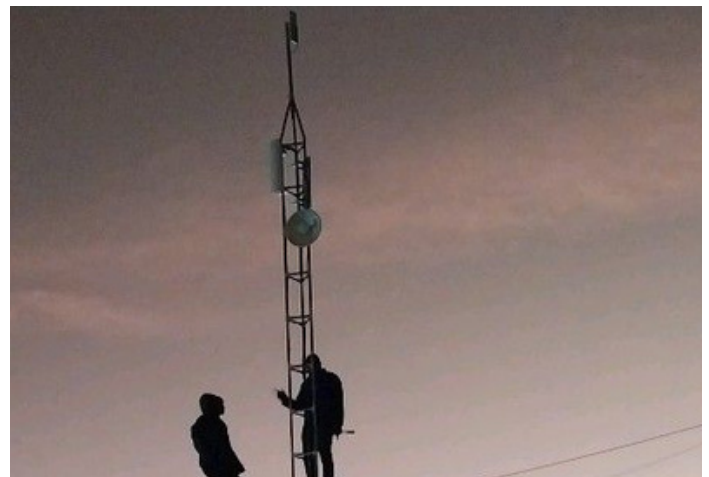
We are looking to expand to the rest of the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality while deploying small network cells in other provinces to begin building our national footprint. We are also looking to establish our presence in all major data centers in the next few months from Johannesburg to Durban and Cape Town. This should help us to begin peering with other ISPs and content providers who are co-locating at the main data centers.

Who are the greatest consumers?

School children are the biggest users of the prepaid voucher service. Families are the biggest users of fixed uncapped Wi-Fi packages. 🌐



TV White Spaces (TVWS) network technology providing Low-Cost Internet



A team inspects the TV White Spaces (TVWS) network technology



UNDP announces seed funding to female entrepreneurs following civil unrests



Celebrating Phenomenal Women - Top 10 Seed Grant Winners



In celebration of International Women's Day observed on 8 March each year, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in South Africa and the 22 ON SLOANE Start-up Incubation Hub, announced the awarding of US\$50,000 (R775,000) seed grant to support 10 female entrepreneurs in Kwa-Zulu Natal and Gauteng provinces.

The entrepreneurs have each received US\$5,000 (R77,500) to help rebuild their businesses which were affected by the 2021 civil unrests that took place in the two provinces.

The funding is targeted at women-owned businesses under the UNDP Youth Entrepreneurship Action Hub: Post COVID-19 Early Recovery Project.

UNDP South Africa initiated the Youth Entrepreneurship Action Hub project in 2020 as part of its several projects to advance youth and women empowerment through entrepreneurship capacity development.

Through this initiative, 20 youth start-ups were through a "Challenge Fund" created to support the development of youth entrepreneurship in 2020.

The main objectives of the fund were to boost innovative approaches that create and expand employment by supporting young entrepreneurs at early or pick-up stage.

The 20 black-owned entrepreneurs, 50% of whom were females, were drawn from Information and Communication Technology services, manufacturing, waste management, agro-processing, renewable energy, education, and primary agriculture.

Over a six-month period, the beneficiaries were trained in business development before receiving the seed grant.

This pre-incubation programme included developing business plans that qualify for funding. UNDP runs several other initiatives to support small business development in the country, with flagship projects such the UNDP-Council

for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Television White Space (TVWS), Network Operator Support Programme,

This empowers SMME's to deliver Wi-Fi hotspots in townships and villages, the UNDP-Branson Centre Food Waste Innovation Challenge, which supports entrepreneurs to come up with ideas on expanding food waste innovative solutions through an intensive market and investor-readiness programme.

Overall, in 2021, UNDP supported 1, 646 entrepreneurs, youth start-ups and small businesses, as well as informal traders in general. 🌍



Inspirational leadership recognized during the UN in South Africa awards

On the side-lines of this year's retreat of the United Nations Country Team held in the port city of Durban, the then head of the UN in South Africa, Nardos Bekele-Thomas, hosted the UN Resident Coordinator's annual awards dinner. The first category of honours was the Special Guests Award, which went to Munyaradzi Chenje, a former regional director with the UN's Development Coordination Office, and Charles Kwenin, a former regional director with the International Organization for Migration, in appreciation of their long and dedicated service to the UN.

