

# InFocus



A magazine of the UN in South Africa

Vol 1, Issue No. 2, June 2018



## NEW HEAD OF UN IN SOUTH AFRICA

*Nardos Bekele-Thomas*

**UN Games 2018:  
South Africa plays  
host**

**UN food agency  
warns of rising  
food insecurity**

**Education:  
Leaving no  
child behind**

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# EDITORIAL NOTE

Welcome to our second edition of *InFocus*, an online magazine of the United Nations system in South Africa. In this issue, the new UN Resident Coordinator in South Africa, Nardos Bekele-Thomas, shares her perspectives on the work of the organization and her vision for South Africa. Ms. Bekele-Thomas is also the UN Humanitarian Coordinator and the Resident Representative of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in this country.

As with the previous edition, you will find in this issue a mix of stories covering a wide variety of some of the UN's activities in this country: ranging from stories with a human interest to stories on projects and activities by various agencies.

Our readers will discover how UNICEF is working with schools in rural communities to improve the quality of education with amazing results. The Food and Agriculture Organization is warning of the rising threat to food security in Southern Africa as a result of the ongoing drought, while UNDP continues to monitor the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals and the impact of climate change in the region. The World Health Organization gives advice and updates on listeriosis, which is currently affecting South Africa as it experiences the world's worst outbreak of listeriosis, an infection caused by food poisoning.

These and many other UN stories in this issue focused on Sustainable Development Goals, provide a synopsis of the ongoing work of the UN in partnership with the government and other organizations. We hope they will help you to at least get an idea of the contribution the UN is making in assisting South Africa implement the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

As always, we welcome your feedback on this and future issues.



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## INTERVIEW

# Nardos Bekele-Thomas

UN Resident Coordinator - South Africa



The new United Nations Resident Coordinator (RC) in South Africa, Nardos Bekele-Thomas, assumed office in Pretoria at the beginning of February. She is also the UN Humanitarian Coordinator and the Resident Representative of the UN Development Programme (UNDP). She has held similar positions in Kenya and Benin and has worked in several countries including at UN Headquarters in New York. She recently sat down with *InFocus*' Masimba Tafirenyika to talk about the experiences she brings to South Africa and her vision for the country. Here are the excerpts from the interview:

**InFocus:** What was your reaction when you first learned that you've been appointed as the new RC for South Africa?

**Nardos Bekele-Thomas:** South Africa was on my radar all the time. I applied for the post of Resident Coordinator. I had other opportunities but I really opted to come to South Africa for so many reasons. My name went through several clearances, including with the Interagency Appointing Committee. After I was cleared by the committee and the Secretary-General approved the appointment, I was really delighted. It was like a dream come true.

**Could you share with our readers what exactly is the role of the RC?**

The role of the UN Resident Coordinator is becoming much more important than what it used to be before the new development agenda reform, but also given the fact that UN resources are really dwindling down and we are expected to be more efficient and effective. This can only be done if we coordinate all our activities and deliver as one. Therefore, the responsibility of the RC is more on how to coordinate the operational activities of the UN systems—at least 17 UN entities here in South Africa—so that we can deliver results for South Africa in a very effective and efficient manner, respond to the needs of the country and support the government to do the same.

**You arrived here in the middle of a political leadership transition. What were your first impressions of South Africa?**

It was a real roller coaster. I arrived here with a letter addressed to President Jacob Zuma. I realized then that there was uncertainty over his resignation which eventually culminated in exactly that. I also experienced the hope and dwindling of

hope among South Africans. The transition was also a very good sign for the UN. We saw opportunities to work with the local and national governments, to support them and to help them meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and also realize, to some extent, the promises of leaving no one behind.

**What would you consider as the priorities for the UN system here in SA?**

The number one challenge facing South Africa is income inequality. As you know, the Gini co-efficient for South Africa is the highest in the world; South Africa is the most unequal country globally. Yes, it is true the country is young. It is just 24 years old but still we need to do something about inequality. We need to move on all the historically marginalized entities and people. Also, the whole economic situation is not very encouraging. To solve inequality, we need to make sure the country maintains and sustains economic growth that is strong enough to address all its social ills. It is encouraging to note that youth unemployment is on the agenda of the newly-elected President Cyril Ramaphosa as he clearly articulated in his State of the Nation Address [SONA]. Youth unemployment and inequality are critical issues that require strong economic growth. We can only resolve youth unemployment and inequality if we create opportunities for young people to participate in the economic transformation of this country. And these are the things that we can do as the UN together while addressing all the other critical issues such HIV and access to health care and education.

**You have been the RC in Kenya and Benin in the past. From what you know about the South African development environment, how different are its challenges from other African countries?**

It is very different in two aspects. First, from what I have seen and read since I arrived, inequality is more visible here than in Benin and Kenya. Second, when we talk about poverty, the poor in this country are really worse off than in Kenya and Benin. This is because when you go in the rural areas of Benin and Kenya you will see grains, you will see vegetables, you will see everything in the house. The poverty in most of the African countries is monetary poverty; they don't have the money to buy other things but they have access to basic foods. Here, what I see is that people are not in subsistence agriculture. That means if they are not employed then there is nothing for them. I was surprised to realize that they can rarely afford more than one meal a day. It is a sign of the deep inequality in this country. On the other hand, the paradox is glaring. South Africa is technologically advanced, with well-established and well-run academic institutions and very good medical services but catering for a small group of people.

[Where do you see the country going now in terms of these economic challenges that you are talking about over the next five to 10 years?](#)

I think there is so much hope. The president has articulated his vision as he outlined in the SONA. If the government implements what has been promised, there would be a difference. For us in the UN, we need to move from just working on upstream policy advisory and go down to the people. My vision for the UN Country Team is to have a selection criterion of all the provinces and identify the ones that needs assistance the most. We then go there as one entity, all 17 of us to deliver in that region, work with provinces to develop improvement plans at a local level with the SDGs being at the centre, partner with the private sector and foundations accordingly, and do this province by province.

[You have worked both at UN Headquarters in New York and in various other duty stations in Africa. What were your most memorable experience in those situations?](#)

Wherever one goes there is always something different and striking. When I assess my journey in the UN, starting from New Delhi in India when I was a young woman and travelling through the entire country, the image I had about India being very poor and racist has all just completely changed. I left India with a lot of affection, admiration and respect for the country. Then I went to Bhutan, which is a small kingdom country where there was nothing literally. I found out that

people can be happy with just basic needs. The whole idea of happiness emanated from the King of Bhutan. His idea was for people to be happy with what they have. That's when I realized that material things are not as important as one's happiness in terms of human development. That's how the Bhutanese government introduced the happiness index, which measures human development in terms of people's happiness. In Comoros, I sat down with people on the floor, listening to them and addressing their basic needs. I had different memorable moments in each country. I believe the most important thing for us is to have the capacity to understand people and their cultures and to not bring or impose our own views. In all these countries, including Kenya and Benin, I learned that if you really integrate with people, you will have many memories and rewards. I hope I will be able to make friends here and integrate within the society, make a difference, be part of the society and not see myself as a foreigner.

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**“ We are all a UN family and we need to have a shared vision ”**

*- Nardos Bekele-Thomas*

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[What is your message as the new RC to UN staff and to the people of South Africa?](#)

To UN staff, we are a family. The RC is a UN staff member. We are all a UN family and we need to have a shared vision and move together in all our work. We need to listen to and support the national staff because they know the environment and the culture better and they feel proud of what they are doing to build their country. They can guide us in what we are seeking to achieve. Ours should be a participatory management and leadership. That's what I would like to introduce here and move with the national staff because this is their country. For the UN staff, delivering as one is a very important message I would like to pass. Delivering as one is not only for the UN Country Team; it is for the entire staff. Delivering as one is for the entire UN with the government, the private sector, NGOs and the citizens of South Africa.

[Finally, on a personal level, what are your hobbies?](#)

I used to be a scuba diver. When I was a student, I used to earn a living doing scuba diving. I remember it during the time of apartheid because there were so many people from South Africa coming to the Comoros because that was the island they were allowed to visit for scuba diving. I used to do scuba diving with them without knowing they were from South Africa because I never expected at that time of apartheid they would be so mobile. If I have the time I would really like to do some scuba diving, yoga and meditation. These are the three things I normally do in my spare time. 🌈



The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has launched a major new campaign that calls on Africans to take action to solve the continent's worsening refugee crisis. The campaign, called 'LuQuLuQu' - is centred on the African philosophy of "Ubuntu" or "Ujamaa" which promotes the principles and values of shared responsibility, shared resources, and caring for one another, inherent to African culture and beliefs.

The campaign asks the hundreds of millions of people on the continent, or connected to Africa, to take ownership of the refugee and displacement problem through simple everyday philanthropic actions, to promote self-reliance and independence, and in so doing, empower refugees.

The LuQuLuQu campaign is a social movement that seeks to create a community of supporters. Its essence is to engage ordinary citizens and corporate organizations to redefine the existing image of Africa's displacement crisis, and co-create with the UN refugee agency a new image of the African refugee—one of self-reliance, empowerment and inclusion into the mainstream. The LuQuLuQu Tribe embraces all of society that seeks to share resources, hospitality and helps to amplify the voices of the displaced.

With a goal to change the narrative and conversation around the fate of the displaced in Africa, the aim is to demonstrate that Africans can play a transformative role in changing the lives of refugees and the uprooted.

The LuQuLuQu campaign was launched in South Africa last November. It was led by a number of High Level Influencers (HLIs) including actress Nomzamo Mbatha, South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) Morning Live presenter Leanne Manas, music producer and artist ANATII and Congolese refugee and award-winning musician Trésor Riziki. Other HLIs included Goliath & Goliath, comprised of comedians Jason Goliath, Nicholas Goliath and Donovan

Goliath; actor Ayanda Makayi; Zimbabwean award-winning journalist and World Economic Forum global shaper, Ancillar Mangena; and Cameroonian musician, Wax Dey.

"Ours is not to take pictures that glamorize the plight of the refugees. Ours is to give hope and raise each other up," said Nomzamo Mbatha. "These influencers join twenty other African celebrities from Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Ivory Coast who all pledge to mobilize public support for the campaign through strategic public engagements and activities, showing South Africans what kind of everyday philanthropic actions they can undertake to be part of the movement, and bring solutions for refugees," said Needa Jehu-Mazou, UNHCR's head of Partnerships for Africa, adding, "Corporates and private enterprises are also invited to take part through new and innovative partnership models."

