



MESSAGE FROM MS. NARDOS BEKELE-THOMAS RESIDENT COORDINATOR



Dear Colleagues,

2019 has been a busy, yet exciting year for the UN family in South Africa. As we complete our first year of the reform, we heed the lessons from the challenges and opportunities and look forward to strengthening our work as one UN family in 2020. The reform process required the UN to revise its country planning framework and consequentially devised new United Nations Strategic Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) guidelines in May. As the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in the country, we had to quickly internalise these and swiftly move toward applying them as we develop our UNSDCF. We are proud of being one of the countries to use the latest guidelines to develop a new-generation Cooperation Framework. The past couple of months have seen our team busy at work with Government and non-government stakeholders defining the UN's contribution to national development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We are grateful to our government partners for taking the lead in convening the Strategic Planning Retreat (SPR) in December 2019, and our focus for 2020 will be to finalise the UNSDCF.

In 2019, we undertook numerous other activities, including programmes targeted at improving the well-being of our staff. The year was marred by the violent xenophobic attacks against foreign nationals as well as the regular flooding that occurred in various parts of the country. The xenophobic attacks thrust South Africa into the spotlight with much of the world's media focussing on these events. This painful period highlighted some the fault lines of South Africa's story. The work of the UN in the country has been focused on finding both immediate and longer term solutions to this national problem. Our UNCT has spent a considerable amount of time engaging with communities and key national stakeholders on this issue.

Our region, Southern Africa, has been affected by major floods over the course of 2019 and South Africa has not been spared. The effects of these floods have been most severely felt by poor communities. The UN has worked closely with the local governments of eThekweni and Port St Johns to provide emergency relief to communities that were devastated by floods in April. In December, the UN provided support to communities affected by flooding in the township of Mamelodi, Pretoria. The flooding disasters are becoming a much more frequent occurrence, which requires the UNCTs in the region to find ways of working closer together to respond to climate change and its effects. In this regard, we must be the catalyst that brings our respective governments in the region together in finding solutions. As the effects of climate change become more acute, this area of our work will become even more urgent and important. This communication highlights just a few of the key events and programmes undertaken in 2019, and is by no means exhaustive.

I would like to thank all our national, regional and global partners for the support provided to the UN in South Africa. Most of all, I want to convey my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to our UN team in South Africa. Thank you for your outstanding work and commitment to the various cause. I wish you every success and happiness for the new decade.



UN in South Africa Country Team had an opportunity to engage with Dr. Winnie Byanyima, UNAIDS Executive Director on strategic directions of the UN's joint work in addressing HIV in South Africa.

STRATEGIC CONSULTATION PROCESSES



UN-Media engagement to promote awareness on the SDGs in South Africa

In April, a Roundtable Media Breakfast meeting was held with editors and senior journalists from various media agencies to discuss mechanisms on how best media can promote and improve coverage of developmental issues in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within South Africa. Ms. Mahlatse Mahlase, chairperson of the South African National Editors Forum (SANEF) called on the UN to be more proactive and creative in promoting its work but most importantly, to be more responsive to the needs of communities. She further affirmed media's commitment to continue telling South African stories. It was agreed that using the solution-based media reporting approach that focuses on the responses of social issues as well as addressing the problems, was best suited to present people with factual and comprehensive information that drives effective public

UN Workshop on UN Reform and new UN Strategic Development Cooperation framework (UNSDCF) 2020-2025

- UNCT convened this workshop with programme staff of the UN in the country to consider elements of the Theory of Change for the new Strategic Cooperation Framework for contribution to the internal alignment of the organization on what could constitute our joint priorities and results in support of the Government of South Africa new five -year National Development Implementation Plan over the next five years. It was agreed that internalizing the new UNSDCF guidelines for strengthening collaboration across agencies and facilitation of joint thinking action and working together was critical in moving forward.

UN engages Civil Society on UN Strategic Development Cooperation Framework

September – The UN hosted a consultative meeting with Civil Society Organisations (CSO) to strengthen partnerships between the UN and civil society. The key objective of the consultation was to map out new strategies to aid in the implementation process of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and ensure that CSO input is well documented for actioning in the UNSDCF. Like the South African government, civil society is one of the relevant stakeholders that the UN collaborates with to implement of projects and campaigns to drive development in the country. In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and yield better results, the UN is working on strengthening its relationship with civil society.



