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## An Idea Whose Time Has Come



**MISTRA's Monthly Briefing** is a newsletter from the Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection. It aims to inform MISTRA's partners about the Institute's research, strategic reflections, published papers, and other news relating to the network of people and organisations committed to MISTRA's strategic engagement with the issues facing South Africa. The briefing is issued monthly.

In issue **Number#20** we report on a roundtable on *"The legacies of Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr and Mahatma Gandhi: A humanitarian approach to service delivery"* hosted jointly by the **Centre for Scholarship at the University of Pretoria** and MISTRA. The panel comprised **Prof Leland Ware**, of the University of Delaware, **Sello Hatang**, Chief Executive Officer of the Nelson Mandela Foundation, **Prof Dilip Menon**, a comparative historian and the Mellon Chair in Indian Studies at the University of Witwatersrand, and it was chaired by **Prof Sibusiso Vil-Nkomo**, Chairperson of the MISTRA Board.

We also report on *The African Transformation Report 2014* launched by the **African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET)** in partnership with MISTRA and on a Dispatch Dialogues event on Poverty, patronage, inequality with **Dr Mcebisi Ndletyana** and **Dr Somadoda Fikeni** hosted by the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper and the University of Fort Hare.

We include a range of articles by **Joel Netshitenzhe**, **Yacoob Abba-Omar**, **Dr Mcebisi Ndletyana**, **David Maimela** and **Catherine Kannemeyer**, including a research paper on *"Why inequality matters: South African trends and Interventions"*.

This Monthly Briefing also features an interview with MISTRA Board Member, **Dr Tanya Abrahamse** on *"How can scientists make their work relevant for policy?"* at the Inaugural meeting of the United Nation's Scientific Advisory Board in Berlin.

And we're proud to announce that MISTRA is partnering with The Green Fund of the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) to implement one of its key priority research projects (PRP) – Earth, Wind and Fire: Unpacking the political, economic and security implications of discourse on the Green Economy.

We hope you find our Monthly Briefings informative and invite you to visit our website, where you will find more information on our research, key papers, media on MISTRA, as well as an [Expression of Interest Form](#) if you are interested in participating in any of the Institute's research projects.

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# MISTRA STRATEGIC REFLECTIONS

**Leaders, Legacies and Lessons: MISTRA Roundtable on "The legacies of Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr and Mahatma Gandhi: A humanitarian approach to service delivery"**



L-R: Prof Sibusiso Vil-Nkomo, Prof Leland Ware, Sello Hatang, Prof Dilip Menon

The Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection convened a Roundtable discussion on 18th February 2014 in partnership with the University of Pretoria (UP) to examine several key issues on public service, drawing on the legacies, values and strategies of Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jnr, and Mahatma Gandhi.

***"The legacies of Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr and Mahatma Gandhi: A humanitarian approach to service delivery"*** was hosted jointly by MISTRA and the UP Centre for Scholarship. The panel comprised Prof Leland Ware, of the University of Delaware, Sello Hatang, Chief Executive Officer of the Nelson Mandela Foundation, Prof Dilip Menon, a comparative historian and the Mellon Chair in Indian Studies at the University of Witwatersrand. Prof Sibusiso Vil-Nkomo, Chairperson of the MISTRA Board of Governors, chaired the discussion.

## Launch of the African Transformation Report 2014

The African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET) in partnership with the Mapungubwe Institute launched ACET's **2014 African Transformation Report** on **Monday, 3 March 2014** at the Radisson Blu Gautrain Hotel, Sandton.

The good news about Africa's recent, rapid economic growth has been well



documented. But to ensure that growth is sustainable and continues to improve the lives of many more Africans, countries now need to promote economic transformation.

The premise of the 2014 African Transformation Report is that African economies need more than growth – if they are to transform, they need growth with **DEPTH**. That is, they need to **Diversify** their production, make their **Exports** competitive, increase the **Productivity** of their farms, firms, and government offices, and upgrade the **Technology** they use throughout the economy – all to improve **Human well-being**.



L-R: Dr. K.Y. Amoako, Joel Netshitenzhe, James Mwangi

The 2014 African Transformation Report is based on studies of 15 African countries (Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia), which together add up to more than 70% of Sub-Saharan Africa's GDP. The Report introduces the African Transformation Index, which ranks countries on their progress on the five (DEPTH) measures of transformation.