"Visiting Dzaleka refugee camp in Malawi, I learned the definition of hope—it was the truest form of resilience," said Jason Goliath, pledging to use the voice of Goliath & Goliath to encourage support for refugees.

Trésor Riziki, a refugee from the Democratic Republic of the Congo now living in South Africa, thanked the country for taking him in after he was forced to flee from the conflict in his country. He urged the crowd to be more sympathetic to refugees saying, "Don't break those who are already broken."

There are more than 20 million displaced people in Africa, of whom 78 percent are women and children, out of which more than half (57 percent) are under the age of 18. So far, this year only 35 percent of the critical funding required to assist refugees in Africa has been received. With increased displacement crises across the world, funds allocated to Africa have declined. UNHCR seeks to engage South Africans to partner in bringing solutions to the displaced in Africa. 🌍

*Learn more about the campaign at [LuQuLuQu.org](http://LuQuLuQu.org) and follow the conversation on social media with [#DoItLuQuLuQu](https://twitter.com/DoItLuQuLuQu)*

# Two million more South Africans to be put on HIV treatment by 2020

South Africa—already running the world’s largest HIV treatment programme—is massively scaling up its response to HIV/AIDS with the pending launch of a multi-year national health screening, testing and treatment campaign.

The National Department of Health and the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) will run the three-year campaign with support from development partners. More than 14 million South Africans will be tested and screened for HIV, tuberculosis (TB), diabetes and hypertension in the first year alone, and urgently linked to treatment and care.

The campaign will deliver on the commitments that President Cyril Ramaphosa set out in his State of the Nation speech in February, including putting an additional two million people on HIV treatment by December 2020, scaling up HIV testing and treatment and launching a major campaign to confront non-communicable diseases.

A year ago, South Africa it launched the National Strategic Plan for HIV, TB and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) 2017-2022 and it has committed to ambitious health targets, including a plan announced on World AIDS Day last year to reduce new HIV infections to 88,000 or fewer per year by 2020 as part of a national HIV Prevention Revolution roadmap to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals.

“This year, we will take the next critical steps to eliminate HIV from our midst. By scaling up our testing and treatment campaign, we will initiate

“ **This year, we will take the next critical steps to eliminate HIV from our midst by scaling up our testing and treatment campaign** ”

an additional 2 million people on antiretroviral treatment by December 2020,” President Ramaphosa said in his State of the Nation address.

South Africa has a gap in HIV testing among men and young people and must move more people onto treatment for HIV and tuberculosis to meet its Fast-Track targets for 2020. An additional 400,000 men living with HIV need to be diagnosed and linked to care by 2020 for South Africa to reach the first of its 90-90-90 Fast-Track targets. The latest estimations show that South Africa is close to achieving the first of the 90-90-90 targets, with almost 90 percent of women and 82 percent of men living with HIV knowing their status. For the second target, 55% of women living with HIV who know their status and 48% of similar men are accessing treatment, and of those women and men, around 79% have a suppressed viral load.

The National Department of Health and SANAC, in consultation with UN agencies, the US President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), civil society organizations and other partners, are supporting the development of the multi-year campaign. The campaign will include

risk reduction counselling and prevention strategies and linking people into care.

Organizers plan to mobilize all sectors of society to raise awareness among people about the importance of screening for HIV, TB, diabetes and hypertension and urgently accessing treatment and care. In February, SANAC briefed the United Nations Country Team and emphasized the need to create demand for screening and testing services. SANAC called for support to the government and the public health sector, to actively participate and support technical coordination and implementation, including support and technical coordination at all levels, from the national objectives to facility-based implementation.

The campaign will promote disease prevention by emphasizing the importance and potential of lifestyle changes, as well as encouraging early diagnosis and treatment. The expected benefits include seven million people screened being for hypertension and diabetes and linked to care, two million people initiated on antiretroviral treatment, and 80,000 undiagnosed TB infected persons identified by December 2020.

The campaign will launch in all 52 districts of South Africa with the involvement of municipalities and local leaders and the active support of UN agencies. There will be emphasis on 27 high burden districts that will receive intensified screening, testing and treatment events backed by a communications campaign. 🌍



# Early grade reading study helps to end poverty

By Sudeshan Reddy

**A** long and dusty gravel road leads to a series of flat concrete structures that make up Mogodiri Intermediate School on the outskirts of Ventersdorp in South Africa's North West Province. Surrounded by indigenous veld, the school is the only learning institution in the surrounding area. Children, some as young as five, walk up to six kilometres each way per day to get to the school. There is a school bus but it is not often reliable.

So-called farm schools like Mogodiri have, historically, served some of South Africa's poorest communities. While the post-apartheid government has made notable strides in reducing rural poverty, these regions still grapple with high illiteracy rates and limited job opportunities. The meals provided to the children through the government school's feeding scheme is at times their only meal for the day.

Mogodiri (named after a local indigenous tree) was built in 1937 to serve the children of farm workers. More than 80 years later, the life of the average worker has not fundamentally changed and many children remain trapped in a cycle of poverty with very

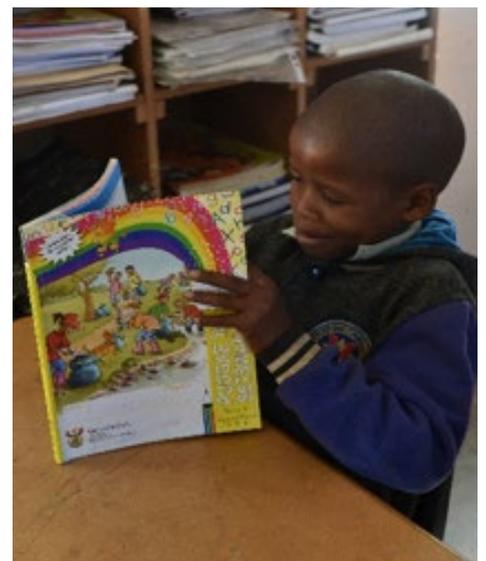
limited career opportunities. Teachers speak of high rates of absenteeism by the children and almost non-existent parental monitoring.

What has changed, however, is that investments are now being made into the quality of education received at farm schools and similarly under-resourced primary educational facilities. Mogodiri is one of the schools participating in the Early Grade Reading Study (EGRS) programme with positive results. The school and the classrooms look well-organized punctuated by the buzz of dynamic students.

In a sunlit classroom with 26 students, Maria Tseladimitloa, a teacher, begins her lesson by showing examples of phonics in the Setswana language and having the learners pronounce them. She then creates a breakaway group of six students and conducts a guided reading exercise during which she and the students read together. This differs from previous approaches whereby the teacher would read to the whole class, thus limiting focused attention and discouraging individual reading. Reading books are provided by the Department of Basic Education

and each student's progress is tracked and ticked off in a notebook. A glossary is created in which each student's vocabulary is also monitored. Spelling tests are held every Friday. Ms. Tseladimitloa notes: "Children need attention and we as teachers need to be able to multitask."

She uses mind map diagrams and colourful visuals in her classroom to drive home the message that



Loynatso Moluabi enjoying his reading - © UNICEF/Hearfield

reading is both fun and stimulating. Ms. Tseladimitloa said the EGRS programme has provided much-needed structure and focus for reading lessons, adding, “we did not have a plan before.” She attributes her success to the training she received through Class Act, an implementing partner supported by UNICEF.

There has been a noticeable improvement in school results when the students sit for the common provincial tests. This is borne out by officials from the Department of Basic Education who, on visits to Mogodiri, have acknowledged the improved reading skills among first to third graders.

At 13 years old, Jeremiah Ngake is older than any of his classmates. Difficult circumstances forced him to repeat grade three. Nevertheless, Ms. Tseladimitloa has noticed improvements in his reading abilities and confidence levels since his exposure to the EGRS programme. His favourite book is *Baking with Granny*, he shyly says.

Kate Maake, one of the EGRS programme coaches, oversees the training and monitoring of the teachers and visits the schools on average three times per term. When asked what keeps her going, she responded: “I told myself that I need to get these children somewhere, to help the teachers mould them into responsible adults.” The coaches train teachers and, sometimes with difficulty, encourage them to embrace the new EGRS methodology and routine.

Maryna du Plooy from Class Act describes the three coaches based in the North West as “relentless in their commitment and dedication.” For Ms. Du Plooy, the EGRS programme, thanks to UNICEF support, will help shape a better future for thousands of students. She adds that the difference between traditional reading instructions and the EGRS programme is “the difference between receiving and producing language.” 🌈

# Industry 4.0 unpacked at a national dialogue



From left to right: Industry 4.0 panelists Gerhard Fourie, Janitha Badul, Khaled El Mekwad, Joseph Senona, Valerie Geen, Mauritz Lindeque and Kuda Ndhlukula

More and more people are getting to learn and experience the Internet of Things (IoT), which is the interconnectedness of electronic devices with the internet such as mobiles phones, tablets and other gadgets that “talk” to each other. Little do people realize that IoT is but just one part of the Industry 4.0, the fourth generation of industrial revolution that uses robots, data, automation and cloud storage to come up with innovative technologies in the industrial and manufacturing sectors.

It was with these goals in mind that the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) recently organized a national dialogue with more than 100 senior representatives from key South African government ministries, the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the private sector.

The aim of the dialogue, which was held in Johannesburg, was to discuss the increasing importance of making use of new, smarter and integrated technologies to produce goods and services. In his remarks at

the dialogue, UNIDO Representative Khaled El Mekwad emphasized the need to prepare markets for the upcoming change under Industry 4.0, and for government to take the lead in raising awareness and putting the necessary strategies and regulations in place.

During the discussions, there was broad consensus that the unprecedented change associated with Industry 4.0 would have an impact on all businesses. While it has the potential to be destructive and disruptive, the switch to Industry 4.0 also offers new and exciting opportunities. It was acknowledged that the process should be inclusive, highlight the importance of system-wide education and develop the necessary skills.

Delegates emphasized that the switch to Industry 4.0 ought not to leave people behind as a result of the digital transformation of industry and exponential technological changes, especially given the South African context. A special focus on continuous education, reskilling and upskilling was therefore needed to ensure the retention of jobs. 🌈

# Companies should be advocates and investors in gender equality

By Otae Mkandawire

To mark International Women's Day on 8 March, stock exchanges across the world held 'ring-the-bell' ceremonies in recognition of the pivotal role the private sector plays in advancing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in achieving Goal 5 which calls for gender equality globally by 2030.