Youth consultation on the UN Strategic Development Cooperation Framework

August - UN in South Africa, under the leadership of UNFPA, hosted a Youth Consultation Workshop on the United Nations Strategic Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) with the Theme: “Nothing for Us, Without Us”, as part of International Youth Day activities. The objective of the consultation was to mobilize support from various partners and UN agencies on how best to work with the youth towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The UNSDCF provides the basis of the United Nations systems work in South Africa, with particular focus on priorities outlined in the National Development Plan (NDP). The Youth performed theatrical drama skit demonstrating young people's interpretation of the work of the UN centered on development, conflict resolution, humanitarian work and poverty alleviation. The youth called on the UN to improve engagement with young people and create opportunities for youth and urgent actions to address the needs of people living with disabilities.

Consultation with Private Sector on UN Strategic Development Cooperation Framework

September – This consultation process was an opportunity to discuss the role of private sector towards sustainable development in South Africa, a country faced with triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment. The private sector can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs and the socio-economic development to further promote national priorities. Each SDG presents business opportunities. Overcoming inequality is in the interest of business as the success of business depends on the success of the broader society. The UN and private sector must seize the opportunity to leverage each other's expertise and financial investment for sustainable development and growth.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESSES

Common Country Analysis Peer Review

The UN Country Team facilitated the Common Country Analysis Peer Review process to underpin opportunities and challenges, issues of sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, peace and security, and humanitarian perspectives.

Keeping in mind the importance of the “Leave No One Behind” approach for the attainment of Agenda 2030, the discussions focused on the following;

- ◆ Localising the SDG’s
- ◆ Towards a Developmental State
- ◆ Restructuring the Economy
- ◆ Social Cohesion
- ◆ Policy Evolution and Implementation



PRE-Strategic Prioritisation Workshop on the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF)

UNCT hosted a Pre-Strategic Prioritisation (Pre-SPR) workshop to plan for the development of the UNSDCF 2020 – 2025 with national stakeholders. The key objectives of this consultation were to prepare for the SPR session with Government and agree on the design and facilitation approach, review outcomes of the various sector consultations and taking into account the current gaps, challenges and opportunities for the UN system in South Africa.

Strengthening results-based planning for the UN SPR engagement team and alignment of emerging priorities for the UN’s contribution to national development priorities and SDGs were critical points in this process.



SPR United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and Strategic Prioritisation Retreat

The retreat provided an opportunity to the UNCT and Government of South Africa to discuss both long and medium-term priorities aligned with the Medium-Term Strategic Framework agreed by the Cabinet.

The main objectives of the process was to identify the strategic priority areas for collective action and the strategic shifts that will form the core of the 2020-25 UNSDCF for South Africa and ensure alignment of the UN vision with the South African Governments vision and priorities



UN ATTENDS THE LAUNCH OF 2019 WOMEN'S MONTH SOUTH AFRICA

The United Nations Women South Africa Multi-Country Office, in collaboration with the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, launched the 2019 Women's Month Programme at an event held in Pretoria at the Sheraton Hotel on 31 July under the theme: "25 Years of Democracy: Growing South Africa Together for Women's Emancipation".

It was highlighted that, the lack of support to people living with disabilities is one of the urgent issues that needs urgent action, and all government departments should have results-driven programmes that are impactful and responsive towards women's needs and participation.



UN working with government to make gender equality a reality by 2030

The UN has supported the **National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security** to address these challenges and ensure that women participate and lead in peace-building. The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda aspires to peaceful, just and inclusive societies to underpin sustained development.

WOMEN IN UN DIALOGUE

As part of the #16DayOfActivism, women in the UN in South Africa held a dialogue to foster a culture that supports women and to work collectively in bringing about changes across all UN agencies.

In South Africa, forms of insecurity threaten women and girls daily, including sexual and domestic violence; human trafficking; food insecurity; forced internal migration; harmful cultural practices (including child marriage and forced marriage); and targeted violence and discrimination against (nonheterosexual) LGBTIQ communities.



UN pays courtesy call on Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma



May - The United Nations Resident Coordinator in South Africa, Nardos Bekele-Thomas, led a UN delegation on a courtesy call visit to the new Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. The visit was to congratulate the minister on her new appointment, and to highlight that the UN was ready to receive guidance and direction on potential areas of cooperation with the government within the spirit of South Africa's National Development Plan and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Ms. Dlamini-Zuma urged the UN to identify areas it could support people particularly in rural areas and townships in the field of agriculture and food production. She further called on the organization to explore international best practices and adopt lessons learned from integrated approaches to rural development that could be applied in South Africa.