Founded in 2007 by former Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, K.Y Amoako, ACET is an economic policy institute supporting long-term growth with transformation of Africa's economies as the core of its research and output. Based in Accra, ACET has a core staff of about 30 from various sub-regions of the continent plus the Diaspora, augmented by a global network of development experts and economic role-players.

#### Program

- **Welcome - Joel Netshitenzhe**, Exec. Dir. of MISTRA
- **Background to the ATR – Dr. K.Y. Amoako**, President, ACET
- **Introduction of contributors to the report – Dr. K.Y. Amoako**
- **Presentation of the ATR – Dr. Yaw Ansu**, Chief Economist, ACET

### Moderated discussion.

- Moderator: **Dr Tanya Abrahamse** (MISTRA Board & CEO of South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI))
- **Dr. Yaw Ansu**, Chief Economist, ACET
- **Joel Netshitenzhe**, Exec. Dir. of MISTRA
- **Dr. K.Y. Amoako**, President, ACET
- **James Mwangi**, Global Managing Partner, Dalberg
- **Amb. Febe Potgieter-Gqubule**, Advisor to AU Commission Chairperson
- **Prof. Alan Hirsch**, Director of Graduate Studies, University of Cape Town

Below L-R: Tito Mboweni, Piroshaw Camay, Dr Sibusiso Vil-Nkomo & Dr Yaw Ansu

[To view \*2014 African Transformation Report\* and the country rankings click here.](#)

[To view a video preview of the 2014 African Transformation Report click here.](#)

\* *To view a picture gallery of the 2014 African Transformation Report, click on the image below.*



### Dialogues: Poverty, patronage, inequality with Mcebisi Ndletyana and Somadoda Fikeni

On the 11 February 2014, **Dr Mcebisi Ndletyana** (Head: Faculty of Political Economy) and **Dr Somadoda Fikeni** (an independent researcher) addressed delegates at the *Dispatch Dialogues* hosted by the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper and the University of Fort Hare at the East London Guild Theatre.

The talk was based on the research report published in November 2013 by MISTRA titled *Patronage Politics Divides Us: A Study of Poverty, Patronage and Inequality in South Africa*.

*Patronage Politics Divides Us: A Study of Poverty, Patronage and Inequality in South Africa* can be purchased from MISTRA for **R175** (excluding postage costs). Please contact:

**Angela McClelland**  
Real African Publishers Pty Ltd

## Patronage Politics Divides Us



A Study of Poverty, Patronage and Inequality in South Africa



Mcebisi Ndletyana, Phisoana Oupa Makhalemele and Ralph Mathokga

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## Why Inequality Matters: South African Trends and Interventions



On 25 November 2013, Concerned Africans Forum (CAF) convened at the the University of Johannesburg Faculty where MISTRA Executive Director, Mr **Joel Netshitenzhe**, delivered the keynote address which focused on the extent and implications of inequality in South Africa.

### Why Inequality Matters: South African Trends and Interventions

The dynamics of inequality in South Africa have evinced various trends since the advent of democracy. While income inequality among the races may have somewhat declined, this is not necessarily the case with regard to the income gap among various social strata within the population as a whole. Rising income inequality is not unique to South Africa: it finds expression in most OECD countries, and even in countries such as China where poverty has been reduced. Yet Brazil seems to have succeeded in the past few years to buck the trend. What are reasons behind these global trends, and what are the lessons that South Africa can draw from these experiences?

The burden of inequality falls inordinately on the poor and the marginalised. Yet, as Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett demonstrate in their book, ***The Spirit Level***, inequality has a negative impact even on the rich. This relates to such issues as the magnitude of violent crime, educational performance and even teenage pregnancies among both the rich and the poor. It also relates to the magnitude and quality of economic growth. It is therefore in the interest of all sectors of society that inequality is addressed.

In trying to identify holistic approaches to address inequality, it is necessary to look beyond income inequality and interrogate indicators such as assets, access to services and opportunity, and social capital. These indicators articulate with one another in virtuous or adverse ways, depending on the effectiveness or otherwise of the interventions applied. How does South Africa fare in this regard?

Measures required to deal with inequality include the absorption of more people into economic activity, quality education, efficient public services, progressive taxation and appropriate spatial settlement patterns. While economic growth is critical to dealing with inequality, such growth should be pro-poor; and pro-economic and social interventions should be pro-public policy should target both the reduction of poverty and inequality, proceeding from the understanding that the reduction of poverty may not necessarily result in the reduction of inequality.

