

# NATIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

NO.1



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## A brief note from the National Planning Commission

We are pleased to present the first of the National Planning Commission's (NPC) monthly newsletters. Some of you may have received our periodic media advisories and statements to date – that will continue – however, this publication, which we aim to release on the first Monday of each month, will capture the NPC's events and work for the previous month as well as give you a taste of the issues that will be addressed in the coming month.

In this issue, we address Youth Month and the significance of Youth Day to remind us of our fractured history and to celebrate the importance of social cohesion in future. As this is our first issue, and in light of the many public holidays that we had in May, this issue captures events going back to April 2025.

As you are aware, the NPC is an independent structure appointed by the President to advise government and society about long-term planning and, as such, they are the custodians of the National Development Plan: Vision 2030 (NDP). In addition to being an independent structure, the NPC is made up of part-time commissioners who are supported by a full-time secretariat that is housed in the Department of Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation. These commissioners had been appointed to the NPC based on their expertise and experience in their day jobs. We will therefore provide you with a summary profile of, at least, two commissioners in each edition.

An important aspect of the NPC's mandate is ensuring that the state implements the NDP and encouraging society to play its part in this regard. As we head to 2030, the NPC, being cognisant of the limited time left for the current NDP, has started working on the framework for the country's next long-term plan. As with the current plan, this drafting process will incorporate public comments and feedback about the salient aspects of our collective future. Look out for announcements about these public engagements as we chart a better future for all in South Africa.

We invite you to respond to our statements and encourage you to engage with us either by contacting the secretariat via email - [Zarina@dpme.gov.za](mailto:Zarina@dpme.gov.za) or [Sandisiwe.Mapine@dpme.gov.za](mailto:Sandisiwe.Mapine@dpme.gov.za) - or through our social media platforms *NPC\_RSA* on X and *National Planning Commission of South Africa* on Facebook.

## A message from the Deputy Chairperson, Prof Tinyiko Maluleke

### **May the sound of NDP implementation reverberate...**

Long-term planning hardly ever shows up with the crystal clarity of a cloud-free South African day. Planning for the long term must be negotiated amidst the moving clouds of geopolitical and national realities.

Often, long-term planning is the complex art of strategic goal-setting amidst a forest of many known and unknown factors. In this sense, at least, long-term planning is akin to what, well-known author, Alice Walker, once called 'making a way out of no way'.

More than making a way, long-term planning is about establishing a national destination or destinations or horizons worth pursuing.

And yet, as the third NPC has noted right from the beginning of its term, plans in general and long-term plans in particular, even the best such plans, are not in the habit of implementing themselves.

For long-term plan implementation to be effective, it has to be coordinated across government and across society consistently and constantly. Indeed, implementation is the acid test of all plans.

I say all these by way of introducing the NPC newsletter, an intervention designed to enhance

communication within the NPC and between the NPC and all NDP stakeholders.

If the NDP was music, this newsletter would be the microphone and the speakers that amplify the sound, and turn it into what Neil Diamond once called 'a beautiful noise'. And what might that 'beautiful noise' be made of? It is the beautiful noise that emanates from the acts of implementation of the NDP.

As we enter the last five years of the NDP 2030, may the sound of the NDP reverberate across the valleys and mountains of our country!



## South Africa and Liberia share lessons on planning.

The Minister in the Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Ms Maropene Ramokgopa, welcomed Minister Mamaka Bility from the Republic of Liberia on 8 April 2025 at Bryntirion Estate in Pretoria.



Minister Bility led the Liberian delegation on a three-day study tour in South Africa, which was aimed at providing insight into best practices for planning, monitoring and evaluation and the advancement of impactful government performance and national development.

Minister Bility and her team held sessions with representatives from the National Planning Commission, Statistics South Africa and SITA, guided by senior managers from the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, who

offered additional insights regarding planning, monitoring and evaluation.

This engagement aligns with the vision of the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063, which advances the promotion of collaboration and exchange towards the realisation of a prosperous, integrated and peaceful Africa.

Minister Ramokgopa provided details about the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) 2024 – 2029 and National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030 as the South African government's programme of action and vision to achieve sustainable development in the country.