UN pledges support to floods victims in KwaZulu-Natal



The UN in South Africa team visited some of the affected areas in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape provinces pledging support and solidarity with the leadership and the people affected by the floods. The organization donated sleeping mats, blankets, dignity packs and torches to the municipalities assisting those affected who are either in community shelters or have returned to what is left of their homes in the affected areas. Flash lights, though small and often deemed insignificant, were some of the necessities required as families narrated how the severe rains and subsequent flooding resulted in power outages and family members were unable to locate each other.



UN in South Africa contributes relief supplies to the City of Tshwane floods victims

- The UN handed over relief supplies to the City of Tshwane Acting Executive Mayor, Cllr. Abel Tau, for victims of the recent floods in Pretoria. A week earlier, the UN team led by Ms. Bekele-Thomas, visited the communities affected by the floods in Mamelodi, Pretoria, and met with the community residents and the Gauteng Premier, David Makhura. During the visit, the UN committed to provide technical expertise to support the Provincial Technical Team in assessing the floods damage and, to the extent possible, to provide material support to affected members of the community.





Ms. Nardos Bekele-Thomas assumes top position at the UN in South Africa (23 May 2019)

May - Ms. Nardos Bekele-Thomas officially assumed her position as the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in South Africa, the most senior UN official in the country. Ms. Bekele-Thomas expressed delight at the acknowledgement saying, “The position gives us the opportunity to work together towards achieving the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals which demands an integrated, holistic and comprehensive approach in line with the country’s National Development Plan.”

“We believe that the relationship between the UN entities and our government departments will be elevated in order to maximize the mutual benefits of the relationship between South Africa and the UN system,” said the then Minister of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, Lindiwe Sisulu.



UN encourages mental health care of staff and their families

Around the world mental health is increasingly being recognized as a growing problem that can no longer be ignored despite the cultural taboos around it. For its part, the United Nations Wellness Committee has encouraged staff members to be aware of the problem and take appropriate measures where necessary. Addressing UN staff in South Africa at a Mental Health Awareness session held in Pretoria recently, the UN Wellness Coordinator, Sandiswa Mathiso, emphasized that it was important for staff to know their mental health status.



Ethical Leadership Seminar on leading like Mandela

The United Nations in South Africa, in collaboration with the Thembekile Mandela Foundation, the Public Service Commission, Tshwane University of Technology and Moral Regeneration Movement, hosted an Ethical Leadership Seminar in honour of Nelson Mandela on the 19 July 2019. The seminar focused on inter-generational dialogue “LEADING LIKE MANDELA – DAWN OF A NEW ERA OF ETHICAL, VALUES-BASED AND CONSCIOUS LEADER”.

H.E Ms. Ndileka Mandela, Founder and CEO of The Thembekile Mandela Foundation and first grandchild of Nelson Mandela, honored the leadership legacy of Nelson Mandela and called on all to follow and lead like Mandela, mentioning that we must harness our resources because Africa is the richest continent and yet it remains the poorest as a result of poor leadership.



#FightRacism this Human Rights Day

The United Nations in South Africa joined South Africans in commemorating Human Rights Day on 21 March 2019 in Sharpeville and participated in the Human Rights Festival at the Constitution Hill, Johannesburg. The day is of special importance to the UN and the global community as it also marks the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which was adopted in honour of the victims of the Sharpeville massacre in 1960.

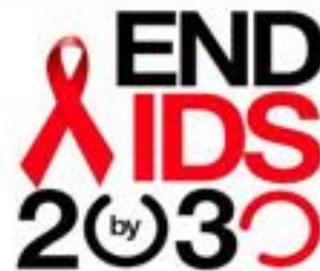
The massacre became the face of the apartheid regime and led to the adoption of the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid in 1962 which later lobbied and campaigned for

sanctions to be imposed against apartheid South Africa. Racist extremist movements based on ideologies that seek to promote populist, nationalist agendas are spreading in various parts of the world, fuelling racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, often targeting migrants and refugees as well as people of African descent.