[To download full paper click here.](#)

**\* A version of this paper was also presented at the HSRC Social Science Research Conference on Inequalities and Justice: Influences, Effects, Intersections and Evidence (26-27 Sep 2013).**

# MISTRA IN THE NEWS

## Catch 'em young, coaches

By Howard Freese

The fact that South African football enjoys remarkable resources, abundant talent and the passionate support of the majority of South Africans, and yet it is unable to achieve satisfactory levels of success and competitiveness locally and internationally is very disappointing.

At the centre of the problem is poor football development, which has a deleterious effect on elite performance and the country's long-term international success and competitiveness.

In a few months time we will be glued to our screens watching countries battle it out for the biggest prize in soccer, the World Cup that is being hosted by Brazil. Sadly South Africa will not be part of the 32 nations or one of the five African teams participating, despite having hosted the most lucrative competition in Africa.

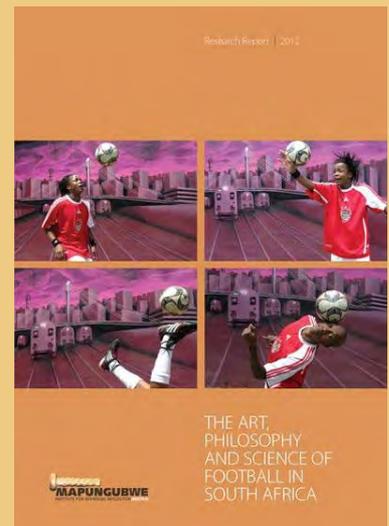
For a country with modern sporting facilities and the richest league in Africa, the national team has underperformed over the past decade. Currently, the team is ranked 54th in the world and is not even in the top five of the CAF rankings; it is currently ranked ninth.

The president of Sifa, Danny Jordaan, has acknowledged that a total revamp is required at Sifa. He further admits that changes are not just required at national level but especially at grassroots level. If we want to build a winning team for the future we have to have efficient structures in place right from the school level.

Pivotal to bringing about a new dawn for football is to acknowledge that South Africa needs systematic youth development programmes.

[To read full article click here.](#)

*[A version of this article that appeared in The New Age newspaper was incorrectly credited to David Maimela. MISTRA regrets the error.](#)*



## EVER thought Tlokwe and Dutywa would ever share anything distinctly common? by Dr Mcebisi Ndletyana

Other than the fact the two towns are both under ANC-controlled municipalities – like hundreds of others – one can't readily think of any other similarities. And once you realise that they're located in different provinces – one in the North West and the other in the Eastern Cape – and are more than 700km apart, similarities seem even more far-fetched. But they're not quite so far-fetched, actually.

ANC councillors, in both Tlokwe and Dutywa have achieved the rare feat of having brought down their own municipalities. And, this was no accident. It was a well-orchestrated plan in both towns. The councillors simply passed a vote of no confidence in their own mayor. All his happened just last year. The result was the fall of their own municipal government.

In Tlokwe, the ANC councillors did it twice – they were quite determined and colluded with the opposition, electing a mayor from their ranks. Nor were the councillors instructed by the party to bring down their own municipality. They acted out of their own volition, united against the party.

*Originally published in The Dispatch Online on 11th February 2014.*

[To read full article, please click here.](#)



## Produce and still perish? – The State, Markets and Job Creation by David Maimela

Apparently, the idea of an open, free-market economy promises 'opportunity', 'growth' and 'competitiveness', among other things. And from these, the expectation of development arises, at least in so far as the promise of free marketeers suggests. In South Africa, although our economy is predominantly capitalist, rhetoric from officialdom usually speaks of a 'mixed economy', where a regulated private sector exists, side by side with a state and public sector. No doubt, our political economic reality requires a strong and capable state that performs the twin strategic tasks of simultaneously transforming itself, whilst transforming social relations, supposedly in the interest of the poor and the working class.

It is often said that societies that get ahead are those that produce goods and services of all kinds, and at scale. With increased competition for markets, a competitive edge is maintained at two levels: innovation and customer service. South Africa can be proud that we have a thriving services sector, thanks to specialised skills, technology and financial services in particular. However, deep structural challenges remain; thus impacting directly on industrialisation and job creation.

Does the idea of an open, free-market economy really deliver on its promises of 'opportunity', 'growth' and 'competitiveness', let alone development? By way of responding to this key question, the following case study may shed some light:

During the summer break, I visited a small tissue paper manufacturing company, Kahle Soft Rolls CC (Kahle), in semi-rural Mkhuhlu, Mpumalanga. The company took a year to get running, and operations began in mid-2013. In effect, Kahle is a small-medium enterprise (SME) that employs two young people who produce, package and distribute toilet rolls to small shop owners with a long-term strategy to increasingly gain market share in surrounding towns and townships.