# Capacity development support engagement with Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality

The National Planning Commission (NPC) and the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) met with a delegation of the [Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality](#) (MMM) on 7 – 8 April 2025 at the Union Buildings. The Executive Mayor, Councillor Gregory Nthatsi, led the MMM delegation. At the heart of this two-day engagement were the topics of a) building capacity and sharing expertise about planning and b) monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the NDP, which was specifically tailored to address local government processes.



Commissioner Hope Hangwelani Magidimisha facilitated the discussions. In her input, Commissioner Pulane Molokwane outlined the role of the NPC and its advisory notes in giving effect to NDP objectives and targets for local government, especially those focused on spatial transformation and service delivery. For his part, Commissioner Mashupye Maserumule stressed the importance of building capable and

developmental local governments by ensuring that the requisite capacity is prioritised.

Mr Mamotabo Mohlala, Chief Director: Sector Monitoring: Local Government (DPME), organised the programme with representatives from the DPME and various departments and organisations, including the Department of Cooperative Governance (DCoG) and Traditional Affairs, South African Local Government Association (SALGA), National Treasury, and the Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB).



Discussions focused on the different roles that the three spheres of government play in ensuring the implementation of District Development Model One Plans, including how they align with other statutory instruments. These discussions confirmed the importance of collaboration and plan alignment between the political and technical components of all three spheres of government.

Evaluation capacity was outlined as a significant gap in the municipality's skills.



## The NPC calls for a holistic measurement of poverty and inequality

The [National Planning Commission](#) (NPC) participated in the conference hosted by the South African Labour Development Research Unit (SALDRU) titled, 'South Africa at 30 Years of Democracy'. The conference was held from 2-4 April 2025 at the University of Cape Town with key partners in the Presidency and the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), as well as the European Commission through the EU-AFD Research Facility on Inequalities.

The NPC's involvement in the conference, therefore, focused on the overall objectives of the NDP, specifically those related to eliminating poverty and reducing inequality and unemployment.

Commissioners Boitumelo Ramatsetse and Julian May addressed the opening plenary of the conference on government's perspective on 30 years of democracy on 2 April 2025 by outlining some of the challenges with meeting the NDP's 2030 goals as captured in the [NPC's Ten-Year Review of the NDP](#).

In outlining the solutions proposed in the [Call-to-Action](#) that accompanied the Ten-Year Review of the NDP, Commissioner May stated, 'The realisation of NDP Vision 2030 hinges on stronger collaboration between government, private sector and civil society all united in shared responsibility to drive economic growth and sustainable development for long-term national prosperity.' He emphasised the importance of co-ordinating planning by all spheres of government and the critical role that private-public partnerships of these goals are to be achieved.



The discussions following the NPC's inputs focused on defining poverty and the relevance of

the poverty line, understanding and fixing the skills' challenges, ensuring that the additional costs of the vulnerable, specifically persons with disabilities, are included in the discussions about poverty, and taking an approach that engages with the complexity of the challenges faced.

In addition, during the Social Security presentation (Coverage and Outcomes) on 2 April 2025, Gemma Wright from Southern African Social Policy Research Insights, who focused on progress and gaps in the country's provision, drew on a paper that was co-authored by Commissioner Phakama Ntshongwana. The paper highlighted the false dichotomy of independent self-upliftment through paid work versus passive social grant receipt. Living in a state of poverty – whether unemployed, in low

paid or precarious employment, or undertaking unpaid care work – is extremely hard work in itself. The article recommends the integration of social security and employment policies for a mutually enhancing outcome.

In the concluding session of the conference, the convening role of the NPC was identified as a key resource in future. The outcomes of the discussions at the conference will form part of the ongoing research that SALDRU will undertake.

SALDRU first convened an enquiry into poverty and inequality in the country in the 1980s with the Second Carnegie Conference and hosted the 'Towards Carnegie 3: Strategies to Overcome Poverty and Inequality' conference in 2012.

## **NPC-PCC-PEAC meeting**

The National Planning Commission (NPC), the Presidential Climate Commission (PCC) and the Presidential Economic Advisory Council (PEAC) hosted an online engagement about long-term economic planning that is aligned with the just transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future on 14 April 2025.

The PCC is an independent, multistakeholder body established by President Cyril Ramaphosa, whose purpose is to oversee and facilitate a just and equitable transition towards a low-emissions and climate-resilient economy.

PEAC advises President Cyril Ramaphosa with the aim of providing sound advice on economic policy in order to spur sustained, inclusive economic growth, investment and job creation for South Africa.

