

News

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Planning Commission mostly activists

Many of the 24 members of the Planning Commission announced by President Jacob Zuma on Friday were struggle activists in their early years,.

By Michael Hamlyn

It is not surprising, perhaps, that many of the 24 members of the Planning Commission announced by President Jacob Zuma on Friday should have been struggle activists in their early years, nor perhaps is it any less surprising that many of them are academics.

Some are well known. Some are less so. But all bring a special, and detailed knowledge of an area of expertise important to South Africa's present and future.

Cyril Ramaphosa

Heading the list of appointees is Cyril Ramaphosa, once regarded as the likely successor to President Nelson Mandela - and indeed his own favoured candidate.

Disappointed by the preferment of the smooth schemer Thabo Mbeki, Ramaphosa took himself off into business, where he is now executive chairman of Millennium Consolidated Investment (MCI) and non-executive chairman of Johnnic Holdings, MTN Group Limited and SASRIA.

He is the past chairman of the Black Economic Empowerment Commission. His directorships include South African Breweries, First Rand Limited, Macsteel Holdings, Alexander Forbes and Medscheme Limited.

Ramaphosa started his career as a lawyer, and joined the Council of Unions of South Africa (Cusa) as an advisor in the legal department.

In August 1982, Cusa resolved to form National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and in December Ramaphosa became its first secretary.

Ramaphosa was conference organiser in the preparations leading to the formation of the Congress of South African Trade Union (Cosatu).

He was elected general-secretary of the ANC in the Durban conference of July 1991. In this capacity he became the head of the negotiations commissions of the ANC and led the ANC team negotiating the movement's way to power, and then creating the widely acclaimed constitutions of the new democracy.

He is to be deputy chairman of the Planning Commission.

Bobby Godsell

Godsell was a sure-fire nomination for the commission, since he is now the grand old man of South African business, constantly on hand to dispense sound advice and wisdom to aspiring captains of industry.

He was the leading figure in deep mining in the gold mines, as deputy chairman and chief executive of the gold division of Anglo American.

And when he finally left the industry he became chairman of Eskom, a position which led to a considerable falling out with especially the chief executive Jacob Moroga.

He chairs Business Unity South Africa (Busa), which leads us to Jerry Vilakazi.

Jerry Vilakazi

Vilakazi is the chief executive of Busa a confederation of employer and business organisations active in macroeconomic, social policy and the formulation of business positions.

It is the principal business organisation representing SA business at national and international levels. Prior to joining it he was managing director of the Black Management Forum.

He is the non-executive chairman of Netcare, and holds directorships in PPC, BMF Investment Company, Palama Investments, ExecuPrime, Tower Group, SA National Parks Board, ComMark Trust, and he chairs the Mpumalanga Gambling Board.

Earlier he was a civil servant as public service commissioner, director and chief director for strategic planning at Home Affairs, deputy director for transformation at the DPSA, director for commerce and industry with the Institute of Chartered Accountants, and on the board of the Water Research Commission.

He started his career as teacher in then Eastern Transvaal (Mpumalanga) and served in various ANC branch structures. He writes and publishes poetry. Elias Masilela

Elias Masilela is currently Head of Policy Analysis at group Sanlam Investments which he joined in 2005, following his role in the National Treasury as leader of the Social Security and Retirement Reform programme.

In June of 2006, he was elected to chair the board of the South African Savings Institute, In May of 2008, he was appointed by President Thabo Mbeki to the board of the South African Reserve Bank (SARB).

In August 2008, he was appointed by the Minister of Finance, Trevor Manuel, to the board of the Government Employee Pension Fund (GEPF).

His novel "Number 43, Trelawney Park" tells the stories of the ANC and PAC cadres who passed through a modest house in a suburb of Manzini, Swaziland, which was for many years a vital base of operations for the ANC during the liberation struggle

Noluthando Gosa

Noluthando Gosa is chief executive of Akhona Properties and deputy chair of Broll Property Group. Previously she was an analyst with Investec Bank and an executive director of the SA Telecoms Regulatory Authority.

Until 1997, Gosa was the marketing manager of Telkom.

She served on the board of the SABC until quitting in a row over accusations of corruption and poor governance, but according to the Democratic Alliance she was a member of a board that constantly intervened in programming (stopping broadcast of completed or commissioned work) and in commissioning. "It is a political board," Dene Smuts told Parliament.

She currently serves on the boards of Investec Asset Management, the Small Enterprise Development Agency and the Broll Group.

She at one time served on the board of the Ntsika Enterprise Development Agency and the Broadcasting Complaints Commission. She has also served on the investment committee of the National Empowerment Fund.

Jennifer Molwantwa

Molwantwa is a an expert in the science of water. Her expertise is in active and passive biological treatment of mine water.

In the course of acquiring her various academic distinctions she showed to how to use a novel biofilm technology.

She provides surface water quality input to environmental impact assessments on mining related impact prediction, assessment, mitigation, management and development of monitoring programmes.

Mike Muller

Muller is another water expert. He was director general of the Water Affairs and Forestry department under several ministers, before leaving to become visiting adjunct professor at the Graduate School of Public and Development Management, Johannesburg; He is allso a memberof the UK Institution of of Civil Engineers.

Mariam Altman

Altman is an expert on jobs. She runs the Human Sciences Research Council's Centre for Poverty, Employment and Growth where she develops strategies to put employment centre stage in policy making and implementation.

The research covers the macro-economy, trade and industry, government employment, labour markets and social policy.

Her claim to fame is evidence-based employment scenarios drawing together top decision- and opinion-makers in business, labour, government and academia to identify how to halve unemployment and poverty.

Altman is a leading expert in employment and industrial policy, with 20 years' research and practical experience in economic development issues, and having produced over 80 publications.

Her work concentrates on framing public and private strategies to make the economy and industries more employment-oriented.

She has a BA in economics from McGill University, an MPhil from the University of Cambridge and a PhD in economics from the University of Manchester.

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