

Ubuntu Awards honour trailblazers

South Africa has honoured the contribution made by those who have excelled in promoting the interests of the country on an international stage.



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“DIRCO [Department of International Relations and Cooperation] is honoured to shine a light on South Africans who have distinguished themselves in promoting our national interests, our talents, and values around the world as ambassadors of our country,” said DIRCO Minister, Dr Naledi Pandor, at the Ubuntu Awards ceremony held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre on Saturday evening.

Pandor said the awards celebrate excellence and are the department’s way of honouring excellence.

“We are so excited to have this thrilling privilege of once again revealing the quality within South Africa to the world. Many are ordinary South Africans, who are honoured here for doing extraordinary things,” Pandor said.

The Minister said the nominees and award recipients have each championed the essence of the meaning of ubuntu, an ancient African philosophy that speaks to having compassion for others and lending energy to uplifting communities.

“The essence of ubuntu is a stress on the oneness we share. It reflects a humanist African philosophy that has been decimated and weakened largely by colonialism and sociology economic deprivation. It suggests community as a building block of society.

“Essentially, it asserts that we are all bound together in ways that may be invisible to the eye. We achieve ourselves by sharing ourselves with others and caring for those around us,” Pandor said.

Actively live ubuntu

She urged for cooperation in the many global challenges confronting the different countries of the world.

“These challenges are so immense that they suggest that as leaders and communities, we must do more to actively live and breathe ubuntu, [and take] action that is framed by justice for all people, and by the practice of fairness and equality regardless of race, gender or social status.

“As a global community, we must be [enjoined to address] climate change, migration, disease, human trafficking, terrorism and hunger. Our help must uplift communities and not increase their vulnerability,” the Minister said.

She said the rescue efforts in earthquake-ravaged Turkey and Syria indicate commitment in caring for one another.



Image source: [SANews.gov.za on Facebook](https://www.sanews.gov.za/on-facebook)

“We commend all those South Africans and global citizens who are showing the spirit of ubuntu as they offer humanitarian support. We also laud all who are contributing in many different forms of support.

“For us working in the domain of international cooperation and diplomacy, I am pleased to share with South Africans that working with the countries gathered in this room, we are striving to partner in addressing the difficult challenges facing South Africa,” Pandor said.

The Minister said South Africa is delighted to chair BRICS [Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa] this year.

The chosen theme by South Africa is, ‘BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development, and Inclusive Multilateralism’.

“Our theme and priorities reflect our foreign policy focus of advancing in partnership. We cannot neglect the critical task of developing our continent Africa and the global South.

“One of the issues which will be discussed in BRICS is how to restructure the global, political, economic and financial architecture so that it becomes more balanced, representative, inclusive, and equitable,” Pandor said.

Award winners

Popular South African musician, Makhadzi, received an award in the category of Arts and Culture Diplomacy.

She is known to many music lovers for her hit songs, *Tshanda Vhuya* and *Matorokisi*.

Makhadzi was among the performers at the ‘2020 DStv Mzansi Viewers’ Choice Awards’. She has performed in France, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

“I am happy to receive the award. This really shows that hard works pays off,” she said in her acceptance speech.

Makhadzi has represented South African music in other countries.

“Wherever I go to perform, I perform in my mother tongue. I am proud to be a South African. Music and dancing is what I do best,” an elated Makhadzi said.

She told *SANews* that “music is her life” and that she loves entertaining people.

“Singing and entertaining people is what I do best. I don’t see myself doing anything else other than entertaining people.”

Another artist who received an award in the same category was Abigail Kubeka. The renowned Kubeka is a professional actress, film, television and cabaret star.

In the Ubuntu Economic Diplomacy category, the award went to Shoprite, which has over 500 stores and over 20 million

shoppers across the continent.

Also in the same category, Theo Baloyi, a South African entrepreneur and the founder and CEO of Bathu Shoes, was also awarded.

He launched his eponymous shoe brand in 2015, having previously served as a senior associate at PwC in Dubai. He was featured in the Forbes 30 Under 30 list in 2019. In 2021, he won GQ's Business Leader of the Year.

In the Ubuntu Youth Diplomacy category, the award was received by Nsovo Mayimele, who is a pharmacist and lecturer at the Tshwane University of Technology.

Mayimele has served South Africa and the global community through her skills in healthcare, development and policy. She is an award-winning contributor, scientist and voice for advocacy in access to healthcare and women's health.

The Ubuntu Awards were launched in 2015 and have since become a platform for celebrating the achievements and contributions of those who work tirelessly to promote SA's image.

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