FAST-TRACK

ENDING THE AIDS EPIDEMIC BY 2030



United Nations pledges support to a Human Rights Plan on HIV/AIDS at the South African AIDS Conference 2019

The United Nations in South Africa joined the South African government and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in June in launching a three-year National Human Rights Plan in response to human rights and gender-related barriers to HIV and TB services. The plan, which will run from 2019 to 2022, focuses on key and vulnerable populations. It has seven key programmes: to reduce stigma and discrimination; to sensitize and train health workers and other service providers including community workers; to sensitize law and policy makers and law enforcers; to increase legal literacy with “Know Your Rights” campaigns; to strengthen access to legal support services; to monitor, review and reform law and policy; and to reduce gender inequality, harmful gender norms and gender-based violence.



United Nations denounces violence against foreign nationals

The United Nations in South Africa expressed deep concern about acts of violence against foreign nationals that spread across several parts of South Africa, particularly in the Gauteng Province. The UN called on stakeholders to be part of the solution by refraining from saying or sending inciteful messages within and outside South Africa. Political leaders, the law enforcement agencies, the organized private sector, community leaders, civil society organizations, citizens and the international community must be vanguards and ambassadors of social cohesion. The UN was encouraged by the police response in quelling the violence and welcomed statements by South African authorities, including President Cyril Ramaphosa, condemning the violence and other acts of criminality.

United Nations condemns perpetual acts of gender-based violence and femicide and calls on men to stand up against violence (Statement)



The United Nations in South Africa strongly condemned the violent murders of 19-year old student Uyinene Mrwetyana, boxing champion Leighandre Jegels and many other victims of gender-based violence in 2019. These murders were unfortunately part of an unabating trend of intimate partner violence meted out against thousands of women in South Africa and across the world: globally one in three women has experienced some form of sexual

or gender-based violence. South African women and civil society organizations called for a national state of emergency. There is a need to immediately reprioritize resources that will effectively deal with perpetrators of violence and offer prevention mechanisms. This violence against women, particularly the murder of women by their intimate partners is a national and global crisis and responses need to change and measure up to the destruction that is brought by each life lost. There must be accountability – men who are largely responsible for this violence – must be held to account.

UN Day commemoration

Why the United Nations is still relevant to South Africa?

OpEd by Nardos Bekele-Thomas, UN Resident Coordinator in South Africa

The United Nations (UN) role in ending apartheid is well documented; what is less known is its relevance to a democratic South Africa (SA). As the world, marked the UN's 74th birthday amidst concerns over its ability to finance an ambitious development agenda, it is time for a sober reflection on why the global body is relevant to SA. South Africa was a founding member of the UN in 1945 before it was suspended in 1974 due to its apartheid policy. It resumed full membership in 1994 and since then, it is no exaggeration that its sway within the organization has grown by leaps and bounds. 2019 marks the third time SA is a member of the UN Security Council, a feat very few countries have enjoyed. Being a member of the council representing Africa on two-year terms has accorded SA the privilege of a coveted seat at the agenda-setting table where threats to global peace and security are discussed and decisions made. <https://unicpretoria.org.za/2019/10/28/why-the-united-nations-is-still-relevant-to-south-africa/>



UN Day Commitment Walk

United Nations in South Africa marked UN Day with a walk, song and dance in colourful outfits in Pretoria. The purpose of the event was to embark on the commitment walk towards continued efforts to raise awareness about Agenda 2030. DIRCO, media and members of various diplomatic corps joined the UN team to commemorate UN Day. The United Nations called on citizens to continually reflect and be part of building a peaceful and sustainable planet for all.

UN DAY Activities: UN hosts Youth Event at the National Botanical Gardens Pretoria



As part of the UN Day celebrations, the UN in partnership with the Wildlife and Environment

Society of South Africa (WESSA), The Department of Environmental Affairs and the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), hosted 100 high-school learners from Thuto Balale, Nellmaphius, to a day of fun and learning. The event was held at the National Botanical Gardens under the theme: 'Our Planet, Our Future.' The objective of the event was to celebrate UN Day encouraging and educating youth about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially on matters relating to climate change and how best to protect and sustain our planet.

Model UN-Debate with students at University of Pretoria

UN was a proud partner at the Model UN Debate at University of Pretoria. Posing as state-delegates, political sciences students took on the #ModelUNDebate discussion on the accountability for sexual violence in conflict and closing the implementation gap.