In South Africa, the UN Women South Africa Multi-Country Office joined the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, the UN Global Compact, Women in Exchange Traded Funds and Sustainable Stock Exchanges at the fourth Annual Ring the Bell for Gender Equality held in Johannesburg.

Paying tribute to women in factory lines, production lines, boardrooms and stock exchanges across the world, the keynote speaker, Ipeleng Mkhari, the founder and chief executive officer (CEO) of Motseng Investment Holdings, acknowledged that 'opportunity' was usually what set women apart from men, adding that a gender-insensitive world made it difficult for women to rise. However, she challenged women to change the business narrative of males as 'business heroes'.

"It is us as African women that must defeat this distortion of our contemporary economic realities," said Ms. Mkhari.

Following the bell-ringing ceremony, several companies that have made public commitments to accelerate gender equality showcased their programmes, investments and contributions for an equitable corporate sector to encourage more South African companies to do the same.

Opening the showcase session, Nozipho January-Bardill, the chair

of the UN Global Compact in South Africa, reflected on the ever-growing reliance on the corporate sector to provide solutions to global problems and develop a private sector that has a purpose.

"[The private sector] must not just please shareholders and make sure our balance sheets are okay; but we must also make sure we have the social licence to operate rather than just a legal licence to operate," she said.

UN Women used the occasion to call on the private sector to accelerate changes in company policies and practices on gender equality by signing and implementing the Women's Empowerment Principles. The principles are a framework developed by the Global Compact and UN Women in consultation with government, the private sector and civil society, to guide businesses on empowering women in the workplace, marketplace and communities.

Anne Githuku-Shongwe, the UN Women Representative, pointed out that if all companies were committed to the Women's Empowerment Principles, there would be a clear economic shift as opportunities would open for women to become part of labour, leadership and ownership.

"We want every [company] to make gender equality its business," she emphasized, adding, "Collectively there is no reason why we shouldn't see progress. Let's make this economy work for women."

The CEO of Business Leadership South Africa, Bonang Mohale, encouraged increased engagement from men in ensuring an equitable and transformed economy. "Men must do more to ensure that women take their rightful place in the broader economic agenda. Only then will we



Women business leaders officially open the Johannesburg Stock Exchange at the Ring the Bell Ceremony - © JSE

look back and say we have played our part," he said.

Companies that showcased their work included DeBeers Consolidated Mines represented by its Deputy CEO, Nompumelelo Zikalala; Motseng Investment Holdings represented by Ms. Mkhari, and Rand Merchant Bank represented by its Business Development Director Jessica Spira. The companies exchanged ideas on progress they have made particularly on leadership opportunities for women and creating suitable work environments.

The CEO of the Commission for Gender Equality, Keketso Maema, spoke about the impact of the commission's engagement with the private sector including the Gender Transformation Hearings where leaders are called to account on progress towards gender transformation, employment equity quotas, and policy mechanisms that can be applied to gender equality targets.

UN Women will continue to mobilize companies to sign the Women's Empowerment Principles by setting targets and monitoring progress while working with the more than 50 companies that have already signed up. 🌍

# Taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impact

Incidents of wildland fires have increased significantly across South Africa. Over the past several years, there have been major and catastrophic fires which have resulted in death, damage to infrastructure and loss of property and assets. The occurrences have not only negatively affected the natural environment but have also come at enormous direct and indirect social and economic costs to the country.

Fynbos is a fire-prone and fire-dependent shrubland vegetation that requires regular fires to ensure the survival of the extremely high species diversity. The Fynbos Biome is defined by South Africa as the most fire-vulnerable in the country and is even more prone to climate change-related disaster risks from wildland fire.

In 2012, the Global Environment Facility started funding the FynbosFire Project in four South African rural communities (Goedverwacht, Kranshoek, Sir Lowry's Pass Village, Clarkson) within the Fynbos Biome. The project's aim is to develop sustainable interventions to radically reform the approach to managing

wildfires and to implement strategies to reduce wildfire risks. It involves FireWise community concepts which seek to build resilience against

"We are proud that this project and its results are echoing well beyond the shores of South Africa and we will be happy through our networks as UNDP to ensure that its legacy continues to resonate in international circles well beyond its completion," said UNDP Country Director, Walid Badawi, at the project closeout event in March this year.

destructive unwanted wildfires, with a focus on preventing damage to people's homes, livelihoods and the landscape surrounding them.

Under the FireWise initiative, rural communities are trained to recognise fire dangers and to run their own risk reduction measures. FireWise teams are taught to use the fire danger index to measure the degree of fire threat. They use simple but effective mechanisms and tools such as colour-

coded flags, multi-lingual pamphlets, door-to-door and school-based education campaigns to communicate with communities about being FireWise. These teams form a second line of defence in the case of big fire emergencies. In 2017, Kranshoek survived fires that spread over 300kms and burned for nearly two weeks, thanks in part to the FireWise principles the community implemented.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in South Africa and several other partners manage the FynbosFire Project, which is implemented by Kishugu (now Landworks) through the Department of Environmental Affairs. The project

has engaged several stakeholders including the insurance industry, calling for the design of tailored products with a reasonable and attainable cost structure for poor and vulnerable communities in affected areas. Private sector partners chip in through subsidised products that protect communities from future disasters. As a result, several resource materials for use by communities have been produced. 🌍



# UN agency warns of rising food insecurity in Southern Africa

**W**hile there are ample stocks of cereal in southern Africa, the spell of dry weather and erratic rains earlier in the season signal multiple risks to agricultural yields and may aggravate the impact of the Fall armyworm pest, warns the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the UN food agency. In its latest special alert, the agency's Global Information and Early Warning System said reduced harvests are "foreseen to intensify food insecurity in 2018, increasing the number of people in need of assistance."

Many smallholders and rural families in southern Africa are still recovering from losses due to the severe El Niño-associated drought, and they are vulnerable to a downturn, the agency's Global Information Early Warning System (GIEWS) noted, adding that this was especially the case where harvests in 2017 were sparse. Poor rains and hot temperatures triggered water stress which has adversely affected crop development in several areas of southern Africa.

FAO said the same situation was also likely to occur in areas where the weather trends have been unfavourable, notably parts of Lesotho, southern and central areas of Mozambique, western South Africa,

southern parts of Zambia and Malawi, eastern Zimbabwe and southwestern Madagascar.

Maize production hit a record level in 2017 in the southern Africa sub-region, which was a welcome development after sharp output declines in the previous year caused by an unusually strong El Niño. Cereal production in the sub-region is estimated in 2018 to fall due to erratic rains, along with the intense dry period experienced in January.

To this end, FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva has emphasized the importance of boosting the resilience of communities, particularly in Africa, in making sure that "Zero Hunger is possible".

## Food insecurity to rise

The number of food-insecure people in the sub-region is likely to rise over the course of 2018, partly reversing last year's sharp decline, the GIEWS alert warned.

In 2016, crop production declines due to El Niño drove up significantly the number of food-insecure people in the sub-region. In Malawi, an

estimated 6.7 million people and just over 4 million people in Zimbabwe were food insecure. But the significant rebound in the sub-region's cereal production to a record level in 2017 led food insecure numbers to fall by up to 90 percent, according to official estimates.

Maize production in 2017 increased 43 percent above the recent average and the sub-region produced more than is required for domestic consumption for the first time in five years, even excluding South Africa, a traditional net exporter. As a result, most countries were able to build up inventories. The higher stock levels should be able to partly cushion the effects of the likely production decreases to come. Local maize prices, currently down on a yearly basis, also reflect favourable supply conditions.

Rain patterns also matter greatly for the Fall Armyworm, an invasive species that has now been detected in all countries of the sub-region, except Lesotho and Mauritius. While recent heavy rains in some areas may have contributed to containing the pest's spread, the general dry weather may help it spread and could exacerbate the impact on yields. 🌍

# Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital underscores the importance of partnerships

By Ziyanda Ngoma



L-R: UNFPA Executive Director, Dr. Natalia Kanem, UNFPA ESARO Regional Director, Dr. Julitta Onabanjo, and UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Jayathma Wickramanayake at the Nelson Mandela Children Fund. © Sarah Kenyi

**E**arly this year, Dr. Natalia Kanem, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Executive Director, joined the UN Secretary-General Envoy on Youth, Jayathma Wickramanayake, in touring the Nelson Mandela Children Hospital as part of their visit to South Africa.

The Nelson Mandela Children Hospital, a state-of-the-art facility, is a specialized children's hospital which offers free care to patients within South Africa and from outside the country. It combines a child and family-friendly environment with ultra-modern MRI and CT-Scan facilities, and offer complex medical solutions like interventional radiology. It has an intensive care unit (ICU) where up to 24 new born in their most critical state can be treated at the same time.

Prior to its opening, only one specialised hospital of its kind existed in South Africa, which is located in Cape Town. The project, which was initiated by the Nelson Mandela

**“If the world was equal and we were to build a health facility for our children, what would it look like”**

Children's Fund, was to supplement this need and close the gap in children care. The hospital is one of only five specialised state-of-the-art children hospitals in Africa.

The UNFPA executive director, who was also accompanied by Dr. Julitta Onabanjo, the UNFPA Regional Director for the Eastern and Southern African Regional Office, noted that the success of the project showed the power of a dream, having only last seen it when it was in its construction phase, and knowing when UNFPA funded its pre-feasibility study. Bongki Mkhabela, the Chief Executive Officer of the Nelson Mandela Hospital, noted that it was a project that grew both from the power of imagination and the commitment of many partners and professionals who were willing to pay the “Madiba Price”: time and cost.

“If the world was equal and we were to build a health facility for our children, what would it look like?” she asked, noting that this question was at the heart of why the facility had to be built.

Although the hospital was built with funds exclusively from donors, it has formed partnerships with three medical schools in the Gauteng Province, being it the capacity to train fellows for the teaching hospital and augment the professionals who are resident at the hospital. It has also attracted top professionals who volunteer their time whenever they are needed.