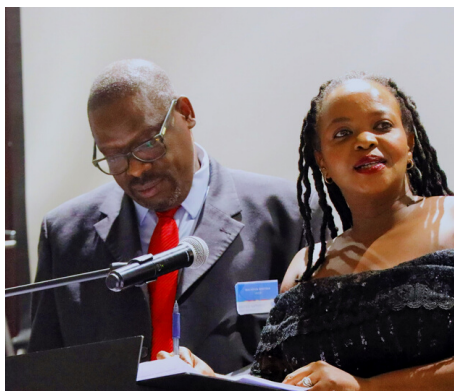
The second category of awards was for UN partners who were recognized for their Commitment and Dedication in assisting to develop and finalize UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), the document that spells out the UN's work in South Africa in collaboration with the government and other partners. The recipients, who were recognized their leadership and coordinating role, were Dr. Kefiloe Masiteng, the Acting Secretary at the National Planning Commission (NPC) and Cedrik Crowley, the Director for Economic Development at the Department for International Relations and Cooperation.

The third category of awards were dedicated to UN staff for displaying inspiring characteristics as they worked to leave no one behind. The awards for staff went to Tebogo Maleka from the UN Industrial and Development Organization (UNIDO), Siyanda Siko (International Labour Organization), Linda Naidoo and Ziyanda Ngoma (UN Population Fund), and Maria Moreriane (IOM)

A special award for the evening was presented to Ms. Bekele-Thomas, the Resident Coordinator, by UNIDO Representative Khaled El Mekwad for her inspirational leadership as the head of the UN in South Africa during her tenure. The Programme Directors for the evening were Ziyanda Ngoma from the UN Population Fund and Buchiyza Mseteka from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. 🌍



Ms. Nardos Bekele-Thomas, former UN Resident Coordinator, South Africa



Ziyanda Ngoma (UNFPA) with fellow Programme Director Buchiyza Mseteka



Linda Naidoo (UNFPA) - Award Winner



Siyanda Siko (ILO) receives award from Ms. Lily Sanya, IOM Chief of Mission



Maria Moreriane (IOM) - Award Winner



Part of the audience at the award ceremony

PHOTO GALLERY

Inspirational Leadership Award Ceremony



Zwakala Covid-19 campaign: Take your shot!

By: Daylin Joseph Paul

An innovative campaign in South Africa is using local solutions in the global fight against COVID-19



An activist for the Zwakala campaign

"We were shocked and I was scared of Covid-19 because many people were dying because of it," says 17-year-old Bafana Chabalala, "I remember my sister had it...so it was bad with my family...we couldn't hold on with this coronavirus."

Bafana was 15 when Covid-19 became a global health crisis and his community of Ivory Park, a township roughly halfway between the cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria in South Africa, was forced into lockdown along with the rest of the world.

Now, two years later, Bafana is contributing towards better managing the pandemic by helping his community get informed about the virus and to get vaccinated, one street at a time. Bafana is a mobiliser in an innovative campaign hitting South African streets called "Zwakala" which calls on young people to get vaccinated and "#takeyourshot" while promoting mask-wearing and social distancing.

A joint partnership between UN Verified, UNICEF, the South African National Department of Health as well as the Community Organizing Working Group and the Community Media Trust, Zwakala is simultaneously an on-the-ground, door-to-door mobilization effort and a multimedia campaign. The word "zwakala" is a colloquial isiZulu expression usually used to

compel a friend or neighbour to "come on over" or "come around" and it's on the ground and in neighbourhoods like Ivory Park that Zwakala's community-centric approach really comes into its own.

On the days before (and on the day of) a pop-up vaccination site being set up, a pick-up truck with an improvised PA system drives around the area, playing "amapiano" – a popular genre of music with young people – and repeatedly interspersing the songs with voice overs

The word "zwakala" is a colloquial isiZulu expression usually used to compel a friend or neighbour to "come on over" or "come around"

announcing the date, time and venue of the upcoming pop-up vaccination site.

The truck is accompanied by mobilisers like Bafana who go up to curious onlookers handing them an information pamphlet, answering their questions and explaining directions to the venue.

These young mobilisers grew up in Ivory Park and are known and trusted more than an outsider might be, and – when it comes to a topic that many people in South Africa and indeed across the world are still

apprehensive about – a friendly and recognizable face makes all the difference or neighbour to "come on over" or "come around" and it's on the ground and in neighbourhoods like Ivory Park that Zwakala's community-centric approach really comes into its own.

On the days before (and on the day of) a pop-up vaccination site being set up, a pick-up truck with an improvised PA system drives around the area, playing "amapiano" – a popular genre of

music with young people – and repeatedly interspersing the songs with voice overs Bafana believes that the campaign has made a difference in his community, especially since it extends vaccination services to those who do not have formal documentation

– which is an added challenge. While there is a perception that undocumented people in Ivory Park are foreign nationals, this is only partly true as many South Africans themselves are not properly documented.

