



Department of Arts and Culture

Celebrating 10 years of freedom through National Symbols



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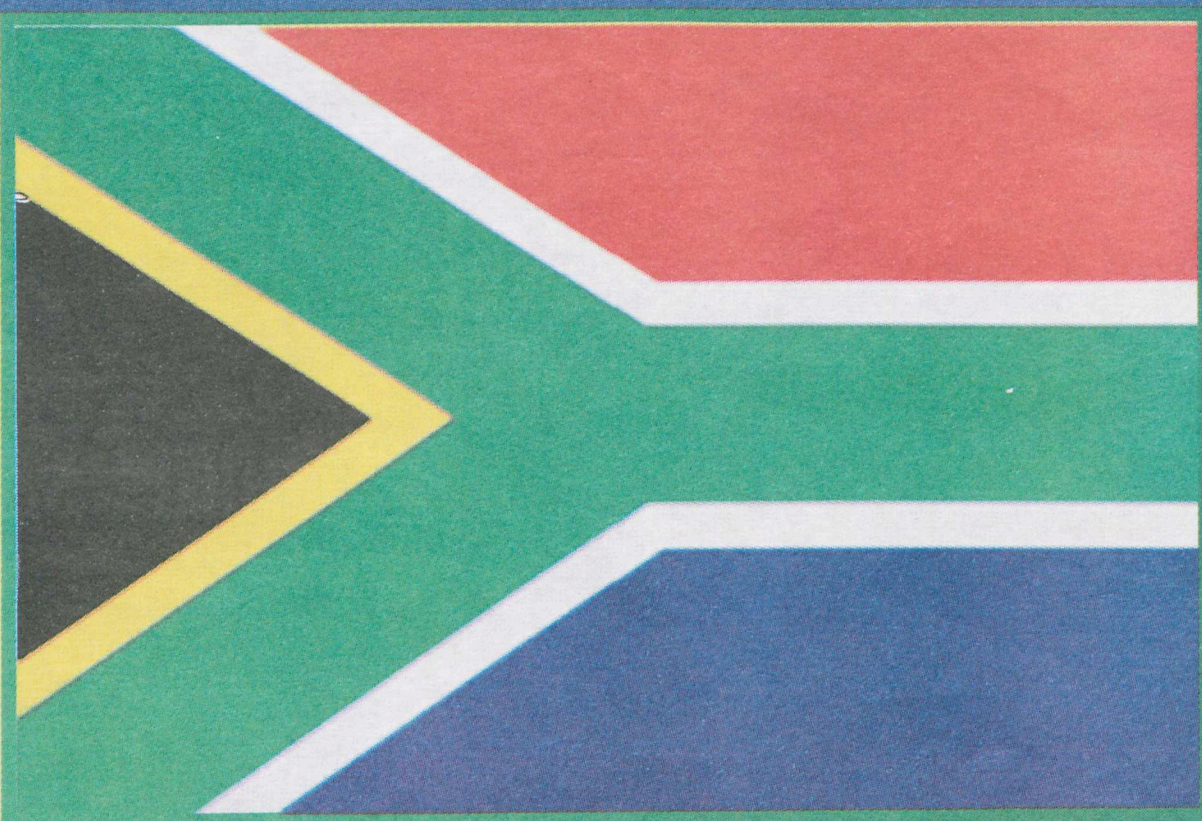
National Symbols

What are National Symbols?

National Symbols are those symbols adopted by people in a particular country to express its values and aspirations. These symbols are key to social cohesion. Some of the roles of the national symbols include the following:

- Nation building
- National identity
- Unification
- Land marking history

National Flag



The history

The new National Flag of the Republic of South Africa was taken to use on 27 April 1994. It replaced the previous flag which flew over South Africa from 31 May 1926 to 26 April 1994.

The unique central design of the flag which begins as a "V" at the flag-post and comes together in the centre of the flag, extending further, as a single horizontal band to the outer edge of the fly, can be seen as representing the convergence of diverse elements in South African society, which then take the road ahead in unison. This idea also links up with the motto of the New National Coat of Arms namely *Ike e: /xarra /ke*, in the language of the /Xam San people, which literally means "diverse people unite".