[To read full article click here.](#)



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## Tale of a visionary and a strategist? By Mcebisi Ndletyana

Nothing is impossible in politics! Mamphela Ramphele joining the DA has reaffirmed this truism. The denials over the weekend were so fierce as to suggest the Agang spokesman took offence at the mere suggestion. It turns out the indignation was fake or was it? Either way, Ramphele's co-option is telling. It's tempting to cast aspersions on her integrity. After all, she had repeatedly maintained she's not a "joiner". Now she has done exactly that, and even sealed it with a kiss, mcwaa, on national TV nogal. Some of her supporters won't spare her their scorn, but this twist is as revealing of our national politics as it is of Ramphele.

Agang's demise is a useful starting point. The party never gained traction. Its growth had hinged on building a leadership collective and organisational network. Neither materialised.

# Tale of a visionary and a strategist?

**N**OTHING is impossible in politics. Mamphela Ramphele joining the DA has reaffirmed this notion. The demands over the weekend were so fierce as to suggest the Agang spokesman is now on the offence at the mere suggestion. It turns out the indignation was false or was at a later stage. Ramphele's co-optation is telling.

It's tempting to cast aspersions on her integrity. After all, she had repeatedly maintained she's not a "joiner". Now she has done exactly that, and even sealed it with a kiss, across an emotional TV night.

Some of her supporters won't spare her that concern, but this time is no revealing of our national politics as it is of Ramphele.

Agang's demise is a useful starting point. The party never gained traction. Its growth had hinged on bulging leadership collective and organisational networks. Neither materialised.

Prominent people who'd professed a keenness to be part of Agang never pitched. Ramphele was dumped, for instance, to face the media alone at the press conference announcing the launch of the party.

Even that event, which was meant to herald a "game-changer" was a hurriedly organised affair. Her purported co-founders based in Joburg never made sufficient preparations, but deserted her instead.

So, why was Ramphele eventually left alone? It could be the supposed co-founders changed their minds – they decided that a new opposition party was not such a good idea, after all.

Financial interests may have had more to do with the change of mind than a dispassionate intellectual reflection.

Risk fear reigned especially if their livelihood depends on public employment, doing business with the state or they need the ruling party's help to secure deals elsewhere. Ramphele is among the few self-sufficient public figures. Opposing the ANC didn't threaten her livelihood. But it is a threat to others.

What was intended to be a one-headed party led by a collective of leaders, eventually became a patron-headed party Ramphele was Agang.

The way it's unfolding is not surprising. It is consistent with the life of the party. Agang had no elected leaders, but volunteers and members led by the founder.

As the founder, Ramphele doesn't seem to have things in it necessary to consult. I suppose the absence of

Though Mamphela Ramphele's move is unlikely to change the outcome of the elections, the DA's new business plan may turn out to be a good investment after all, writes **Mcebisi Ndletyana**



This is no easy task. Sure those "clever blacks" are not happy with the ANC president taking 40 percent of their monthly salaries to build a luxurious house and that he's in the habit of offending on a regular basis.

This infuriates them, but they still trust the ANC to fight for their interests. ANC officials may not use the same published language that pleases middle-class South Africans, but they put their print across and unapologetically.

Can the DA be trusted to fight for the black middle class just as the ANC has been doing?

This is the question whose answer determines the future of the DA. It may be tricky especially for Ramphele. She doesn't do the black solidarity thing well.

She costs herself as a racially uncommitted figure. We do need to be cautious, but we need not do it in a manner that suggests one doesn't matter now.

This sense of the sort of denialism that makes "clever blacks" gnomes.

This means developing a language that both reassures the party's traditional white base and inspires its intended black recruits. Not the present manner we have seen recently. This will be a delicate balance to strike.

The DA also has its fair share of husbands who're likely to wear off the script. I don't envy Helen Zille.

It has a grand problem though. Ramphele brings great promises.

Agang's white-women may get off their sofas to vote for it. With Ramphele at the helm, voting DA no longer feels like a wasted vote.

The party has the potential to grow, which is sufficient to get a significant voice in the polls.

And, pockets of reluctant donors will likely loosen up because Agang and DA policies are not too different.

Members were possibly reluctant to fund them separately because they were unlikely to register optimal impact. Now the DA makes for a great investment in the future of multi-party politics.