Avoiding an 'us-and-them' distinction that could keep foreign nationals fearful of coming forward due to outbreaks of xenophobic violence, mobilizers call on all to get vaccinated, "whether you have an ID or not".

In addition to being undocumented, many people simply cannot afford to travel the

long distances required to get to a hospital or clinic.

Through partnership with the Gauteng Province's Health Department, the pop-up vaccination partnership sites also provide additional health services with blood pressure checks, screenings and routine childhood immunizations for children who may have missed their shots, "[I] didn't think I would be vaccinated," says Neliswa Mnana, an Ivory Park resident who came to one of the pop-up clinics for her Covid-19 jab together with her 6-month-old son Lwazi, who needed his routine immunizations.

"I always wanted to vaccinate but when I see the distance of going to a clinic, I would just say, 'Nah, I will go tomorrow, I'll go tomorrow.' But when I heard the announcement that we could come to the park and vaccinate,

"I was running to get here and now I'm happy!"

For Bafana, it is stories like Neliswa's that are bringing back hope to Ivory Park and make him proud to be a Zwakala mobilizer.

"I feel safe now because many people have vaccinated now...and I'm the one who told them to come and vaccinate...I'm happy about that", he says. 🌈



Mobilizers are briefed at the beginning of their shift about the objectives for the day as part of the Zwakala campaign



Bafana encourages a passerby in central Ivory Park to visit the pop-up vaccination site to get vaccinated



Mobilizers gather around a truck carrying PA equipment which broadcasts music and messages encouraging passersby to vaccinate at the Swazi Inn shopping centre and transport hub in Ivory Park



Bafana Chabalala poses for a portrait in Riverside Road in Ivory Park

Interview: Ndoni Mcunu, climate activist, scientist and trailblazer

By: Nombulelo Malinga



Ndoni Mcunu, activist for climate change and Founder of Black Women in Science

Ndoni Mcunu, the late Founder of Black Women in Science and advocate for climate change on a global scale was well-versed in the field of science and technology with a special focus on climate change and environmental sustainability.

She was a sterling example of success and beacon of hope to young black women in science. Some of her accolades included being voted as the Gagasi FM SHERO of 2018, listed as one of the Mail & Guardian Top 200 in the education field (2016), being accepted as a 2017 Mandela Washington Fellow and winning the Humanitarian Global Award for the Most Distinguished Women Change Makers in Africa in 2020-2021.

Ms. Mcunu's contribution to science and women empowerment has been globally recognized. She was also a Ph.D. candidate at Wits University focusing on action-oriented climate change research. A few weeks before she passed on, *InFocus's* Nombulelo Malinga sat down with her to find out more about her journey in the field of climate science.

Tell us about your journey as a climate scientist. Why this route?

My journey wasn't necessarily the most straightforward in the climate science space as it's a fairly new field. I started off doing environmental sciences and through my Ph.D. I got into climate science. I believe there is an urgency and a need for us to change the way we behave towards the environment.

There's a diverse voice as well as diverse knowledge when it comes to climate

science, especially in Africa. I believe that as Africans it's important for us to know the impacts of our actions on the environment so we can accurately predict and act swiftly where climate related disasters may occur.

Can you tell us about Black Women in Science and its impact?

Black Women in Science is a registered non-profit organization which I founded as I saw a lack of diversity and inclusion where black, female scientists were concerned. My organization aims to deliver capacity development interventions that target young black women scientists and researchers as well as aid in the workplace integration system once scientists graduate from university.

As much as I believe representation matters, I always remind young scientists that we shouldn't focus too much on the fact that there are not enough of us but rather equip ourselves with the necessary skills to ensure that we drive true impact and change where science is concerned. Now, our core focus fuses the need for scientific and entrepreneurship skills to be maximized.

In climate change communications, we hear a lot about how humans are creating the problem, but we don't often hear about how they are a part of the solution. How can we shift the narrative to spotlight solutions and increase the visibility of people's actions to lower their carbon footprint?

There's definitely a need for an integrated conversation between leaders and scientists. We need to understand the economic impacts of a zero-carbon footprint and environment. We need to have frank conversations on how to manage the associated risks.

A zero-carbon footprint could greatly assist the dire unemployment rate we face in South Africa. We could breed healthier environments and build a better future for the upcoming generations. However, we need to be able to have the logical conversation where we discuss and define what this means for Africa. Something I strongly believe in is that we also need to practice the culture of accountability.

As an African continent, what is our contribution towards carbon emissions and are we holding accountable those who are emitting more than us? We need to focus on accountability and reach agreements with governments to truly see change.