In her remarks during the tour, the UN youth envoy noted that the children's hospital was a good example of the fact that “quality can also be free”. She added that the success of the project provided an important lesson on how to build partnerships and mobilize the private sector to realize a dream and invest in health for the future generation. 🌍

# Developing a policy to promote social and economic change



Women beneficiaries of the social economy project

By Kerry Krige

South Africa, along with Tunisia, is taking the lead in Africa in developing a policy to promote a social and solidarity economy. The value of such an economy is that it not only promotes job opportunities, but also strengthens communities. Together with the Department of Economic Development, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in South Africa, with support from the Government of Flanders (in Belgium), is developing policies which are aimed at creating and supporting decent jobs in a sustainable and inclusive social economy.

South Africa's social economy has been growing steadily over the past decade. Social economy organizations combine the best of both worlds: trading to earn an income that helps create sustainability, while delivering the social services and values that are typically associated with non-governmental organizations.

The result is a range of organizations that empower local communities over the long term, including co-operatives, mutual associations, social enterprises and non-profits that are engaged in trade. Their value of these groups is extensive, tackling the 'triple-demons' that characterize South Africa's economy: poverty, unemployment and inequality.

"One of the great strengths of the social economy is that it encourages citizens to respond to the issues

they see in their communities and to take action," says the ILO Director in South Africa, Joni Musabayana. He cited the example of Neil Campher, an entrepreneur, who set up waste recycling initiatives in Helenvale in Port Elizabeth, in response to severe dumping and littering.

"We see people like Stacey Brewer and Ryan Harrison setting up Spark Schools, driven by a desire to provide affordable, high-quality education to school children. The best is that it has no urban bias: the social economy thrives in rural areas, as communities band together to tackle issues and earn an income."

According to the ILO director, the social economy is not new: the principles of community that support co-operatives and stokvels define it. The Department of Economic Development, with support from the ILO, is creating the eco-system that will allow these organizations and their members to thrive.

The formulation of policy on the social economy is scheduled to run till 2020. The process involves extensive consultations with stakeholders and accompanying research to build an understanding of this mixed environment. Currently there is not enough data on the social economy in South Africa despite broad agreement on its value in creating jobs in under-served and economically isolated areas. What is known is that the

sector is blending policymakers' perspectives on social and economic change, and offering opportunities to generate action.

"The social economy is so powerful because it achieves both social and economic change simultaneously," says Mr. Musabayana, adding, "and it does so sustainably. There are great lessons from the private sector in terms of governance, accountability and the how-to of generating profit over time."

"When coupled with the deep principles and connectedness of non-profit organizations, and their approach to community development, we have a real win-win for South Africa and the continent."

The ILO is committed to growing the social and solidarity economy globally, with international academies, research and training programmes. The organization is also heading a similar project in Tunisia through legislation.

"We are proud of our work in the social economy and our position as one of the first organizations to champion the value that it brings. I believe the social economy thrives in South Africa, and that together with government partners, we can tackle unemployment, inequality and poverty by enabling social economy organizations to thrive," says Mr. Musabayana. 🌍



# Visiting Swedish Minister stresses the value of sexuality education

Comprehensive sexuality education was in the limelight early this year when the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the South African Department of Basic Education (DBE) hosted the visiting Swedish Minister of Education, Gustav Fridolin, during his tour of South Africa and Zambia. The aim of the visit was to raise political awareness around young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Sweden supports UNESCO through a project, which started in 2013, on strengthening sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention among children and young people in Eastern and Southern Africa. South Africa is one of the countries benefiting from this support.

The minister's visit kicked off with a dialogue with youth at the Katlehong Art Centre in the eastern part of Johannesburg with the Teen Pregnancy Coalition and Mmoho Campaign. Through drama, the young people demonstrated their challenges and concerns in accessing information on sexuality. The discussions that ensued highlighted the disconnection between what young people know and what their parents are willing to discuss. It was recommended that parents, including religious leaders, should be brought on board to openly discuss Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE).

During the high-level discussions, which were led by Minister Fridolin and brought together key regional policy makers to reflect on progress, challenges and opportunities for scaling up CSE, the organizers presented the revised International Technical Guidance on sexuality



Minister Fridolin addressing young people in the Youth Dialogue in Katlehong.

education. The dialogue resulted in a consensus on the importance of CSE in empowering adolescents and enabling youth to make healthy, informed choices. Participants agreed to expand and strengthen CSE and linkages to youth-friendly sexual reproductive health services.

According to UNESCO's Regional Director for Eastern Africa, Ann-Therese Ndong Jatta, 15 out of 21 countries in Eastern and Southern Africa now provide CSE in at least 40 percent of primary and secondary schools. She called for bold leadership and joint action to strengthen CSE programming.

The minister's visit to South Africa concluded with a dialogue with religious leaders and youth from SANALELA and the Save the Children held at Mabopane Baptist Church in Pretoria. The discussions centred around religion's role in advocating and mobilizing communities on CSE and addressing SRH related challenges that adolescents and young people face. Pointing to

the many challenges South Africa faces with HIV infections, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse and gender-based violence, the minister called for concerted support and action from religious leaders. He challenged them to play a key role in communities to help the country address these social problems.

"We need to accept the fact that sometimes it is the young people in the room that have rights and letting them speak is very critical," the minister told his audience, adding that although Sweden has made considerable progress in the implementing CSE, there were lessons to be learned from his visit.

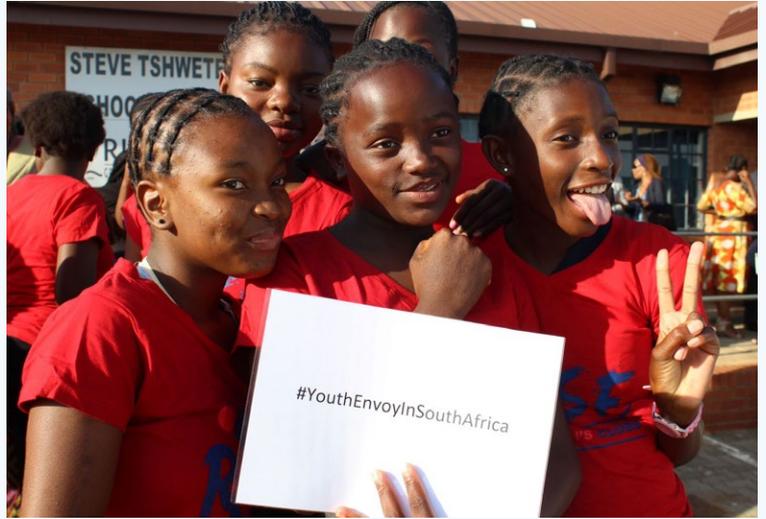
Other government delegates who were part of the mission to South Africa included Ghanaian Deputy Minister of Education Barbara Asher Ayisi, officials from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat, and senior government officials from Côte d'Ivoire and Swaziland. 🌍



Joint WFP/UN Women training in business, digital and internet literacy for South African Women In Farming (SAWIF) held in Polokwane and Tzaneen to enhance food supply to orphaned and vulnerable children in Swaziland.



SheDecides flagship event marks a year of accelerated global support for women and girls to realize their sexual and reproductive health rights.



UNFPA Executive Director, Dr. Natalia Kanem and UN Secretary-General's Youth Envoy Jayathma Wickramanayake visit to South Africa.



Nardos Bekele-Thomas, the UN Resident Coordinator in South Africa, addresses UN staff at a townhall meeting.

# Education: Leaving no child behind through care and support for teaching and learning

By Sudeshan Reddy

**F**unjwa Primary School is located on the outskirts of Hoedspruit, a gateway town into South Africa's iconic Kruger National Park. Humid and lush vegetation characterise this part of the country, known as the 'lowveld' as is evident when one enters the neat school and is welcomed by the sight of a healthy herb and flower garden. Neatly attired learners in red and white uniforms chatter amidst the midday heat as they enjoy the post-exams school period.

The school is one of those that currently benefits from the Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) programme, a holistic model of education supported by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) in South Africa. The programme's objective is to remove health and social barriers which limit children's growth potential by prioritising several areas: nutrition, safety, work, health, material support, grants, identification documents, socially inclusive and cohesive initiatives, ending gender-based violence and supporting curriculum with a focus on inclusive education and leadership.

In collaboration with the Mpumalanga Department of Basic Education, UNICEF is currently testing the CSTL programme in 393 schools (292 primary and 101 high schools) in the province. Launched in 2008, the programme has since gone through phases, focusing on, among other issues, curriculum and psycho-social support, HIV and broader health surveys as well as deworming and adherence to certain minimum standards.

Dr. Saadhna Panday, the UNICEF education specialist, says since the inception of CSTL in these schools,

the overall matric pass rate in the province has increased, "thus showing the success of this critical, multi-faceted intervention." Data from ongoing studies show the success of the programme thus far.

At the time of UNICEF's visit to Funjwa, the school was a hub of activities as officials from South Africa's Department of Home Affairs were busy registering children for birth certificates and identity papers. Officials from the Embassy of Mozambique in South Africa were also assisting the process since some of the school children are from Mozambican migrants. The documents are a requirement for accessing social security grants which help keep starvation and extreme poverty at bay. The school, with 702 children and 23 teachers, receives a government subsidy commensurate with the number of officially registered children.

"This school started under a tree," says Thandi Mthethwa, a dignified, gentle-in-demeanour but strong-in-character teacher. Distressed by the poverty among the school children in the area, she set up a care centre adjacent to Funjwa Primary School. In discussions with UNICEF officials, she commended the CSTL programme for having "made a great difference" and given children a "degree of self-actualisation." She has introduced reading competitions to the excitement of the children. "We see too many learners going to school for the sake of school rather than with a vision and a plan," says Ms. Mthethwa, crediting the CSTL programme for giving the school children a sense of hope and direction. A support team run by people with an interest in the school works closely with the local community.



A roundtable discussion with the relevant stakeholders from the School-based Support Team (SBST).

The team comprises, among others, representatives of the school, the police and district health officials. With the help from the CSTL programme, the team has successfully intervened especially in cases of child neglect. Deputy Principal Rose Mbethe commended CSTL initiative for making "a big difference from where we started."

With support from the National Education Collaborative Trust, the CSTL programme has scored notable success in areas such as de-worming programmes, the provision of HPV vaccines, HIV awareness and a reduction in alcohol and drug abuse, and no pregnancies among the school children.