As the Chairperson of the PCC and PEAC and having appointed the NPC, the President, Honourable Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa provided the opening address to the trilateral meeting.

The meeting undertook in-depth discussions and reflections on key related economic topics such as green growth opportunities and industrial policy,



labour market shifts and the just transition, and exploring opportunities for financing and investment. Further to the engagement, Dr Mokate (PEAC), Prof Maluleke (NPC) and Dr Olver

(PCC) wrote a joint reflection titled [Green industrialisation and the new geopolitics, a time for action](#).

## The NPC calls for a Review of South Africa's Foreign Policy

The National Planning Commission, led by Commissioner Zondi, briefed the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation on its advisory note that addresses how South Africa can optimise its chairing of global forums and institutions on 7 May 2025. Commissioner Zondi proposed that South Africa re-establish the decommissioned South African Council on International Relations to navigate an increasingly volatile international community and attract diplomatic value.

The presentation by the NPC was critical as South Africa currently holds the presidency of the G20, so that it can guide the processes on how the country can fully take advantage of its position.



Commissioner Zondi stated, “We need to update our foreign policy framework continuously. We

always have to do so, so that we can do this game a little better. We need to strengthen parliamentary oversight of international engagements, not a general policy or foreign policy perspectives, but these big things that cost a lot that can benefit us a lot”. He appealed to Parliament to assist the government in becoming more strategic about its international engagements and policies. He proposed the policy forum would convene former diplomats, experts in international relations and Members of Parliament to discuss issues of international relations that were of significance for the country. He pointed out that there were similar forums in the EU and the US to assist with analysing these matters.

In addition, the Commission stressed the importance of strengthening the research capacity in the Department of International Relations and Cooperation to assist with managing the long-term benefits that can be gained through international relations. They needed the capacity to do a cost-benefit analysis of South Africa's engagements so that it can derive the optimal long-term benefits

## Trends in the Cost of Living in South Africa Launch

On Friday, 16 May 2025, the National Planning Commission (NPC) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) South Africa jointly launched the 'Trends in the Cost of Living in South Africa' report in Pretoria.

The report, which was jointly commissioned by the NPC and UNICEF South Africa, analyses cost of living trends between 2011 and 2023 to understand the complex interplay between service provision, wage growth, and household well-being. It looks specifically at the effect of these changes on poor and working poor households in a context of growing indebtedness. Challenges, including the Covid-19 lockdown, supply chain disruptions, fuel price increases, and rising interest rates, coupled with limited economic growth in the country and government's fiscal constraints, have intensified concerns about the cost of living. The research is informed by three groups of research questions, focusing on the provision of basic services, incomes, and the cost of living.



In her opening remarks, Ms. Christine Muhigana, the UNICEF South Africa Representative, highlighted President Ramaphosa's 2025 State of the Nation Address about the Medium-Term Development Plan 2024/29 as well as the significance of South Africa hosting the G20 Summit later this year. Expressing the hope that this research will enhance efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, she highlighted the findings for UNICEF's main constituency, namely children. "Rising food prices have forced many families to sacrifice meals, leading to malnutrition and long-term health consequences for children as well as reduced access to education and [increased levels of] violence against children," noted Ms. Muhigana.

In introducing the findings of the research, Professor Julian May, of the NPC, reminded the audience that the actual cost of living, beyond the numbers and graphs, is "the cost of being human" and that this was not fixed and is likely to vary depending on personal circumstances. He noted that the report should be used to ensure that when debating changes that will affect the lives of the majority, who are poor, it is done from an informed point of view that understands the cost of being human.



On the joint panel, Mr Mervyn Abrahams of the Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice and Dignity Group and Mr Tony Ehrenreich, from COSATU, representing NEDLAC, discussed the importance of ensuring that the research was used to improve the lives of the poor by ensuring that the state made the appropriate policy decisions and that the country begins to look at alternative approaches to addressing the basic challenges being faced. Although the report offers a comprehensive review, coordinated action from all stakeholders is essential to ensure its recommendations are effectively implemented. Targeted interventions will be required to address

both the underlying causes and the far-reaching consequences of the rising cost of living and the decline in living standards described in the report.