As one of the Top 40 African Leaders in Climate Resilience, how would you advise South African to be prepared for climate

and environmental shocks rather than reacting to them as they happen?

In my opinion, a tangible approach would most definitely see a better disaster management system in the country. This would highlight us not being in a situation where we are reacting to extreme weather events but rather, we are proactive.

This would need better data collection services, access to African data as well and training in technology and techniques that are currently being used on a global scale. Emerging researchers need to be able to detect upcoming climate and environmental shocks that could impact our communities.

One thing that I have been doing recently is expanding my access data in the scientific fields. Although access to this data from an African perspective is limited, it is a starting point and should be expanded for generations to come. Access to the correct data is extremely important as it allows you to predict and create scenarios of likely events that could happen which assist in detecting early warning signs of climate related shocks.

In 2020 you stated that "not enough" was being done for climate reporting in Africa which continues to reflect wrong ground realities. Do you still think this is the case and why?

I do. There is a dire need to increase the available data on climate reporting in Africa. We need to not only change the narrative that not enough is being done in Africa but bring to the forefront exactly what is being done. That is my mission.

With over 10 years of experience, Ms. Mcunu's work in climate change advocacy and leadership in the development of women will live on eternally. We send our deepest condolences to her loved ones since her death in April 2022.



New Flanders-South Africa project on climate change adaptation in industries bearing fruit



Representatives of the Government of Flanders and UNIDO officials

The United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and its partners have officially launched a new project to strengthen the adaptation capacity of industry for a green and resilient economy in South Africa.

Focusing on the agro-processing sector, the objective of the project is to support industry in making its operations more resilient to climate change, avoiding negative impacts on the environment and people, and better preparing for future climate change stresses.

The launch event was attended by various high-level officials, including the Minister-President of Flanders, Mr. Jan Jambon; the Ambassador of Belgium in South Africa, Mr. Didier Vanderhasselt; the Acting Director General of the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic), Ms. Malebo Mabitje-Thompson; the then UNIDO Representative in Southern Africa, Mr. Khaled El Mekwad; the Diplomatic Representative of Flanders in South Africa, Dr. Geraldine Reymentants; and other senior private sector and government representatives of the two countries.

The Government of Flanders has approved funding of 2.4 million Euro (about R40m) for the project, which will address the barriers that are currently hampering the adoption of climate change adaptation measures and technologies in industry and enable the private sector to capitalize on the opportunities to shift towards a green economy. The project is also strongly aligned with South Africa's national priorities and the relevant policy initiatives

and activities such as the National Development Plan, the National Adaptation Plan and the National Climate Change Response Policy.

The project, which will run over three years, consists of three components that will be implemented by UNIDO, in collaboration the National Cleaner Production Centre South Africa (NCPC-SA) and the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA).

The NCPC-SA will be responsible for the component dealing with the application of renewable energy and energy and water use efficiency interventions in pilot enterprises, drawing on the successful implementation of other joint projects with UNIDO, including the multi-award winning South African Industrial Energy Efficiency project and the Global Eco-Industrial Park project.

The impact and benefits of the interventions in the pilot enterprises will be widely showcased and shared to promote broader implementation of and investment in such measures and technologies in industry.

TIA will lead the project component aimed at the acceleration of industrial innovation on climate adaptation, building on the methodology of UNIDO's industry-leading

Global Cleantech Innovation Programme for clean technology entrepreneurs and start-ups with climate mitigation innovations. TIA has been spearheading the implementation of the GCIP in South Africa since 2014. The third component, which will be led by

UNIDO, will focus on strategic partnerships with academia, industry and umbrella organizations to ensure that climate-resilient approaches are sustained and scaled up across the economy.

There will be a strong focus on ensuring the involvement of women in all the project components, and partnerships between Flemish and South African institutions are encouraged.

Speaking at the launch event, Mr. Jambon described the SAIA project as the latest chapter in Flanders and South Africa's rich history of cooperation dating back to the democratic transition in 1994.

"Development cooperation has been an important pillar of our partnership. SAIA represents the beginning of a renewed and strengthened partnership with a focus on innovation, building on past experience linked to a future in which South Africa and Flanders institutions can exchange knowledge to the benefit of both our societies," he said.

Affirming this sentiment, Ms. Malebo Mabitje-Thompson said a green transition has to allow for co-creation and mutual benefit.

"Innovation and collaboration must assist every single country to industrialize in order to take people out of poverty towards a more just world. We believe that by accelerating this transition, SAIA will create job opportunities and innovation in South Africa, by South Africans."