Flying the National Flag

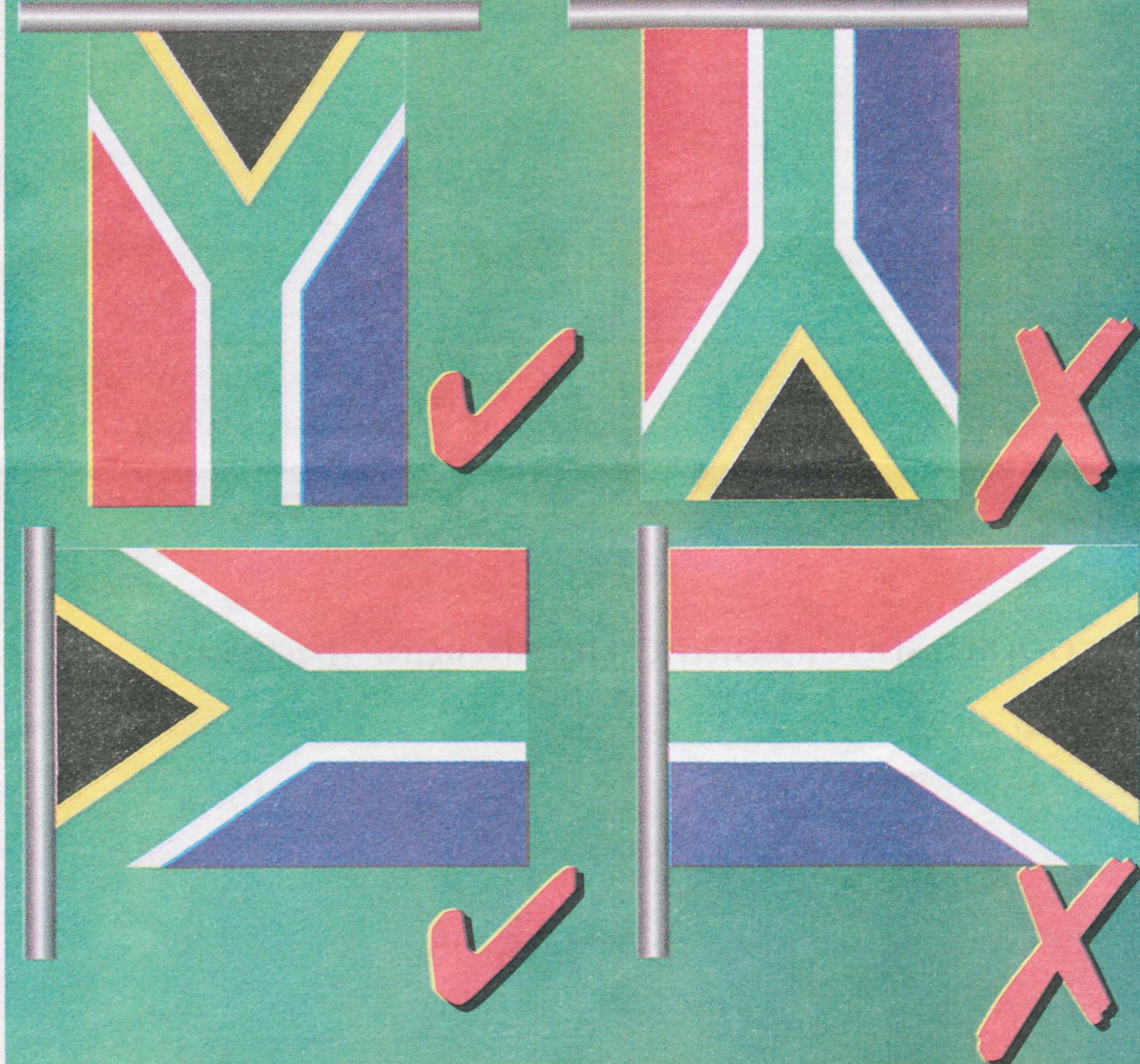
Respect for the National Flag

The National Flag must at all times be treated with dignity and respect.

The flag must not-

- Touch the floor or the ground;
- Be used as a tablecloth or be draped in front of a platform;
- Be used to cover a statue, plaque, cornerstone etc. at unveiling or similar ceremonies; or
- Be used to start or finish any competition, race or similar event.

How the Flag should be flown



National Coat of Arms

The role of the Coat of Arms

A national coat of arms, or State emblem, is the highest visual symbol of the State. Take a minute to consider the important events in your life – birth, marriage, death and school certificates, your passport – they are all endorsed by the Coat of Arms. Your smallest coin has it on one of its sides. When away from the country seeing a plaque of it on the embassy signals a home away from home.

The coat of arms is also a central part of the Great Seal, traditionally considered to be the highest emblem of the State. Absolute authority is given to every document with an impression of the Great Seal on it, as this means that it has been approved by the President of South Africa.

The new coat of arms replaced one that has served South Africa since 17 September 1910. The change reflects Government's aim to highlight the democratic change in South Africa and a new sense of patriotism.



- 1) The Motto
- 2) The Ears of Wheat
- 3) Elephant Tusks
- 4) The Shield
- 5) The Human Figures
- 6) The Spear and Knobkierie
- 7) The Protea
- 8) The Secretary Bird
- 9) The Rising Sun

The Motto

The motto is: *Ike e: /xarra /ke*, written in the Khoisan language of the /Xam people, literally meaning: diverse people unite. It addresses each individual effort to harness the unity between thought and action. On a collective scale it calls for the nation to unite in a common sense of belonging and national pride - Unity in Diversity.

