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# Arts, science to go their separate ways

## Mbeki agrees to departmental split

Tamar Kahn

*Science and Education Correspondent*

CAPE TOWN — President Thabo Mbeki gave the go-ahead yesterday for the functions of the arts, culture, science and technology department to be split in two.

According to presidential spokesman Bheki Khumalo, the restructuring is intended to enable the two departments to have a more focused approach.

Observers say the move is also seen as an attempt to smooth relations between the arts and culture, and science and technology functions.

The move would also remove some of the operational tension within the department.

According to the constitution, science and technology is a national competence.

The mandate for arts and culture on the other hand, is concurrent, shared between national and provincial government.

Sources say that this difference has resulted in tension about access to resources, and difficulties in defining mandates.

No new cabinet posts are to be created, as the two new departments — arts and culture and science and technology — will be overseen by the current minister, Ben Ngubane, and his deputy, Bridgitte Mabandla.

This surprise news came yesterday shortly after the president briefed journalists on this week's three-day cabinet lekgotla, during which he emphasised that government would place more emphasis on implementation.

Ngubane's spokesman, Andrew Aphane, said that the current director-general of the department, Rob Adam, was to become the director-general of science and technology.

The post of director-general



Ben Ngubane

for arts and culture would be advertised shortly, he said.

Aphane said that the restructuring process, which was being driven by the office of the president, would begin on August 1 and would end on September 30.

All corporate services would at first be placed in the department of science and technology.

Observers said that by giving both departments the attention of a director-general, government was sending a signal that both functions were equally important, and that it intended to strengthen their operation.

Ngubane will host the first African Caribbean Pacific-European Union Forum on Research for Sustainable Development in Cape Town later today.

The five-day event will bring together scientists and researchers from more than 90 countries to develop a position on the contributions that science and technology can make to sustainable development.

The forum hopes to improve co-operation between the northern and southern hemispheres.

## KZN govt is not 'paralysed'

I AM astounded by the degree of ignorance of the operation of the Cabinet shown by Ido Lekota in *Sowetan* of July 22, in his article headlined "IFP will not share KZN."

It is a distortion of fact to say that the suspension of Cabinet meetings in KwaZulu-Natal has "paralysed government" in the province. I am on record giving assurances that Cabinet will convene to deal with important matters that are in the best interests of the citizenry we serve as a collective.

The Constitutional Court has not ruled on the matter of the floor-crossing legislation. On the contrary, we are enjoined by the Constitutional Court order to maintain the status quo and stay clear of conflict situations.

Who said further Cabinet meetings would worsen the conflict between the parties?

I am not privy to conflict between the Inkatha Freedom Party and African National Congress Cabinet ministers.

As responsible politicians, we engage in vigorous debates without descending to petty politicking.

I will convene Cabinet as soon as there is a need to deal with important government business. I stand by this commitment.

Lionel Mtshali  
KwaZulu-Natal  
premier



## Comment

### Do we need the provinces?

**E**VERY year, the auditor-general of South Africa, files a report on the performance of each of our provinces and individual national government departments. Some of these reports are damning and make rivetting read.

And, based on the provincial inefficiencies that are sometimes identified, some in the country are now raising serious doubts about the need for the provincial sphere of governance. Corruption tends to strengthen these calls.

Some are even suggesting that the provinces should be scrapped because South Africa now has a functional local tier of governance.

Some people feel the provinces have been used as dumping ground to accommodate certain politicians. Until now, though, the debate has been clouded by emotions. It tends to crop up each time there is a case of spectacular corruption in this or the other province.

One of the most sober inputs on this discourse has come from Mr Mbhazima Shilowa, the premier of Gauteng. In an interview with this paper, he has suggested that the debate on the need for provinces should be separated from the pre-1994 one.

Back then, this debate was more ideological. It also took place against the background of the need for a constitutional compromise to pave the way for the country's transition to its first-ever all-race election. So the nine provinces were created and given original powers.

Seven years into the democracy, as a people, we are now in a better position to have a less emotive debate on the matter. We have experience of what provinces, national and local spheres of governance can and cannot do for our people.

Shilowa, one of the pioneers in this debate, says there are some functions that are better exercised by this or the other sphere of government. The trick is to find out which of these powers belong where.

The debate, calling for the reconfiguration of the country's governance on the basis of "we don't need the provinces because we have local government", is a non-starter. A worthy debate must be driven by the need for what works to deliver better and efficient services to South Africans.

## ANC, IFP retain ward seats

Ernest Mabuza

Senior Reporter

THE African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) held on to their seats in the ward by-elections held in various provinces this week.

The ANC won two uncontested seats in Nkomazi in Mpumalanga and at Umsobomvu in Northern Cape. The party also retained its wards at Umzimkulu in Eastern Cape, Cedarberg in Western Cape and Aganang in Limpopo.

It also won a seat in Mogwase in North West, previously held by an independent councillor.

The IFP retained its seats in Okhahlamba and Indaka in KwaZulu-Natal, while the Democratic Alliance

(DA) won the by-election in Knysna in Western Cape.