Zille may just turn out to be an

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[To download full article click here.](#)

Originally published in The Sunday Independent on 2 February 2014

## The troubled DA-Agang nuptial: Whoever has ears, let them hear By David Maimela

On June 10 1997, the then deputy president, Thabo Mbeki, told the National Assembly that: "Assertions have been made about declining financial management standards in government, which is attributed to inefficient blacks, who, it is said, occupy their positions by virtue of misplaced affirmative action policies. In reality, we are not far from the day when the diplomatic language will slip and the point will be made openly, that 'the Bantus are not yet ready to govern'."

I was reminded of this statement two nights ago when I read DA leader Helen Zille's lament over the brief and tumultuous marriage with Agang's Mamphela Ramphele in her statement titled: "Ramphele's reneging on agreement is a sad day for democracy."

Zille's statement contains language of the kind to which Mbeki was referring 17 years ago.

Zille said: "We felt that Dr Ramphela would help us speed up the realignment of politics." Ramphela has also been parroting the language of "the realignment of politics". But there, in that one line, Zille reveals, albeit diplomatically, that the courtship had nothing to do with Ramphela: "WE felt ... [she] would help US ... ," in the manner of a tool, a spanner, in short, a Trojan horse.

In additional seemingly benign yet revealing language, Zille is not mistaken as to "wie is die baas" – "who is the boss".

As can be expected from a non-racialist like her, Zille has many black friends. So, Ramphela "is a long-time personal friend of mine and I sought to bring her into politics over many years".

Originally published on Thought Leader on 4 February 2014

[Read full article here.](#)

## Here's how we can fix Bafana Bafana

### By Joel Netshitenzhe

The dramatic exit of the national football team from the African Nations Championship (Chan) 2014 tournament last Sunday has caused tempers to flare. This is a reflection of the deep passion South Africans have for the senior national team and the sport in general. Passion has its place in human society and more so in sport. It can be a key driver for the pursuit of excellence. But it can also generate self-immolation. Indeed, the question needs to be posed whether South Africa has sufficiently reflected on the real state of football and the measures required to realise its true potential.

Dispatches

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# Here's how we can fix Bafana Bafana

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Passion has its place in human society and more so in sport. It can be a key driver for the pursuit of excellence. But it can also generate self-immolation. Indeed, the question needs to be posed whether South Africa has sufficiently reflected on the real state of football and the measures required to realise its true potential.

Many who support domestic football confess that, last Sunday, they set out to flip TV channels. Around the same time as the game against Nigeria, Barcelona was playing Levante in a match that was to define the configurations at the top of the Spanish La Liga; and, similarly, Chelsea was battling it out with Manchester United in the English Premier League.

This was perhaps a touch of flagging African pride and a lack of South African patriotism? Or was it, as these football fans explain, a feeling of déjà vu? We have seen it all before, and investing one's emotions in Bafana Bafana has become a serious health hazard.

The fact is that, since for the Iorun moments of the mid-1990s, Bafana Bafana have often flattered to deceive.

Some pundits have advanced interesting technical analysis of the match and Chan 2014 as a whole. They refer to the defensive posture of the coach. They point to that seeming lack of passion in the field.

They argue that, in the game against Nigeria, some of the pillars of the team – specifically from Sundowns and Kaizer Chiefs – were never going to give their all, given the top-of-the-league table clash between the two, four days later.

They refer to the mixed games before the match, with Nigerian coach Stephen Keshi "ambiguously" expressing reverence for Bafana Bafana and the South African

Sport is about the philosophy of human relations; it is an economic sector and involves psychology, medicine, management and other sciences, writes Joel Netshitenzhe



**BUNCH OF LOSERS?** The Bafana Bafana team that crashed out of the 2014 African Nations Championship group stages against Nigeria at Cape Town Stadium last week. The team is now embroiled in controversy as a result of its perennial underachievements. PICTURE: GALLO

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BALANCE SHOULD BE STRUCK BETWEEN LONG-TERM PLANS AND INSTANT GRATIFICATION

ment structures, a functional reserve league, and technical teams staffed by specialists in all areas dominated by the imperatives of modern football.

Arising from the MISTRA research and interactions with Sifa and the PSL, the following issues require addressing:

■ Resolving the tension between Sifa and the PSL and ensuring that the legitimacy and authority of Sifa is earned and asserted in a systematic manner, with both having a professional bureaucracy that transcends electoral cycles.