The school also receives hygienic products for the children such as soap, toothpaste and toothbrushes but does experience periodic water shortages.

There remains, however, concern that it was not always clear what happens after the school children leave the supportive school environment. That is why, according to Dr. Panday, "monitoring and evaluation is critical if we are to understand the full impact of CSTL."

For the learners of Funjwa Primary School, an example of a well-functioning learning institution where commitment and dedication is evident, the benefits of the CSTL programme are clear and life-changing. 🌍

# “KEEP ON RISING”

## officials urge young women and girls



By Ziyanda Ngoma

UNFPA Executive Director, Dr. Natalia Kanem and UN Secretary-General's Youth Envoy, Jayathma Wickramanayake, with young girls.

**O**n a sunny afternoon in February, a group of about 50 teenage girls from Steve Tshwete Secondary School in Pretoria welcomed the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Executive Director, Dr. Natalia Kanem and the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Jayathma Wickramanayake, with song and dance and a play that focused on HIV infection, teenage pregnancy and sexual exploitation by blessers in the community.

The young girls from the Olivenhoutbosch's "Rise Young Women's Clubs" in the township of Centurion are part of the Soul City Institute for Social Justice, an advocacy group on women and girls and the communities in which they live. The group seeks to empower young girls with comprehensive sexuality education and life skills to help them make informed decisions on their sexual and reproductive health, and defend and demand their reproductive rights.

Speaking during the visit, the UN youth envoy shared her childhood experiences, noting the lack of sexuality education when she was growing up. She said openly discussing sexuality was generally considered a taboo and many girls grew up oblivious of the changes they were going through. The youth envoy encouraged the young girls to make the best use of the information and education they are receiving through the Rise Young Women's Clubs, to stay safe and speak up about their health. She emphasized the importance of education in providing opportunities to realise one's potential, and encouraged the Rise Up girls to stay in school and "keep on rising".

For her part, the UNFPA executive director said she was encouraged by the path the clubs were charting for young girls in the school and within the community. Noting the global youth population at 1.8 billion, Dr. Natalia underscored the need to invest in and empower young girls, tackle

sexual exploitation, and accelerate comprehensive sexuality education and services. More so, she also underscored the need to partner and work with communities to protect and enable young girls to reach their potential – and keep rising.

With the play, the girls highlighted the risks they face, and the impact on their lives as a result of lack of sexual education, and the knowledge they have acquired, thanks to Soul City. The discussions that ensued after the play between the teenage girls and the UNFPA executive director and the youth envoy focused on teenage pregnancy, blessers and the need to stay in school.

The UN delegation was welcomed at the school by the chairperson of the School Governing Board and Chief Executive Officer, Lebogang Ramafoko, as well as the Chief Operating Officer, Zane Dangor, both from the Soul City Institute. 🌍

# Special envoy commends South Africa for generously hosting Somali refugees

**Southern Africa is currently hosting over 60,000 registered Somali refugees and asylum-seekers - half of whom live in South Africa.**

By Markku Aikomus



UNHCR Special Envoy for Somalia Ambassador Mohamed Abdi Affey and the then UNHCR Regional Representative for Southern Africa, Sharon Cooper (right) with the Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Hon. Fatima Chohan. © UNHCR/B. Robertson.

**T**he generosity of the South African government has ensured that over 300,000 refugees and asylum-seekers live in the country in a free and safe environment, noted UNHCR Special Envoy to the Somalia Refugee Situation.

“South Africa has a generous policy that grants asylum-seekers and refugees free movement, access to jobs and public services,” said Ambassador Mohamed Abdi Affey during a recent visit to South Africa.

The special envoy visited Pretoria and Cape Town in early February and met with government officials, the ambassador of Somalia to South Africa and representatives from UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, donors and other partners.

He also gave media interviews and met with Somali refugee leaders who gave him first-hand information on the challenges that Somali refugees and asylum-seekers are facing in South Africa including xenophobia,

difficulties in accessing the asylum documentation as well as long asylum processes.

During his meeting with the Deputy Minister for Home Affairs, Fatima Chohan, Ambassador Affey expressed UNHCR’s gratitude to South Africa for providing asylum space for hundreds of thousands, including nearly 32,000 Somali refugees and asylum-seekers. He especially lauded the government for its progressive policies which “UNHCR is also promoting with other countries in the region.”

“Somalia should not be forgotten,” he urged as he appealed to the South African Government to support the ongoing peace and reconstruction efforts inside the war-ravaged country.

Nearly three decades since the start of the Somalia crisis, close to one million Somalis are exiled in the Horn of Africa region.

“Despite many positive developments in Somalia, the country remains fragile and requires continued support from

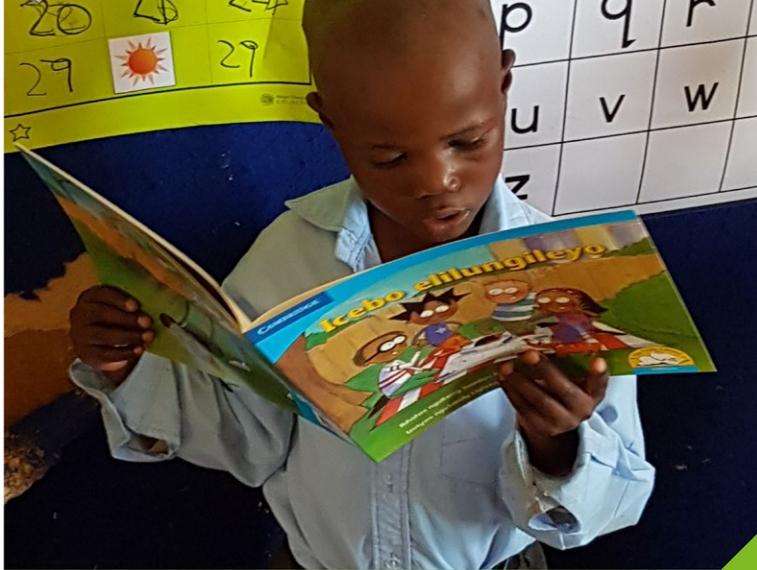
the international community,” added the special envoy.

He noted that Somalia not only requires financial aid to rebuild shelters, schools and other infrastructure inside the country but also durable solutions for Somali refugees in the region through local integration and third country resettlement.

Although the situation in Somalia is not yet conducive for large scale voluntary repatriation, UNHCR is assisting those individuals who have made the decision to return. Some Somalis in South Africa have expressed interest in eventually returning to Somalia; however, most of them prefer to wait until the situation in the country stabilizes.

UNHCR provides technical support to the government of South Africa to enhance the protection of refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless people by working within national, political, economic and social structures to bring policies, practices and laws into compliance with international standards.

The special envoy applauded the cohesive nature of the government’s partnership with UNHCR and other aid agencies, particularly in helping refugees to find jobs and various sources of income. The livelihood support programmes in place help refugees with micro-grants for businesses, empowerment of women’s skills, local language training and vocational skills training. 🌍



Thobela Bhoyoyo reading his favourite book

# Making reading the passport to success

By Sudeshan Reddy

It is a reality of life that education is a necessary tool to break the cycle of poverty. This is particularly true in the rural areas of many developing countries where generations are unable to advance economically due to lack of basic literacy tools. South Africa's apartheid history is characterised by the neglect of rural areas where the black majority lived without adequate educational facilities.

One form of this neglect is in the lack of support for the use of mother languages in schools. Research has shown that being taught in one's home language enhances a child's overall learning and comprehension of language, concepts and logic.

Realizing the importance of mother tongue language, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in South Africa has formed a partnership with the Nelson Mandela Institute for Rural Development (NMIRD) in the Eastern Cape Province on the Bilingual Interactive Differentiated Classrooms (BIDC) Programme, also known as the "magic classroom collective". The idea behind the initiative is that teaching should be engaging and diverse and not linear and monotonous while being fully grounded in its local context. In Eastern Cape, this means promoting the use of Xhosa, the province's main language.

Between 2013 and 2017, UNICEF contributed about R14 million (US\$1.2 million) to NMIRD. The result has improved numeracy and literacy levels among Grade R (pre-school) children since the programme started over a decade ago. Its success has led to the University of Fort Hare (the alma mater of several African statesmen including Nelson Mandela) setting up a bilingual education programme this year to train teachers to teach in indigenous languages.

About 50 kilometres from the town of Mbizana in the Eastern Cape lies Dlangenzwa Senior Primary School. Established in 1985, the school has 178 students from Grade R to Grade 7 and the NMIRD has worked with this school since 2009 with a focus on Grade R to Grade 3.

Nosimo Bhokomela, a school teacher who has been teaching at the school since the BIDC programme was introduced, has seen significant improvement in both reading and counting skills. She says the programme "has made teaching friendly" and children more enthusiastic. Her view is shared by the school principal, Zamuxolo Mdatya, who described the programme's workbooks as "very user-friendly".

According to Mr. Mdatya, the challenges faced by about 70 percent



of the children at the school are those from single-parents or child-headed households. Some of the children do not have birth certificates and are thus unable to access any of the social grants that have helped to mitigate extreme poverty in post-apartheid South Africa. Less children with birth certificates also means less state subsidies for the school, making registration important.

Six-year old Thobela Bhoyoyo, popularly known as "Comrade" due to his love of anti-apartheid songs, is now a confident Grade R reader, thanks to the BIDC programme. His teacher, who helped him channel his energy towards reading books, says Thobela now understands the reading text at a level above most Grade 6 children. The boy says he "loves seeing the words" in his Xhosa home language and would like to be a teacher when he grows up.

Continued on page 25

# Youth Champions in Action

## Monitoring the implementation of the SDGs in Africa

**W**ith so much attention being paid to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Africa, it is becoming increasingly important to monitor and evaluate the process. And who best to spearhead the process than the people who will benefit the most from the attainment of SDGs—the youth.

To this end, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in South Africa, recently participated in a four-day workshop hosted Africa Monitor in Kempton Park for more than 30 Youth Champions from six African countries from Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal and Zambia. The aim of the training was to empower the young people with skills for data collection to monitor the implementation of SDGs in their countries. The training was part of the third phase of the Voice Africa Future Campaign, an initiative by African Monitor, a development aid monitoring group, designed to strengthen the capacity and ability of young people to engage policymakers and influence the implementation of SDGs.