An independent candidate, Christelle Wiese, won the by-election in Ward 14 in Siyathemba in Northern Cape which, was also contested by the ANC.

Of the 29 399 residents eligible to vote in all the wards, 9 564 participated in the voting, representing a 32% turnout.

The DA said although it lost the by-election in Cedarberg to the ANC, the result showed that those that voted in 2000 had remained loyal, following the withdrawal of the New National Party from the alliance.

"This is a vote of confidence in the DA's role as an independent alternative to the ANC," party spokesman Anthony Hazell said.



## Hands on your hips

The defection row in KwaZulu-Natal continues breeding

lots of verbal sniping between the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party. The latest snide remark comes from the ANC's Mtholephi Mthimkhulu: "The ANC in KwaZulu-Natal has learnt with regret of the collapse of marquees [apparently caused by a storm] at the IFP conference presently held at Ulundi. We thank God that no casualties have been reported. The ANC hopes that there will be no unauthorised use of state resources when sorting out the havoc that has been caused by this unfortunate incident."



# Still no go-ahead for Aids grant

Nawaal Deane and  
Jaspreet Kindra

The Ministry of Health has not officially informed the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria that its grant allocated to KwaZulu-Natal is welcome and accepted, thereby further delaying the province's receipt of the grant.

The fund does not acknowledge press releases as confirmation that Minister of Health Manto Tshabalala-Msimang is not blocking the R600-million grant, but says it is awaiting official confirmation from the ministry before any funds will be forwarded.

The fund is an international independent body, established last year on the initiative of United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan.

It is a partnership between countries and is not meant to replace existing initiatives or other funding channels with the same or similar objectives.

The grant was clouded by controversy after it became apparent at the recent world Aids conference in Barcelona that the minister might not accept the money because the correct procedures had not been followed by KwaZulu-Natal, which had directly applied for the grant. This caused an outcry from political and religious organisations, which called for the minister's resignation.

The Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) threatened to bring an urgent

court application to stop the government from blocking the grant.

On Tuesday July 16, after a meeting, Tshabalala-Msimang and KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Health Zweli Mkhize announced the grant would be accepted and pooled with other resources of the South African National Aids Council (Sanac). It was also reported that Tshabalala-Msimang said the fund was trying to bypass the democratically elected government and put the money in the hands of civil authorities.

"Perhaps this is because the fund does not trust governments elected by the people," the minister said.

Melanie Zipperer, spokesperson for the fund, says it does not comment on political statements such as these.

"Before we disperse the funds we have to know who will be the principal recipient. Right now it is all still speculation," says Zipperer. She says a press release has been received but it is not considered an official response.

The fund's website says it hopes to quickly disburse resources to all proposals approved in the first round, based on a country-led and nationally coordinated process. Each country-coordinating mechanism has to propose one or more principal recipients to serve as the legal entity, which receives and manages money from the fund.

"When the principal recipient is communicated to the fund, it intends to move expeditiously, while ensur-

ing there are effective accounting systems in place for managing money within countries." Two grants have been awarded to South Africa, but a principal recipient still needs to be officially communicated.

This week a source close to the ministry said pressure from countries in Southern African had caused Tshabalala-Msimang to make a fuss about KwaZulu-Natal "bypassing" procedures in applying for the grant.

Sources say Tshabalala-Msimang is receiving flak from other Southern African nations because South Africa managed to secure two grants.

The first grant awarded South Africa R1.13-billion for proposals from *loveLife* and *Soul City*.

A second, separate proposal from the Enhancing Care Initiative in KwaZulu-Natal was awarded R720-million.

Tshabalala-Msimang this week raised concerns that countries like Botswana had not received any money.

Mark Heywood, spokesperson for the TAC, scoffs at the explanation, saying that the

real reason the minister is opposing the grant is because it has a big anti-retroviral component.

"When the grant goes ahead it will be the beginning of the provision of anti-retroviral drugs to poor people in one of the worst-affected provinces."

Heywood says that countries like Botswana are "drowning in money" from donors including the Bill Gates Foundation.

He says that the minister is taking equity to Ludi-

crous extremes: "It is not a question of [the fund] having a money pot and then dishing it out equally among countries."

KwaZulu-Natal, like any applicant, can ask the fund for a grant, and an independent board gives the go-ahead, says Heywood, adding that according to the fund's report South Africa did not receive the highest funding.

Nathan Geffen of the TAC says the two largest grants went to Malawi and Thailand.

The Sanac proposal was the third-largest grant approved.

"This is just an excuse the minister has used to try to scuttle around the KwaZulu-Natal proposal, using it as a red herring based on incorrect facts. What lies at the root of what is going on is the agenda of Aids denialists," says Geffen.

Meanwhile the health secretary of the African National Congress, Saadiq Kariem, has endorsed Tshabalala-Msimang's call for the fund's grants to be received by South Africa to be distributed equitably.

Mkhize, however, reiterated his point — made last week — that the province would not lose out on any money due to it.

**Minister of Health Manto Tshabalala-Msimang is at the centre of the Aids-grant controversy.**  
Photo: Nadine Hutton