Mr. Nikolas Bosscher, Deputy General Representative of the Flemish government in South Africa, outlined the business case for the project: "Climate change is a global reality that businesses cannot ignore. The transition pathway can be an instrument for companies to realise resilience, improve operational efficiency and attract investment. More and more, the financial sector will look at environmental, social and governance criteria."

"The project will also build partnerships to bring knowledge institutions and the private sector together to create awareness, strengthen capacities and share knowledge of climate change adaptation within the industry, he said.

Mr. El Mekwad said that the project would serve as a platform to catalyse private sector development for both countries, especially with the opening up

of economies following the COVID-19 pandemic. "There is a strong linkage between UNIDO's mandate to promote Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development and the mission of the dtic, namely to make South Africa a more industrial and globally competitive country by encouraging exports, international trade and investment, in addition to industrial development," he explained.

Mr. El Mekwad confirmed that there was still an opportunity for interested parties to get involved in the project. "We are inviting companies, project developers and technology or service providers looking for co-financing or technical assistance to implement a water-energy nexus project in the agro-processing sector in South Africa, to contact us for more information on the application and selection process," he said. 🌍



Taylormade site visit



(L-R) Mr. Onay Geylan, Ms. Karin Reiss Haimbala, Mr. Nikolas Bosscher and Mr. Khaled El Mekwad

Climate-friendly and luxury handbags

By Zeenat Abdool

The 36 year-old Thobekile Mkhize, is the founder and CEO of Mabothis Designs. Hailing from Amanzimtoti in Durban, Thobekile produces designer luxury leather goods with material sourced from local tanneries. A tannery is the place where the skins of animals are processed.

Tanning hide into leather involves a process which permanently alters the protein structure of the skin, making it more durable and less susceptible to decomposition, and coloring.

After leaving the corporate world behind, Thobekile was attending a traditional ceremony honoring her late grandfather and saw an opportunity for a business venture following the discarding of animal skin after traditional slaughtering.

"Ordinarily, the skin is usually just left there to decompose but it brings with it a lot of flies and insects as well as of course a smell. I thought it would be great to turn this into something tangible and fashionable and by taking the skin away, it's also less cumbersome to the community", says Thobekile.

"We source our material from local tanneries, and our biggest target market is women but our anchor product is the ladies handbags – inspired by the cow which comes from my isiZulu heritage and the patterns for the handbags come from and are inspired by the Nguni cow," adds, Thobekile as she emphasizes that keeping traditions alive does not need to come at the expense of the environment.



Thobekile Mkhize, Founder and CEO of Mabothis Designs



Sample handbags by Mabothis Designs

A self-made and skilled entrepreneur, she has taken her fashions and designs across the globe and exhibited at various trade shows. Asked about the impact of the covid pandemic, Thobekile says that "online business has been going well" as her customers are diverse with many located abroad.

Thobekile admits that even though she registered the business in 2013, she only began operating in 2017 due to financial constraints. Through a friend, she learned about the Essence Festival which was hosted in Durban for the first time. She took the limited stock that she had, not realizing that the Festival was an international event. "A lot of my visitors at my stand were tourists from New Orleans.

At the time I didn't know that the Essence Festival was an international event, as it was organised by the eThekweni municipality. My visitors, who were interested in the unique look of my product, were saying it made them feel connected with the continent."

Suffice to say, this was the affirmation that she needed as her stock sold out and following great networking she was more convinced than ever that there was a need to not only preserve her cultural heritage, and sustain the environment but also persevere with her passion and turn into a profitable business. 🌍

Thobekile's designs can be shopped here: <https://mabotho.africa/about/>





5TH GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON THE ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR

DURBAN, 15-20 MAY 2022

Delegates attending the 5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour have agreed to the **Durban Call to Action**, which outlines strong commitments to end child labour.

The concluding document emphasizes the need for urgent action, because “the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, armed conflicts, and food, humanitarian and environmental crises threaten to reverse years of progress against child labour”.

The Durban Call to Action includes commitments in six different areas:

- Make decent work a reality for adults and youth above the minimum age for work by accelerating multi-stakeholder efforts to eliminate child labour, with priority given to the worst forms of child labour.
- End child labour in agriculture.
- Strengthen the prevention and elimination of child labour, including its worst forms, forced labour, modern slavery and trafficking in persons, and the protection of survivors through data-driven and survivor-informed policy and programmatic responses.
- Realize children's right to education and ensuring universal access to free, compulsory, quality, equitable and inclusive education and training.
- Achieving universal access to social protection.
- Increasing financing and international cooperation for the elimination of child labour and forced labour.