■ Implementing the variety of youth development strategies that have been identified, using the justice of school sports, the universality of excellence that Sifa proposes and the developmental structures of the PSL, instead, with clear minimum standards to which all should adhere.

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[To read full article click here.](#)

*\*Originally published in The Sunday Independent on 26 January 2014*

## Football an undeniable force for positive change

By David Maimela

Football mirrors our society. It also has the power to inspire people to achieve. South Africans of all hues support football in one manner or another, from factory workers, to service providers, to children, to neighbours and family members.

Due to its global reach and ability to transcend barriers, football is also increasingly used to communicate messages about important human concerns, such as HIV and Aids, racism, xenophobia, education and other social causes.

This year at the G8 summit at Camp David, deliberations were stopped for more than 90 minutes so that the G8 leadership could watch the Uefa Champions League final between Bayern Munich and Chelsea. In the end, Prime Minister David Cameron smiled all the way back to London.

Football has a measurable impact on society and is an undeniable force for positive change. In the autumn of 2010, the institute I work for initiated discussion on a research project aimed at exploring the complex terrain of football in South Africa. The project self-consciously set itself the ambition of identifying interventions that could potentially improve the beautiful game in South Africa.

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## The Uprisings

By Yacoob Abba Omar

Tahrir Square or Taksim Square, Gezi Park, Zucotti Park or Pearl Roundabout: all these urban landmarks have become reference points for the waves of demonstrations, uprisings and protests which have shaken regimes, stirred hitherto complacent elites and opened up prospects for change, sometimes superficial, often transformative. How do we understand this singularity, which led Time magazine to declare 'The Protestor' the person of the year for 2011? Are there underlying forces common to all of them?

Writers have been struggling to get to grips with these various movements; some giving up the attempt at a common explanation, suggesting it is too early to do so. Perry Anderson reached back to the 1810 to 1825 Wars of Liberation in Latin America, the European Revolutions of 1848-49 and the unravelling of the Soviet bloc from 1989 to 1991 to describe the Arab Uprisings of 2011 as a "concatenation of political upheavals, one detonating the other, across an entire region of the world". Alain Badiou took a similar broad historical view, seeing the various uprisings around the world as a moment marking the rebirth of History, with the riots trying to stop the post-1980 re-assertion of imperialism and the rebirth of the only Idea capable of halting capitalism, namely the Idea of Communism.

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*Originally published in The Thinker Volume 59 2013*



## Born frees do not exist

By David Maimela

Post-apartheid South Africa has many myths in different spheres of public life. The sphere of the battle of ideas has its fair share of such mythology. Since 1994, concepts such as South African exceptionalism, rainbow nation, lost generation, post-colony, white

genocide, white fears and recently, born frees and many others have emerged across the political and social spectrum.

As a working definition, concepts are theoretical constructs drawn from reality, concretely or imaginatively but always attempting to grapple with dynamics of human life or nature. Concepts have at least two uses. They describe a phenomenon and they inspire action. In the socio-political arena, they have the power to mobilise or demobilise in whatever direction depending on the intentions of the user or propagator.

Today I'm concerned with the false concept of born frees. The concept of born frees is one of the biggest myths in post-apartheid South Africa. It is said that the children born in 1994 and after, are born frees. Although nobody has ever defined what born free means, one can reasonably deduce that the so-called concept refers to the coincidence of being born in a free South Africa.

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## **Scourge of racism haunts Africa's diaspora**

**By Mcebisi Ndletyana**

More than a century after its formation, the Pan African Movement was finally hosted here in South Africa on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday last week. This was the eighth Pan African Congress gathering since its formation in 1900 in London and the third on African soil. Formed at the instigation of a Trinidad lawyer, Henry Sylvester Williams, Pan Africanism is an international movement of peoples of African descent spread throughout the world.

America's foremost sociologist and a pioneer of Pan Africanism, WEB du Bois, explained the *raison d'être* of Pan Africanism at its inaugural meeting: "The problem of the 20th century is the problem of the colour line, the question as to how far differences of race – which show themselves chiefly in the colour of the skin and the texture of the hair – will hereafter be made the basis of denying to over half the world the right of sharing to their utmost ability the opportunities and privileges of modern civilisation." The Pan African Movement was thus formed to mobilise all peoples of African descent against the scourge of racism throughout the world and secure them equal treatment.

For close to 50 years of its early existence, however, the Pan African Movement was largely preoccupied with the plight of the African diaspora. This was a reflection of the dominance of the diaspora. Du Bois singularly dominated the movement until the 1950s, organising all of its first five congresses.