Prof Phakama Ntshongwana, the Chair of the Enhancing the Quality-of-Life workstream of the NPC and of the proceedings, concluded the session by stressing the importance of the findings for informing the definition of a social protection floor for the country. She highlighted the importance of the findings of the impact of poverty on mental health and on the overall effects of disenfranchisement of those affected by it.

## Driving Inclusive Growth Through Sustainable Infrastructure Development in South Africa

On Tuesday, 27 May 2025, the National Planning Commission (NPC) participated in the Sustainable Infrastructure Development Symposium - South Africa (SIDS-SA). The SIDS-SA is an annual event organised by Infrastructure South Africa to convene thought leaders, government representatives, infrastructure funding and

financing institutions and industry experts to discuss key strategies and share insights into the best practices for infrastructure development and investment.

NPC Commissioner, Prof. Hangwelani Hope Magidimisha, alongside Mpho Motsei (BMF President), Tsakani Maluleke (Auditor General),

Prof. Gregory Davids (Acting Head of School of Governance, UWC) joined the Chairperson of the NPC, Minister in the Presidency responsible for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Ms Maropene Ramokgopa (MP) in a Ministerial Panel on Supporting Infrastructure Development through the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP). The panel members engaged in a cross-sectoral discussion on how to harmonise efforts between national governments, regional bodies, and international partners to deliver

## NPC Plenary – 6 June 2025

The National Planning Commission (NPC) held its quarterly plenary meeting on 6 June 2025, which was the first one after its lekgotla in March this year. In recognising the importance of June as Youth Month, the Deputy Chairperson, Prof Maluleke, noted that this year marked 49 years since the Soweto student uprising. He noted that despite almost half a century and the 'Fees Must Fall' protests ten years ago, the young people in the country continue to experience ongoing challenges with student funding for higher education and the highest unemployment rate amongst the youth in the world.

The National Planning Commission also discussed and expressed concern over the challenges faced by women and the increasingly violent nature of crimes against women and children.

infrastructure that is sustainable, bankable, and inclusive.



In recognising that the National Development Plan: Vision 2030 (NDP) does not go far enough in promoting or protecting these vulnerable groups, the Commission has been undertaking workshops to better understand how the state addresses gender and youth issues. The NPC argues that it isn't only violent crime that is of concern but that the silence and lacunas in effective policies, which protect these groups, is itself an enactment of



violence. The NPC is calling for societal introspection and interventions in this regard.

As part of the deliberations, the NPC discussed the structure of South Africa's monetary architecture, the investment requirements to achieve energy security and net-zero in South Africa by 2050, and the opportunities and challenges of irrigation development in South Africa by taking a water-energy-food nexus perspective. In addition, the Commission approved four advisory notes to government and to society as a whole. Each of the advisory notes,

which will be released shortly, makes recommendations aimed at addressing the key objectives of the NDP, namely, to reduce poverty, unemployment and inequality. The advisory notes cover the following themes:

- SMME Red Tape Reduction
- Adequacy and structure of funding needed to collect and provide official statistics
- Accelerating the implementation of the Agriculture and Agro-processing Master Plan
- The State of Service Delivery in the Country

## Upcoming events

- **June:** National Planning Summit
- **June:** Health Systems Performance Assessment Workshop
- **June:** NEET Roundtable
- **June:** National State of Service Delivery in South Africa Research Report Workshop
- **2 July:** Climate Change Act Advisory Note Consultation Roundtable
- **July:** Red Tape Reduction Proof of Concept Launch
- **July:** Social Cohesion Roundtable
- **July:** Youth Mental Health Seminar and Youth Diagnostic launch
- **July:** TVET Colleges Roundtable
- **Aug:** Special needs Schools engagement
- **Aug:** Integrated Crime Prevention and Violence Strategy workshop
- **15 Aug:** SMME Job Creation model site visit
- **Oct:** Sector Jobs Validation Workshop (Economy)
- **Oct:** Roundtable on Disability
- **Nov:** Social Cohesion Roundtable – Virtual

# Up Close with a Commissioner

## Commissioner Chifunyise



### 1. What is your full name and title?

Phumzile Itumeleng Surprise Chifunyise. My titles are Mrs, Commissioner, Mama 😊

### 2. What is your role and area of expertise in the NPC?

Chairperson of the SMME Development and Growth task team. My role of expertise at the NPC is matters of the Economy and Society including SMMEs, Agriculture and Rural Development, Climate Change, Finance, Youth