The discussions focused on innovative partnerships the Youth Champions need to build to conduct effective advocacy with key stakeholders in their countries. The UNDP's Programme Manager on Governance, Bongani Matomela, shared UNDP's experience and the work done with partners such as African Monitor on gaining the support of partners in implementing SDGs in South Africa.

The Youth Champions expressed concern over the realistic nature of the SDGs and the chances for African countries to achieve

them. Some of their questions centred around climate change and industrializing in a sustainable way. They also wanted to know how they could build and sustain partnerships in their countries to adapt SDGs to their local communities. They also asked questions that are sometimes overlooked like, "What informed the colours and numbers of the SDGs as opposed to alphabets in the MDGs [Millennium Development Goals]?"

Mr. Matomela expressed UNDP's appreciation of the Youth Champions' contributions during the discussions on implementing the SDGs, which "are ambitious in nature and built upon the foundation of the unfinished business of the MDGs." He pointed out that African countries are committed to the 2030 Development Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063, the mechanisms that aim to ensure continuity and commitment towards meeting the SDGs targets.

Other frameworks that have been put into effect include the climate change protocol and the Paris Agreement which address sustainable industrialization, and the global climate change fund for financing SDGs. On tailoring SDGs to local conditions, UNDP shared an example where South Africa has translated the SDGs into local languages to help popularize them and aid understanding by communities. The discussions emphasized the importance of forming partnerships with the assistance of UNDP offices in their respective countries.

The Youth Champions' SDGs implementation and monitoring project receives support from Southern African and West African branches of the Open Society Initiative.

### SPEAKING ON THEIR EXPERIENCE OF BEING A YOUTH CHAMPION



Ramatoulaye Badji (25) and Mareme Diop (24) from Senegal

"We are active members of the ROJALNU network and that is how we were identified to take part in this workshop. We have a lot of experience in leadership, and this seminar experience has uplifted our leadership role. When we get back home, we are looking forward to teaching others what we have learned. We must implement this project in our locality."



Budani Bulayani (25) from Botswana

"This is a great opportunity for me personally to interact with other Africans and get to know what is happening in their countries. I am amazed at how much we have in common. The programme has taught me a lot more about surveys and research and what to expect when in the field. I am the Youth Champion of YALDA (Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development in Africa) and non-sporting clubs at Botho University. The Master Leadership class has exposed me to many views, expectations and benefits of leadership. I take away the law of trade-off as a leadership quality that I want to live with!"

# Partners display the fruits of joint projects at the Africa Energy Indaba

**T**here was a hive of activity and excitement at the 2018 Africa Energy Indaba held in Johannesburg early this year. The UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) teamed South African government, institutional partners and the Southern African Development Community (SADC)'s Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency to showcase their joint projects.

The Indaba, which attracted many participants from Africa, provided an opportunity to exchange ideas, knowledge and experience of initiatives that serve Sustainable Development Goal 9, which aims to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

The Low Carbon Transport South Africa project, which is being implemented in partnership with the South African National Energy Development Institute, drew many interested visitors with its display of an electric Nissan Leaf, a vehicle used by the Department of Trade and Industry to demonstrate the use of technology in mitigating climate change and the department's work on green transport.

Working with relevant departments, the project aims to promote the general acceptance of electric vehicles and non-motorized transport, including the growth of the Electric Vehicles Industry Association (EVIA), which brings together industry, government and academia to address the value chain of the electric vehicle industry. Alongside electric vehicles, this initiative provides support to integrated EcoMobility, including non-motorized transport, to selected cities.

UNIDO's goal is to implement technical cooperation projects which can be absorbed into the core business of local partner institutions to allow national ownership. With the assistance of the former Minister of Science and Technology and now Minister of Higher Education, MP Naledi Pandor, the programme has contributed to the entrepreneurial development of more than 607 clean technology innovators in energy efficiency, renewable energy, water conservation and waste management.

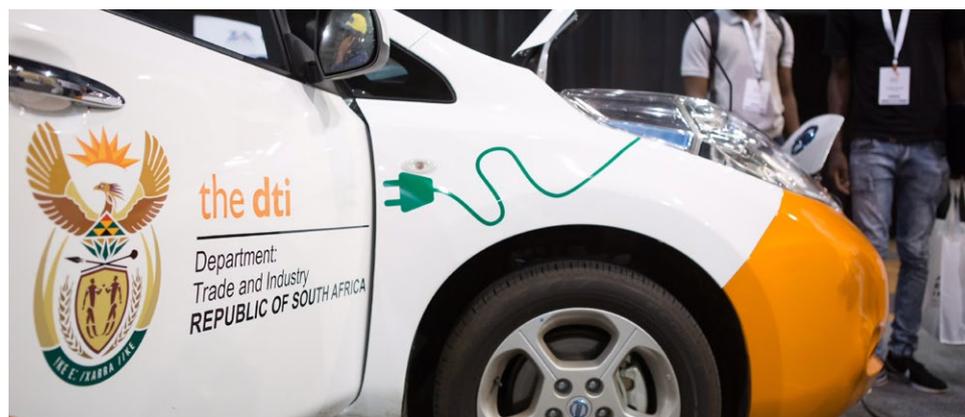
As part of a global programme, the top three entrepreneurial candidates selected in South Africa went on to compete with their international counterparts in San Francisco and Los Angeles at the Cleantech Global Forum organized by the Cleantech Open.

With energy being a core element to economic growth and industrial development, the second phase of the Industrial Energy Efficiency project is being implemented in partnership with the National Cleaner Production Centre and co-financed by the Department of Trade and Industry. The project has supported large industries

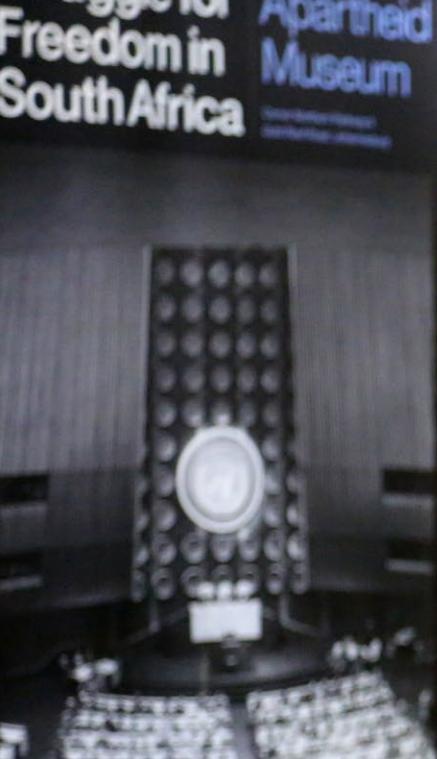
in South Africa to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions, to become more competitive. It has also led to the creation of jobs through energy savings in kilowatt terms and in financial savings.

To date the project contributed to: 2,120 GWh of energy saved (the equivalent of 295 000 middle-income homes electrified for the year); R1.7 billion (about US\$148 million) saved in energy costs; 2 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e mitigated; and 1,744 jobs created or retained as a result of project interventions; world class training programmes developed in energy management and energy systems optimization; and more than 3,000 people trained, including experts trained for the benefit of their plants, for the South African industry and for other countries.

The second phase of the Industrial Energy Efficiency project, which is funded by the Global Environmental Facility, builds on the achievements of the first phase and seeks to offer greater support to the Department of Energy in the planning and execution of its energy efficiency vision for South Africa. 🌍



The DTI's Electric Vehicle drew lots of interest from participants at the Africa Energy Indaba



# UN Youth Envoy

## engages UN staff in South Africa

By Ziyanda Ngoma

**J**ayathma Wickramanayake, the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, met with UN staff based in Pretoria as part of her four-day official visit to South Africa. The townhall-style meeting brought together staff from all agencies to talk about the office of the youth envoy's priorities on youth and the role of UN in promoting more meaningful engagements with young people.

The UN staff raised several issues. One of the questions asked was about some of the UN's unpaid internship programmes and how the unpaid work affects young people's ability to join the UN as interns and how the years of job experience as a minimum requirement affect youth in joining the organization. They noted that for developed countries, the Junior Professional Officer programme (JPO) offers opportunities within the

UN system that are not immediately available to youth in poor countries. In response, the youth envoy noted that unpaid work, labour exploitation and a general review of the internship programme at the UN is an important item on the Secretary-General's agenda. This is one of the issues the envoy had been tasked to make specific recommendations on. In addition, Ms. Wickramanayake noted that job experience was no longer the same as it used to be in the past. Access to information and training opportunities mean that it now takes people a shorter time to learn or understand something than it did 30 years ago. Hence the thinking on job experience needs to change.

The envoy also noted that indeed some countries were investing in specific positions for young people through the JPO programme. But in addition, these countries are also

providing specific quotas to youth from poor countries, citing Italy as an example of one such country, which is planning to allocate a quarter of its JPO positions to young professionals from developing countries.

The envoy also briefed the staff on her mandate, noting that her office was the link between youth in local communities and policy makers, including the Secretary-General, at the UN headquarters, where issues concerning the future of young people are discussed and policies formulated. Her office has the responsibility to bring the work of the UN closer to young people. She urged UN agencies to look for innovative ways to engage youth. Ms. Wickramanayake challenged the staff to think differently about the role young people could play professionally, underscoring the examples of disruptions and leadership the youth are showing as entrepreneurs. 🌍

# Lawmakers commit to use the power of science, technology and innovation

Parliamentarians and high-level officials from Southern African countries who recently attended a capacity building workshop on Science Technology and Innovation (STI) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Pretoria pledged to engage with academics and policy makers to use STI to boost the economy and leave no one behind.

In a document outlining their decisions at the end of their meeting, the lawmakers acknowledged the central role played by STI in the economy in achieving the SDGs. They agreed to gather and create the necessary knowledge, practices, innovations and technologies needed to address

current and future global challenges. They also recognized that parliaments were a strategic partner in establishing good governance in STI.

The Parliamentarians urged the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the International Council for Science (ICSU) to serve as knowledge brokers. This would enable them to offer the necessary technical support to improve the research and innovation capacity and capabilities of academics, policy makers, and stakeholders in new and emerging areas of STI in the region. The

lawmakers also urged UNESCO and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat to create a platform for dialogue and cooperation among all interested parties.

The UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa also organized a similar three-day workshop in partnership with South Africa's Department of Science and Technology, SADC Secretariat and the SADC Parliamentary Forum. Participants included parliamentarians from SADC, other selected African countries and STI senior officials from the region. 

Continued from page 21

In a moving scene, the principal invited the boy's mother, Nonkanyiso, to listen to her son read to his classmates. After reading excerpts of a short story in a clear voice that showed an understanding of the text he was reading, his classmates gave him an enthusiastic applause. Nonkanyiso smiled quietly, and said Comrade is "very curious and always asks lots of questions."

Saadhna Panday, an education specialist at UNICEF, advised the principal to invite parents regularly to come and listen to their children read to foster a culture of reading outside the classroom.

To the programme's credit, two children at Dlangwezwa Primary School passed their recent Mathematics Common paper examinations and were awarded

scholarships to attend one of the best schools in the province.

Not far from Dlangwezwa Primary is Maje Senior Primary School where 11-year-old Angel Zinhle Madikizela is in Grade 6. As a beneficiary of this programme, Angel began reading stories in Xhosa when she started school. Today, she is an active member of her school's Reading Club and is an enthusiastic supporter of the power of reading. She writes poetry and advises others to always "think before you write". School Principal Ace Gqamane says Angel was recently placed second at the District Level Spelling Bee and has done well in Xhosa spelling competitions.

Comrade and Angel are but two examples of the power of innovative learning initiatives in shaping a



UNICEF SA Education Specialist, Saadhna Panday with the Principal, Zamuxolo Mdatya of Dlangwezwa Senior Primary School

positive future for young learners. Principal Mdatya credits the BIDC programme for helping him and his teaching staff realize that the foundation phase of teaching is critical to a child's development. They now recognize that programmes that encourage innovation in teaching and learning are critical as they encourage children to aspire for a future out of the cycle of poverty. 

# World Health Organization helps scale up South Africa's response to listeriosis outbreak



**S**ince January 2017, South Africa has experienced the world's largest outbreak of listeriosis. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), listeriosis affects a variety of animals. It infects people when they consume contaminated foods, particularly unpasteurized milk, soft cheeses, vegetables and prepared meat products such as pâté. Unlike most food bacteria, listeria multiplies readily in refrigerated foods that have been contaminated.

As of 26 March 2018, a total of 982 laboratory-confirmed listeriosis cases had been identified, of which 189 had died. These cases have been reported to National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) from all provinces since 1 January 2017. About 80 percent of the cases came from three provinces: Gauteng Province had 59 percent of the cases, Western Cape had 12 percent and cases from KwaZulu-Natal accounted for 7 percent. The most affected age group (41 percent) is the newborns who are less than 28 days old.

Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi, the Minister of Health of South Africa, confirmed the outbreak source in March as being ready-to-eat meat products (polony) from one producing company, which also exports the product to 15 countries in the region. A recall of the affected products was effected within South Africa and in countries that import the products from South Africa.

In support of South Africa's response to the outbreak, WHO has worked with Government in the following areas:

## **Outbreak investigation:**

*In January 2018, a WHO Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network*

*(GOARN) mission supported the Department of Health in investigating the source of the outbreak. The mission participated in sampling suspected food-producing factories. WHO helped to identify the source of the listeria outbreak as the ready-to-eat meat products (polony) produced by a single company.*

## **Surveillance:**

*WHO continues to support South Africa in strengthening the surveillance of cases, conducting laboratory investigations and managing cases that have been confirmed.*

## **Public health messages:**

*The Department of Health has widely disseminated WHO preventative messages, "Five Keys to Safer Food" translated in nine local languages to educate the population and to promote safe food handling behaviours. WHO is developing further materials to support risk communications and community engagement in South Africa and other countries.*

## **Food exports:**

*Through the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN), WHO sought further information regarding export of affected products to inform affected countries so they can take appropriate measures to protect their populations.*

## **Incident management activation:**

*WHO has activated its internal incident management system to support the government in responding to this outbreak. This includes the repurposing of the WHO country office staff to cover critical functions; deployment of experts in the areas of food safety, Emergency Operations*

*Centre (EOC), epidemiology and risk communication in support of the government lead multi-sectoral response.*

## **Trade bans:**

*WHO is closely monitoring the application of trade bans by neighbouring countries. To date, 12 countries have reportedly banned the import of meat products from South Africa, and three countries have extended these bans to include dairy and agricultural products. WHO advises against the application of unjustified trade bans.*

*WHO does media monitoring of information and trade measures in relation to this outbreak. It verifies, through National IHR (International Health Regulations) focal points, these media signals and makes the information available to other States Parties through the Event Information Site.*

*If countries implement broader trade bans that go beyond the implicated products, WHO reaches out to States Parties implementing such measures to request the public health rationale and justification, if not received from State Party within 48 hours of implementation.*

*WHO has reached out to 17 African nations to provide support for preparedness and response to the listeriosis outbreak which is now threatening other countries on the continent. Additional experts are being deployed to South Africa in food safety, risk communication and epidemiology. Lesotho and Swaziland have also each received one expert to strengthen their respective listeriosis preparedness and response. 🌍*



Making opportunity possible, 19-year old Julian Morudi from Tembisa.

# Techno Girl: making opportunities possible

By Sudeshan Reddy

**J**ob shadowing is one of the most effective ways for students to learn more about a career. It gives them a first-hand opportunity to observe experts going about their daily tasks. Techno Girl, an innovative job shadowing programme started by the South Africa's Department of Basic Education and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) in South Africa, is one such initiative.

The programme involves female high school students who have an interest in and display an aptitude for careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. With the assistance of UNICEF, the students are identified and placed in a structured job shadowing initiative within the private and public sectors.

Julian Morudi, a 19-year old girl from Tembisa township just outside Johannesburg, was part of a group of girls selected to intern at Dimension Data, a digital solutions company. It was while at the company that Julian was inspired by her colleagues, some of whom shared similarly disadvantaged backgrounds.

Their mentor encouraged them to create "vision boards" of their aspirations. Julian soon realized that it was not how one begins their journey, but rather about their determination, hard work and support from families, peers and mentors.

Julian graduated from high school in 2016 with six distinctions. Her aim is to pursue a bachelor of science degree at the Johannesburg-based

University of Witwatersrand after the job shadowing programme. She is determined to overcome the tough economic circumstances that have forced her family to depend on government grants for child and disability support.

When asked how she copes with her living conditions and still manages to achieve such remarkable academic results, Julian responded: "I make sure I am at school by 6am to study before class and I wake up in the middle of the night to study again." Julian's vision is to have a successful career, and with initiatives like Techno Girl programme, her future looks bright. 🌈



## CANCER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN



Sindiswa Mathiso, UN Wellness Coordinator

**T**he United Nations Resident Coordinator in South Africa, Nardos Bekele-Thomas, has urged UN staff to be responsible in taking care of their health and general wellness. Addressing staff at a cancer awareness event held in late March at the UN Library in Pretoria, the resident coordinator said the organization has a duty to ensure that health and wellness is made a priority in the workplace.

The cancer awareness campaign, which is part of a series of planned wellness activities of the UN to be rolled out this year, was attended by dozens of people. The Wellness Coordinator, Sindiswa Mathiso, reiterated the importance of screening, explaining

that an organizational culture that is supportive of physical, emotional and social well-being of its employees builds their morale and self-satisfaction.

As part of the event, a representative from the Cancer Association of South Africa displayed various organs and foods and explained to participants how different types of food affect the body.

UN staff members received screenings for several types of cancer. Thirty-four men tested for prostate specific antigen (PSA), 31 received skin examinations, 47 staff members underwent clinical breast screening, 64 were tested for both blood glucose and blood pressure. As a result of the positive response from staff members, the wellness team plans to organize similar events in the future. 🌈

# CAPE TOWN WATER TAPS RUNNING DRY

South Africa's second biggest city averts a water crisis—for now

By Masimba Tafirenyika

**M**ohammed Allie's wife has given up showers while Cape Town, South Africa's second-largest city after Johannesburg, contemplates life without a drop of water in its taps. Allie, a BBC correspondent, related his wife's experience with the shrinking supply of water, caused by an historic three-year drought.

"[My wife] boils about 1.5 litres of water and mixes it with about a litre of tap water to have her daily wash, while the rest of us catch the slow-running water in a bucket for re-use in the toilet cistern."

Mr. Allie joins over three million Capetonians taking extreme steps to save water in a last-ditch attempt to evade disaster, or Day Zero—when dam levels hit 13.5%, a level too low to keep taps running. The plan is when Day Zero finally strikes, residents would have to line up at about 200 designated water collection points monitored by security to get their daily allocation of 25 litres per person.

Since the beginning of the year, Day Zero has been a moving target. Originally set for 11 May, it was later pushed to 1 June and then to July 9. Thanks to the residents' cooperation with strict water-rationing measures, the day of reckoning is unlikely to happen this year, Mmusi Maimane,

the leader of the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA), announced in March.

Tucked at the southern tip of the African continent, where the Atlantic Ocean meets its younger sibling, the Indian Ocean, Cape Town—one of the world's most popular tourist destinations—is joining the list of global cities affected by serious water shortages attributed to climate change.

## Averting day zero

As the clock ticks and the seasonal rains refuse to arrive, Cape Town has launched a flurry of measures to avert disaster. These range from setting up recycling and desalination plants to extracting groundwater by drilling boreholes as well as imposing tighter restrictions on water usage. The measures, however, are late in coming. The city's population has grown by more than 80% over the past 20 years to over four million, while infrastructure has lagged behind.

Desalination plants, which process seawater to make it drinkable, are expensive and require time to set up. According to the Sunday Times, a national weekly, a large desalination plant costs between \$417 million and \$1.5 billion. By the end of February, the city had completed more than

two-thirds of the work required to install four desalination plants of varying sizes.

According to a local environmental advocacy group, Philippi Horticultural Area Campaign, the city council failed to invest in the mass infrastructure necessary to meet the water demands of an expanding city. The group opposes desalination plants, maintaining that "desalination is regressive—its cost will be borne disproportionately by the poor, and its technologies are already outmoded and superseded by more sustainable environmentally proactive methods of water conservation."

Compounding the crisis caused by drought is the fact that, according to scientists at the University of the Western Cape, Cape Town's surrounding seawater is contaminated by chemicals. Their report last year drew attention to "the probable presence of pathogens, and literally thousands of chemicals of emerging concern" in the city's seawater. The researchers discovered "high levels of microbial pollution and 15 pharmaceutical and common household chemicals" in various samples taken from the city's Granger Bay. City authorities dispute the findings.