*Originally published in The Sunday Independent on 19 January 2014.*

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## **Test of political leadership will start this defining year**

**By Mcebisi Ndletyana**

And so we greet the new year. With it comes the potential for new beginnings. This is what a new dawn promises, a fresh start. We get to feel that we can imagine things completely afresh. Social reality, however, hardly lends itself to neat compartments. Today is as much a continuation of yesterday, as it is the start of a different tomorrow. Social reality is a continuum. That's not to say the new year will not produce surprises. We'll continue to be surprised – that's the inevitability of life. Most of what we'll encounter as the year progresses, however, will be answers to questions posed by events of last year and 2012. Some chapters will come to a close, while new ones will start. Most of these will revolve around the looming fifth national election in this 20th year of our democratic order.

Before the end of this first month, we should have an indication of how the stand-off between the government and the office of the public protector will be resolved. It's a contest of credibility. The government has pitted itself against Public Protector Thuli Madonsela by releasing its own findings on the obscene expenditure on the Nkandla presidential compound. The findings exonerate the president and blame officials

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*Originally published in The Sunday Independent on 5 January 2014*

## **Our inability to save is an obstacle to SA's development** **By Catherine Kannemeyer**

With Christmas gone and the new year approaching and bonuses paid to many workers, retailers are once again smiling all the way to the bank. And while consumers may spend with abandon, once the festive season is over, they are likely to struggle to comprehend how to make it through January, much less actually purchase essentials, equip school children for a new year, and put aside money as a precaution for tough times.

And as is the case every year, newspapers have dedicated much space to cautioning consumers against over-spending, and encouraging prudence and savings. Much of this is likely to fall on deaf ears. Much rhetoric abounds about the "need to save", and certainly, responsible financial behaviour is a skill to foster, but this rhetoric falls short of acknowledging the limited capacity to meet daily needs, much less saving in situations of dire poverty.

Novel thoughts on how to structure a society's savings and insurance frameworks are frequently met with opposition based on little more than favouring what already exists because it is known. The level of savings forms part of the process of nation formation and social cohesion because its key function – internally funded economic growth – is what contributes to the development of a more prosperous society. South Africa's present culture of low savings must be seen as a critical obstacle to the country's development, and the reasons underpinning this impediment to growth need to be scrutinised.



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Originally published in The Sunday Independent on 29 December 2014

## **Pan Africans meet in SA** **By Mcebisi Ndletyana**

MORE than a century after its formation, the Pan African movement was finally hosted here in South Africa last week.

This was the eighth Pan African congress since its formation in 1900 in London, and the third on African soil.

Formed at the instigation of a Trinidad lawyer, Henry Sylvester Williams, Pan Africanism is an international movement of the peoples of African descent spread throughout the world.

America's foremost sociologist and a pioneer of Pan Africanism, WEB du Bois, explained the *raison d'être* of Pan Africanism at its inaugural meeting: "...The problem of the 20th century is the problem of the colour-line, the question as to how far differences of race – which show themselves chiefly in the colour of the skin and the texture of the hair – will hereafter be made the basis of denying to over half the world the right of sharing to their utmost ability the opportunities and privileges of modern civilisation".

The Pan African movement was thus formed to mobilise all peoples of African descent against the scourge of racism throughout the world and secure them equal treatment.

For close to 50 years of its early existence, however, it was largely preoccupied with the plight of the African diaspora. This was a reflection of the dominance of the diaspora.

Du Bois singularly dominated the movement until the 1950s, organising all of its first five congresses.

[To read full article click here.](#)

Originally published in The Daily Dispatch on January 23, 2014

## Dr Tanya Abrahamse speaks on “How scientists can make their work relevant for policy?”

MISTRA Board Member, **Dr Tanya Abrahamse** speaks on “*How scientists can make their work relevant for policy?*” at the Inaugural meeting of the United Nation’s Scientific Advisory Board in Berlin.



Tanya Abrahamse, MISTRA Board Member and Chief Executive Officer of the South African National Biodiversity Institute, is one of twenty-six eminent scientists, representing natural, social and human sciences and engineering who have been appointed to a Scientific Advisory Board, announced by the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon.

The new Board will provide advice on science, technology and innovation (STI) for sustainable development to the UN Secretary-General and to Executive Heads of UN organizations. UNESCO will host the Secretariat for the Board.