### 3. Which NDP target are you most passionate about?

The growth of the economy to reach 5.4%, and 90% of jobs to be stemming from SMMEs

### 4. What is your occupation outside the NPC?

Managing Director of SiMODiSA, Secretariat of the SA Startup Act. It's a non-profit organization that advocates for tax, skills, and global capital reforms for high growth start-ups in the Digital and Innovation sectors. I'm an Agripreneur in the Agriculture sector,

working with farmers and am in agroprocessing. I've recently been appointed as a member of the newly formed Startup20, on the Foundation and Alliances task force to craft fit for purpose startup policy recommendations as part of our G20 presidency

### 5. What is your personal vision for 2030?

My personal vision is to see a South Africa with a levelled playing field, with very little of the disparities in society and the economy that we're seeing now. Including a South Africa that is safe for all the women, men, and children who live in it. My greatest vision is for our small and medium businesses, and the many citizens in the communities they provide opportunities for, to come out of survival mode and to take up the endless possibilities that are available across the country, the continent and globally, that will lead them to generation of sustainable wealth. My vision is to see more and more local businesses competing in global markets, with policies, systems, and channels that will enable that pathway.

### 6. What is the best piece of advice you've ever received?

One of my best philosophies that I live by is: "Opportunity dances with those already on the dance floor" H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

### 7. What is a fun fact about you that your colleagues might not know about you?

I hosted a graveyard radio slot at YFM in varsity, and I miss it daily! 😊

### 8. Describe South Africa in 3 words.

Trailblazing, limitless, home

## Commissioner Mollo



**1. What is your name and title?**

My name is Makhiba Mollo, and I generally go by this name, but I am married so I am actually Mrs Baloyi although I still go by Ms Mollo.

**2. What is your role and area of expertise in the NPC?**

As an NPC member I lead the work on disability. Although there is no specific chapter on disability in the NDP, disability is incorporated as a cross-cutter and finds expression in all the chapters of the NDP albeit at a high level. The Disability Task Team which I Chair, draws its work from Chapter 11 which is on social protection. I therefore work closely with the Chair of the Enhancing Quality of Life Workstream as she also leads the work on social protection.

**3. Which NDP target are you most passionate about?**

It is difficult to only have one or two targets close to one's heart having been immersed in the NDP for over 3 years now.

I do think that redistributing South Africa's share of income by raising it to above 10% to the poorest 40% of the population is one that I'm really concerned about.

Poverty is a real scourge in the country and affects the most capable of people, South African men, women and children who can make a real contribution to the country and who can realise their most daring dreams if not for the chains of poverty.

People with disabilities of course are always disproportionately affected by these social ills, as reflected in the NDP, poverty reinforces disability and disability reinforces poverty.

**4. What is your occupation outside the NPC?**

I am an independent Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Consultant.

This is an area of work that I am particularly passionate about and was in Corporate Governance and Sustainability for almost two decades in the finance and investments sector. Since being appointed to the NPC in December 2021, I have realised the tremendous cross sections between ESG and the public policy space.

**5. What is your personal vision for 2030?**

Well, as a blind person, I have no vision... Just kidding, actually, one of my favourite quotes is one by Maxwell Frasier, "you don't need eyes to see, you need vision". I certainly try to demonstrate my vision for the future by maintaining a positive and realistic view.

I hope that by 2030 we will be well into maturing as a nation. Today, as a 31-year-old country, we are still able to say we fall under the category of youth, but beyond 2030, we will no longer be able to say that we are still sorting ourselves out.

I personally want to experience a feeling of glee that, "we did it," experience the boldness of being able to say, "we told you we could do it" and ultimately have the contentment of knowing that we live in a place

where things are beginning to take an upward turn again. A place where I am energised by my own ambitions knowing that the country's road will rise to meet me.

**6. What is the best piece of advice you've ever received?**

Well, I've received lots of advice over the years, but I think the best advice I've read is, "don't pet the sweaty stuff".

**7. What is a fun fact about you that your colleagues might not know about you?**

I really enjoy reading spy novels. I have just finished one called *Mother, Daughter, Traitor, Spy* by Suzan Ilea Macneal, based on true events.

**8. Describe South Africa in 3 words.**

Yo lekker ding.

What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.

Nelson Mandela, 18 May 2002