More than 1,000 delegates from governments, workers' and employers' organizations, UN agencies, civil society and regional organizations attended the conference in Durban, South Africa. They were joined by another 7,000 online participants.

The event was also attended by child delegates – for the first time in the history of these global child labour conferences – who made clear their expectations that decision-makers should step up their efforts and accelerate progress.

The Durban Call to Action comes as there are just three years left to achieve the goal of eliminating all child labour by 2025 and only eight years to eliminate forced labour by 2030, as outlined in Target 8.7 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The Durban conference, held from 15-20 May, was the first of the global child labour conferences to be held in Africa. The six-day event included more than 40 thematic panels and side events, focusing on a wide variety of issues related to child labour.

The four previous global conferences were held in Buenos Aires (2017), Brasilia (2013), The Hague (2010), and Oslo (1997). The purpose of the meetings has been to assess progress, renew and strengthen commitments, mobilize resources, and establish a strategic direction for the global movement against child labour. 🌍



Cyril Ramaphosa, President of South Africa



Thulas Nxesi, Minister of Employment and Labour of South Africa



Guy Ryder, ILO Director-General



(L-R) Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon, Assistant Director-General & Regional Director ILO Africa, H.E, Senator (Dr.) Chris Nwabueze Ngige, Minister of Labour and Employment Nigeria, and Joni Musabayana, Director, ILO Eastern and Southern Africa

Equipping young people to know, claim and defend their rights

By Otae Mkandawire



Ntethelelo Foundation youth chanting human rights slogan "Amandla"

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Regional Office for Southern Africa (ROSA) closed off its Human Rights Month activities with a visit to the Ntethelelo Foundation early this year.

The Ntethelelo Foundation uses applied drama, interactive techniques and various art methodologies as facilitation tools to encourage dialogue among adolescents. At the foundation's centre in Johannesburg's Alexandra Township, young people also receive tutoring in mathematics and English and counselling sessions.

The foundation's interactive programmes and discussions are designed to engage school-going youth to foster social change, break the chain of gender inequality and poverty, help end violence against women and girls, and empower young people.

Previously the programmes were only open to girls, but in February 2021, boys also joined the sessions and have already taken away important lessons.

"We learnt how to respect women. This has changed me a lot. We learnt about dismantling toxic masculinity for example washing dishes at home and doing other chores", says 14-year-old Tshepang.

Discussions on the day centered on what human rights means to each young person, the significance of Human Rights Day, and

Grace has aspirations to help her family when she grows up.

how the programmes at Ntethelelo have impacted their lives so far. Many of the young people attending say they can see the change in their behaviour since attending the interactive sessions.

Grace, 14, who joined the programme when she was nine years old, says she used to bully other children and was disrespectful to her parents.

"I had a darkness inside of me and that changed and became a light. I am a better person." She now has aspirations to help her family when she is older. "I will make sure that my parents have a better life".

Several young people also pointed out that while everyone should have human rights in their community these rights are often violated, citing lack of access to good education, living in informal structures that are often destroyed during hazardous weather, and rampant gender-based violence.

Following the discussions, two groups performed short plays demonstrating violations of youth rights followed by alternative scenarios where these violations are stopped and young people's rights are

respected and protected. One of the plays depicted young people seeking out sexual and reproductive health services and being denied condoms by healthcare workers due to their age.

"The plays are about how we are treated because of where we come from," says 16-year-old Susan. "We are judged. As a teenager it makes me feel sad because of the treatment they give us, and teenagers become mothers."

OHCHR Regional Representative Abigail Noko, encouraged the youth to continue to stand up for their rights even in the midst of the challenges they face daily and to focus on their studies so that they can access better opportunities. "We are all born free and equal."

"That is the starting place to understand your rights. Know your human rights in order to claim them and defend them," she said.

Following the interactive sessions and plays, Ms. Noko presented a donation of non-perishable food, personal hygiene items and stationery from OHCHR ROSA staff members. 🌈

*First names used to protect identity of minors

STAND UP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

IOM hosts media engagements on migration

By Rencilwe Moningi

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) hosted the Media on Migration in South Africa. The purpose of the engagement was to sensitise them on IOM's work in South Africa, to create a space to better understand migration and the role migration plays in the country's development, to encourage evidence-based reporting on different migration issues and establish a mechanism of ongoing information sharing with the media.