The fields covered by the Board range from the basic sciences, through engineering and technology, social sciences and humanities, ethics, health, economic, behavioral, and agricultural sciences, in addition to the environmental sciences.

The board will aim to ensure that up-to-date and rigorous science is appropriately reflected in high-level policy discussions within the UN system, offering recommendations on priorities related to science for sustainable development that should be supported or encouraged; providing advice on up-to-date scientific issues relevant to sustainable development; identifying knowledge gaps that could be addressed outside the UN system by either national or international research programs; identifying specific needs that could be addressed by on-going assessments; and advising on issues related to the public visibility and understanding of science.

[To watch the interview click here.](#)

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## MISTRA to partner with the Green Fund of the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA)

MISTRA is partnering with the Green Fund of the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) to implement one of its key priority research projects (PRP) – Earth, Wind and Fire: Unpacking the political, economic and security implications of discourse on the Green Economy. Last year, DBSA invited interested parties to submit proposals for research and policy development projects on themes that would advance green economy policy objectives in South Africa and help strengthen the science- policy interface in the green economy sector.

The team of researchers working on this project includes experts from institutions such as the World Wild Fund (WWF) - South Africa, United Nations University (UNU) – MERIT – The Netherlands, The University of New South Wales - Australia and the University of Johannesburg.

MISTRA’s research is organised into three overarching research aims and objectives:

### **(i) Co-evolutionary role of governments, civil society and industries**

The evolution of the discourse on global warming, the courses of action and negotiation that evolved will be studied, including an understanding of how these have been articulated by local governments, businesses and civil society. This will also look at the

major debates around South African labour issues (and other major economic debates) and how they align with the climate change discourse and how that is mediated by the major civil society blocs.

#### **(ii) Transition to a Low Carbon Economy**

The innovation dynamics in the transition to a low carbon economy will be explored by examining the possible development of low carbon transportation technologies such as the bus rapid transit (BRT) system. Through this analysis our understanding of the processes involved in the formation and uptake of sustainable technologies is improved, and we can thereby identify the key associated challenges for policy makers that are managing the transformation process.

#### **(iii) Regional Integration: Exploring Optimal Energy Strategies.**

This will aim to understand and remove barriers to market integration at the regional level (SADC). There is compelling evidence from different countries in Southern Africa and elsewhere showing that renewable energy systems, both small and large-scale, are part of the energy solution of the continent. Policy makers need to send strong signals to all development partners of their commitment to the development of renewable energy sources as part of the process of developing and providing energy access to countries in the region.

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### **MISTRA ranked as one of Top 10 Best New Think Tanks globally**

The Mapungubwe Institute is proud to announce that it has been ranked as one of the top ten Best New Think Tanks globally, according to the 2013 Global Go-To Think Tanks Report. The Global Go-To Think Tank Index (GGTTI) produced by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program at the University of Pennsylvania (TTCSP) is an annual Index that recognizes the critical contributions made by think tanks globally.

Now in its seventh year, the GGTTI began as a response to requests to the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program at the University of Pennsylvania (TTCSP) from scholars, donors, government officials, and journalists to produce regional and international ranking of the world's leading think tanks.

As the Mapungubwe Institute enters its 4th year of operation, its inclusion as one of the world's top ten Best New Think Tanks is an acknowledgement that MISTRA is on track to achieving its ambition to providing long-term strategic thinking to enhance South Africa's development.

During the past 15 months MISTRA has released comprehensive research reports on The Rise and Decline of the Mapungubwe Civilisation, The Concept and Application of Transdisciplinarity, The Philosophy, Art and Science of Competitive Football, Poverty, Inequality and Patronage, The Evolution of the South African State, and The Use and Displacement of Strategic Minerals. MISTRA is working with various stakeholders to ensure the operationalisation of the recommendations. Two reports on the culture of savings in South Africa, and on nation-formation and social cohesion are due for release this year. This is besides MISTRA facilitative role among various sectors of society, public lectures and roundtables.

This year will see MISTRA embark on a new tranche of research projects that focus on, among others: the changing economic balances in Africa, the philosophy of Chinese civilization, the role of arts in development planning, basic education and the calling of teaching, the pedagogy of mathematics, the history of South African innovations, and the implications of discourses of the green economy.

This ranking of MISTRA as one of the world's best new think tanks is confirmation that the MISTRA proposition is a unique and necessary addition to the intellectual landscape in South Africa and further

afield.

MISTRA would like to thank our partners – researchers, donors and others – for their continued support, without which the Institute would not have made these strides.

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