Some experts view the water crisis in terms of equity and justice. Cape

Town is the richest city in South Africa, a country with one of the worst income inequalities in the world. Many of the country's wealthiest citizens and some of the world's best-known celebrities own properties in the city's posh suburbs dotted with impressive mansions and surrounded by acres of lush gardens.

For the city's poor residents, Day Zero will be nothing new. In Khayelitsha, the largest and fastest-growing township in South Africa, tens of thousands of people have no access to piped water, according to Beyond Our Borders, a local advocacy group.

Anele Goba, a 34-year-old resident of Khayelitsha, told Independent Online, a South African news site, that she had little sympathy for the alarm of the rich. "'Day Zero' would give them a taste of how slum dwellers live," she said. "Maybe that wouldn't be a bad thing."

Musa Gwebani, a project manager with the Social Justice Coalition, says that, "For the first time, everyone in Cape Town has to live with water restrictions that are a daily reality for all slum dwellers."

Such reflections of the less fortunate have been picked up by Moody's Investors Service, the US-based credit ratings agency, which warns that due to Cape Town's "acute income inequality," the water crisis poses a possible threat to social order.

Cape Town's water crisis has the potential to spark political fights in the run-up to national elections in 2019. The city's mayor, Patricia de Lille, is a senior member of the opposition DA. Her predecessor, Helen Zille, a former DA leader, is the premier of the Western Cape Province, the only one of the country's nine provinces not under the control of the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC).

Early this year, the city council accused the ANC government of bureaucratic foot-dragging in declaring the drought a national disaster. After months of a political

debate between DA and ANC senior officials, the government declared the drought a national disaster in February.

In his 2018 budget speech, embattled finance minister Malusi Gigaba (now minister of home affairs) allocated \$500 million dollars to Western Cape's drought relief efforts. For its part, Cape Town increased its capital expenditure budget on water projects to \$583 million in 2018 from \$492 million in 2017.

### Economic impact

Cape Town's water crisis has affected not only the political dynamics of the city but also, in various ways, its economy and sanitation, with effects ranging from climbing borrowing costs and sinking revenue from water rates to public health risks from poor sanitation. In 2017 the share of the city's municipal water revenue to its operating income was as much as 10%, notes the Moody's report. Released at the end of January, the report did not imply a review of the city's credit rating, but if such a review happens, it could affect Cape Town's bond ratings.

"The city will lose a portion of this [water] revenue and will have increased operational costs from crisis management policies and programmes, and implementation of water supply projects," says Moody's. A decline in agriculture and tourism, the city's major industries and its biggest water guzzlers, would increase job losses, which would be a blow to tax revenues.

According to estimates from the government's Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the impact of the drought on the economy of the Western Cape Province will be \$492 million, with exports expected to decline by between 13% and 20% this year. The province's agriculture sector accounts for almost a quarter of South Africa's total value from agriculture.

Surprisingly, the city's property market has largely escaped unscathed—for now. Richard Day, the regional head of Pam Golding Properties, told Property24, an online real estate company, of buyer hesitancy recently, but added that this was largely due to property prices as well as recent political and economic uncertainty. He said he had not seen any signs that residents might soon be relocating from the province permanently because of the water crisis.

### El Niño-related droughts

Cape Town's water crisis is a symptom of a much wider and more prolonged problem facing not only South Africa but the whole Southern African region. Over the past several years, the region has watched with frustration as the effects of El Niño-related droughts took their toll. South Africa has suffered one of the worst meteorological droughts (dry weather patterns) since 1904, with the average rainfall from 2014 through 2016 dropping to 403mm from 608mm, according to the Mail & Guardian, a national weekly.

The Food and Agriculture Organization says 45 countries, including South Africa, are experiencing critical water shortages. And according to UN Environment estimates, Cape Town's population almost doubled between 1995 and 2018, while its dam storage increased by a paltry 15% over the same period.

Given the pace of climate change and the El Niño effect, South Africa's rainfall patterns are likely to worsen. The only options left for large cities like Cape Town are to develop water infrastructure that meets the needs of a growing population and for residents to change their water usage.

"Less frequent rainfall and a changing climate mean that drier conditions are likely to become the new normal," says UN Environment.

*This article was first published by the UN's Africa Renewal magazine.* 

# Staff profiles



**DR JANICE GOLDING**

**D**r. Janice Golding is the new chair of the UN Country Team's working group called Greening the Blue. A South African national originally from Cape Town, she joined the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in 2016 as its programme manager for energy and environment.

## What is your work with UNDP?

I work with the Government of South Africa to manage and implement the largest portfolio of environmental projects in the sub-Saharan African region financed by the Global Environmental Facility. My day-to-day duties centre around strategic oversight, and providing leadership to various teams who implement projects. The projects cover many areas of discipline determined by national development priorities in biodiversity, water, waste, climate change and energy.

## What was your career before joining UNDP?

Prior to joining UNDP, I served at the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Cooperation at the Embassy of Switzerland here in South Africa, where I was the focal point for green investment development and trade promotion. I also served as chair of the Southern African Specialist Group for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), an international NGO headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. In 2003, I was the first recipient of a scholarship award granted by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in the UK, which led me my graduation with a PhD from the University of Oxford. I have additional postgraduate qualifications in biodiversity conservation and human rights. When I began my professional life, I started off as a research scientist, and did field work in many African countries.

## What are your dreams and aspirations?

The one that comes up most is to make a difference and help create a better world.

## What do you like doing in your free time?

Since I am from a partly-South African, partly-Swedish family, I enjoy spending time with friends and family in natural environments in both continents. Attending cultural events and yoga are amongst my hobbies. I am a great enthusiast of indigenous plants and sustainable use. I would like to improve my piano and singing ability.

## What is your motto in life?

We are all living together on a single planet threatened by our own actions. The most powerful force for justice and equality on this planet is human cooperation and serving others.



**UNICE MOHLAMONYANE**

## Full name and educational background:

My name is Unice Mohlamonyane, and my maiden surname is Chabedi. I'm 31 years old and was born in Limpopo Province in a village called Jane Furse. I am the first born with four siblings and I was raised by both parents and I thank God they are still alive.

I completed my matric in 2004 at Rebone Secondary School and moved to Pretoria in 2005 where I graduated

with a Diploma in Computer Literacy. I also have a Diploma in Business Management with Pretoria Institute of Learning. I did few courses and graduated with certificates in First Aid, Procurement Course in Zambia, and Certification Programme in Project Management with Wits University. I recently completed the following Green jobs courses in Turin Italy. Concepts and Practices on Sustainable Development in Green jobs; Green jobs and Climate Change resilient; Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE Academy).

## My career:

I started working for Van Greunen Attorney in 2008 as an administration clerk before I joined International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2010. I am working with South African Department of Public Works under the Expanded Public Works Programmes as the finance and administrative assistant to the project. My current interest is resolving climate and planet issues hence my training in Turin for those green jobs programmes. I am now a postgraduate diploma student for Sustainable Development at Stellenbosch University.

## My free time:

I recently joined a gym, so I spent most of my time there. Otherwise I'm an indoor person so I like to read and spend time with family.

## My dreams and aspiration:

My dream is to be able to assist with solutions to climate issues of today.

## My motto in life:

Remember you only live once, so do what you do best and leave a trade mark for the future to see that you ever existed when you are gone.

# UN Games unite staff: South Africa to host the 2018 Africa UN Games



**T**he United Nations in South Africa will host the 11th UN Games in Mpumalanga Province from 31 August to 2 September 2018, with competitors attending from agencies across Africa. The event will feature a range of sports, including football, netball, volleyball, basketball, tennis, swimming, golf, athletics, darts, chess, table tennis, snooker and other fun games like egg race and sack race. All staff are eligible to compete for the countries in which they are stationed.

The UN recognizes the importance of sports for public health and to raise awareness on Sustainable Development Goal 3, which aims to ensure healthy lives and to promote the wellbeing all people at all ages. The African UN Games have been held annually in Southern Africa since 2007. South Africa last hosted the games in 2012, and last year they were held in Lesotho. The African UN Games were established in parallel to the UN Inter-Agency Games which have been hosted primarily in Europe and North America since 1971.

The intention of the games is to build a culture of peace and tolerance by bringing UN staff together, across national and other boundaries to promote understanding, mutual respect and under the UN's 'Delivering as One' approach.

This year's UN Games are expected to bring teams from Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. All UN agencies in Africa are invited to form a national team and participate.

The Chair of the UN Games Local Organizing Committee in South Africa, Sipehele Chingono of UNICEF, said that Team SA is determined to win this year after coming second overall in 2017. "I am confident that Team SA will win the games this year and we call on all UN Staff to participate in the various games to make this a success." 🌍

## GREENING THE BLUE

**T**he UN in South Africa working group on the Greening the Blue, a United Nations-wide initiative launched in 2010 to raise awareness on sustainable issues involving UN staff and external partners, has opened discussions with interested partners in an effort to jump start its plans for 2018.

The group plans to focus its work on reducing carbon footprint by the UN in South Africa by promoting efficient use of electricity and water, creating less waste, raising awareness of the UN's carbon print to identify ways of changing behaviour patterns in offices and at home. The group will highlight results that have been achieved to date, how to build on them and mobilizing all staff to get involved.

This year the Greening the Blue Working Group will work with staff to promote responsible paper consumption and waste management; the reduction of fuel and gas emission for air and ground travel; and responsible use of electricity and water. The group plans to send all UN staff weekly information tips that could easily be applied at home or at work.

In South Africa, Greening the Blue is one of several working groups that function under the Operations Management Team. Janice Golding, from the UN Development Programme (UNDP) chairs group, and is deputised by Unice Mohlamonyane from the International Labour Organization (ILO). 🌍

### IS THE UN CURRENTLY A LEADER IN ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY?



# UNHCR's Conference Centre is **OPEN FOR BUSINESS**

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Regional Representation for Southern Africa in Pretoria is offering conferencing facilities to UN sister agencies, international organizations and diplomatic representations.

Premises – located next to Brooklyn Mall – have variety of layout options and breakaway rooms suitable for meetings, workshops or even larger conferences up to 120 people.

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