Issues discussed during the engagements included projects that IOM is currently implementing, namely: promotion of social cohesion through sports, arts and culture; promotion of inclusive Covid -19 vaccination in South Africa, migration and disability, sexual reproductive health rights (SRHR)- HIV knows no borders, migration health assessment centre, re-settlements and movements and trafficking in persons. 🌍



The Chief of Mission, Ms. Lily Sanya gives an overview of Migration issues in South Africa

IOM South Africa hosts Multistakeholder Engagement on Cross Border Migration Management



Officials from South Africa and Zimbabwe governments during the Cross Border Multistakeholder Engagement

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), under the African Regional Migration Programme, supported the South Africa-Zimbabwe Beitbridge Cross Border Migration Management Stakeholders Forum in Limpopo Province.

The meeting, which was co-chaired by the South African Department of Home Affairs and Zimbabwean Department of Immigration, discussed migration management issues and explored mutually agreements and beneficial solutions to migration management challenges encountered by the two countries.

IOM South Africa Chief of Mission, Ms. Lily Sanya gave the opening remarks on behalf of IOM. There was a representation of both countries from Department of Social Development, Department of Health, Police Services, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Doctors Without Borders, Save the Children, Consular General of Zimbabwe to South Africa and the local municipalities on both sides of the Beitbridge Border Post.

New faces at the United Nations in South Africa



Aleta Miller is the new MultiCountry Representative for UN Women in South Africa. Prior to this she served as the Representative at UN Women in Afghanistan.

since April 2018 and was the UN Women Representative of the Fiji Multi-Country Office, covering 14 Pacific Island nations. Ms. Miller has extensive experience in women's rights, human rights, refugee rights, public health, and international development, gained through more than 25 years of professional engagement, including with UN Women, UNFPA and UNAIDS, and several NGOs and Governments.

During her professional career, she served in Myanmar, China, Hong Kong, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia, as well as New York, and her native Australia. Ms. Miller is a Clinical Psychologist (Australian registered, non-practicing status) and holds a Masters degree in International Public Health, along with undergraduate degrees in Behavioral Science and in Occupational Health. 🌍



Eva Kiwango is the new UNAIDS Country Director in South Africa. She served for four years in the same capacity in Mozambique and brings over 24 years of

foster civil society engagement and mobilize HIV financing. As such, in partnership with the Government and civil society organizations, Ms. Kiwango contributed to the mobilization of over \$4 billion from PEPFAR and the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria during her tenure.

Ms. Kiwango worked for the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) African Centre for Gender in Ethiopia starting in 2001, providing technical support to Sudan, Seychelles, Uganda, Zambia and the Southern Africa Development Community region.

She also brought her practical multidisciplinary and multi-layered systems -thinking and leadership to guide an expanded UN system-wide HIV response that addresses multiple intersectional inequalities. In line with the peace-development and humanitarian nexus approach, Ms. Kiwango worked with the government, communities, and development partners to strengthen collaboration between the emergency response programming and the HIV response during cyclone Idai and Kenneth and on-going humanitarian crises in Cabo Delgado Province. Before joining UNAIDS,

Ms. Kiwango has also worked in Tanzania for USAID, Danida on rural community development poverty, health and education initiatives, and as a consultant for the Tanzanian Ministry of Health where she contributed to strengthening results-based programming in the National Tuberculosis and Leprosy Programme.

Ms. Kwango has a MSc. in Policy and Planning from the London School of Economics (1995). She is a national of Tanzania and is fluent in English and Kiswahili and proficient in Portuguese. 🌍

experience in policy planning, technical assistance, programme management, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. Since 2004, she has served with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) with postings in South Africa, Switzerland and Mozambique. While in Mozambique, Ms. Kiwango performed multiple roles in supporting national efforts to expand access to HIV prevention and treatment, strengthen human rights advocacy,



As the new Representative of the Regional Office for UNODC in South Africa, **Jane Marie Ongolo**, brings over 25 years of relevant substantive and managerial experience in

Drug Control and Crime Prevention with the African Union Commission (AUC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia since 2018; Programme Manager, AU Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention with the AUC (2010-2018); National Programme Officer (HIV/AIDS) and National Project Officer (Drug Abuse and HIV Prevention) with UNODC ROEA in Nairobi (2005-2010).

Kenya (1998-1999); Programme Coordinator and Chief Executive Officer with Sinaga Women and Child Labour Resource Centre (NGO) in Kenya (1995-1998); and Children's Officer with the Office of the Vice President and Ministry of Home Affairs and National Heritage, Department of Child in Kenya (1991-1995).

She also served as the Regional Governance Advisor for East and Central Africa with the British Council in Kenya (2003-2005); National Programme Manager with the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Kenya (1999-2003); Development Officer, DFID Civil Society Umbrella Project with the British Council in

Ms. Ongolo holds a doctorate in Business & Administration from the Bulacan State University and a Master's degree in Development Studies from the Erasmus University in Rotterdam.

She is fluent in English and has a basic knowledge of French. 🌍

international positions including work at the continental level with the African Union Commission. During her career, she has served in various capacities. These include as head of social welfare, vulnerable groups,



Levy Maduse is currently the Acting Representative for the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in South Africa. He has been with the UNIDO Regional Office in Pretoria as a National Programme Officer (NPO) since 2010. The Regional Office covers 10 countries in SADC. Prior to this appointment he was a management Consultant at Fevertree Consulting.

He also worked for a number of years at Eskom, the national energy provider, initially as a Senior Environmental Advisor and later as a Business Consultant. Mr. Maduse has a number of qualifications, including MBA from Hamburg University of Technology-TUHH (Germany), MPA from Harvard Kennedy School (USA), M.Sc. from University of Witwatersrand, and BA (hons) from McMaster University (Canada). 🌍



Preeta Law is currently the Representative for the South Africa Multi-Country Office UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), covering South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Comoros and the Seychelles. Prior to arriving in South Africa, she served as Special Adviser in the Division of International Protection at UNHCR

Headquarters for projects linked to the 70th anniversary of the 1951 Convention, including UNHCR's flagship publication, "People Forced to Flee – History, Change and Challenge (2020-current)". She has served in UNHCR for close to 25 years.

Prior to this, Ms. Law held Deputy Director (2015-2019) and Senior Protection Coordinator for Field Support (2012- 2014) positions in the Division of International Protection in Geneva. Her headquarters positions have also included Special Assistant to UNHCR's Deputy High Commissioner (2004-2010). Ms. Law was also Deputy Representative in Myanmar (2010-12); Regional Resettlement

Officer in Kenya (2000-2003); Resettlement Officer in the former Yugoslavia (1998-2000); and Durable Solutions Officer in Hong Kong (1996-1997).

Prior to joining UNHCR, Ms. Law began her career in women in development in India consulting for the ILO on rural women's employment (1985-87) and as project coordinator for a national women's rights organization (1987-88).

Ms. Law holds a Bachelors degree in political science and anthropology from Sarah Lawrence College in the United States. 🌍



Meseret Teklemariam Zemedkun is the new Head of the UN Environment (UNEP) office in South Africa. She has over 25 years of professional experience in Earth and

Africa Rift Geothermal Development Facility Programme. Throughout her career at UNEP Africa Office, she managed the implementation of major projects in several countries, including South Africa and other SADC countries. These include Clean Captives installations for industrial clients in sub-Saharan Africa, Energy Access and Green Transition Programme and Women Entrepreneurs and Sustainable Energy in Africa.

African Geothermal Center for Excellence, a training institution for African countries. Dr. Zemedkun has played a leading role in the initiative and development of programmes for support to Women Entrepreneurs in Energy sector in Africa. Dr. Zemedkun has been a regular faculty member of UN University- Geothermal Training Programme in Iceland for many years and has been training geothermal staff in Africa as invited faculty.

Natural Science, Energy Management and Project Management. Her career began in Ethiopia culminating in becoming Head of Department in GSE (Ministry of Mines and Energy) managing hydrogeology, engineering geology, geothermal divisions. She is internationally recognized and acclaimed professional with experience in renewable energy programme management including geothermal energy exploration and development in Africa.

Dr. Zemedkun has also been closely involved in different regional and international assignments of the ICS-UNIDO and the African Union Commission (AUC) including in designing the AUC-KfW Geothermal Risk Mitigation Facility for East African Countries. As a regional energy programme coordinator she has been involved with development of regional documents on renewable energy.

In 2009, she served as editor of IPCC Panel of sub-section Renewable sources, Climate Change Mitigation: Geothermal Energy.

She was also Programme Manager for

She has also been instrumental in conceptualizing and making possible the

Dr. Zemedkun holds a Ph.D in Earth Science and Geothermics and is a recipient of many international professional awards. She has authored more than 20 professional papers some earned international awards. Prior to that, she was the Officer in Charge as a head of UNEP South Africa. 🌍



Tlangelani Shilubane is currently serving as the UN Population Fund South Africa Country Office Assistant Representative and Officer-in-Charge. Prior to this she had been with the UNFPA, East and Southern Africa Regional Office in Johannesburg, as a regional programme coordinator.

In addition, Ms. Shilubane has more than 15 years' of experience working in South Africa in the National Department of Health as well as within civil society to advance the health and rights of women and young people for sustainable development. 🌍



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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