The ears of wheat

An emblem of fertility, it also symbolises the idea of germination, growth and the feasible development of any potential. It relates to the nourishment of the people and signifies the agricultural aspects of the earth.

Elephant tusks

Elephants symbolise wisdom, strength, moderation and eternity.

The shield

It has a dual function as a vehicle for the display of identity and of spiritual defence. It contains the primary symbol of our nation.

The human figures

The figures are derived from images on the Linton stone, a world famous example of South African Rock Art, now housed and displayed in the South African Museum in Cape Town. The Khoisan, the oldest known inhabitants of our land and most probably of the earth, testify to our common humanity and heritage as South Africans and as humanity in general. The figures are depicted in an attitude of greeting, symbolising unity. This also represents the beginning of the individual's transformation into the greater sense of belonging to the nation and by extension, collective Humanity.

The spear and knobkierie

Dual symbols of defence and authority, they in turn represent the powerful legs of the secretary bird. The spear and knobkierie are lying down, symbolising peace.

The protea

The protea is an emblem of the beauty of our land and the flowering of our potential as a nation in pursuit of the African Renaissance. The protea symbolises the holistic integration of forces that grows from the earth and are nurtured from above. The most popular colours of Africa have been assigned to the protea – green, gold, red and black.

The secretary bird

The secretary bird is characterised in flight, the natural consequence of growth and speed. It is the equivalent of the lion on earth. A powerful bird whose legs - depicted as the spear and knobkierie - serve it well in its hunt for snakes symbolising protection of the nation against its enemies. It is a messenger of the heavens and conducts its grace upon the earth, in this sense it is a symbol of divine majesty. Its uplifted wings are an emblem of the ascendancy of our nation, whilst simultaneously offering us its protection. It is depicted in gold, which clearly symbolises its association with the sun and the highest power.

The rising sun

An emblem of brightness, splendour and the supreme principle of the nature of energy, it symbolises the promise of rebirth, the active faculties of reflection, knowledge, good judgement and willpower. It is the symbol of the source of life, of light and the ultimate wholeness of Humanity. The completed structure of the Coat of Arms combines the lower and higher oval shape in a symbol of infinity. The path that connects the lower edge of the scroll, through the lines of the tusks, with the horizon above which the sun rises at the top, forms the shape of the cosmic egg from which the secretary bird rises. In the symbolic sense this is the implied rebirth of the spirit of our great and heroic nation.

National Anthem

The History

In 1993, during the multiparty negotiations, a call for a composition of the National Anthem was made. 119 proposals were received. A short list of six anthems including "Die Stem" and "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" was compiled. A debate on the utilization of the two national anthems started on 21 October 1993 in the Negotiating Council.

The President proclaimed both anthems official. This proclamation was published in the government Gazette on 20 April 1994. Both anthems were sung during the inauguration of the new president, Mr Nelson Mandela. Singing the two anthems proved to be effective in terms of nation building, but was time consuming. It was in the late 1994 that Prof. JSM Khumalo was assigned to produce a combined but shorter National Anthem.

The current version was approved on 19 April 1995.

National Anthem of South Africa

Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika
Maluphakanyisw' uphondo lwayo,
Yizwa imithandazo yethu,
Nkosi sikelela, thina lusapho lwayo.

Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso,
O fedise dintwa le matshwenyeho,
O se boloke, O se boloke setjhaba sa heso,
Setjhaba sa South Afrika - South Afrika.

Uit die blou van onse hemel,
Uit die diepte van ons see,
Oor ons ewige gebergtes,
Waar die kranse antwoord gee,

Sounds the call to come together,
And united we shall stand,
Let us live and strive for freedom,
In South Africa our land.

Paying Respect to the Anthem

When the National Anthem is sung, those who are present should show respect thereof:

- People should stand up straight and pay attention.
- Unnecessary movement should be avoided.
- Civilians should take off their hats.
- No talking nor laughing during the singing of the Anthem.

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- Performing Arts Centre of the Free State Tel: (051) 447 7771

- The Market Theatre Tel: (011) 832 1641
- The Playhouse Company Tel: (031) 369 9400
- Arts Cape Council Tel: (021) 410 9921
- The Windybrow Centre for the Arts Tel: (011) 720 0003/4
- Libraries
- National Library of SA Tel: (012) 321 8931
- South Africa Library for the Blind Tel: (046) 622 7226
- South African Blind Workers Organisation Tel: (011) 839 1793
- Cultural Institutions
- Northern Flagship Institution, Pretoria Tel: (012) 322 7632

- Iziko Museums of Cape Town Tel: (021) 481 3832
- Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg Tel: (033) 345 1404
- National Museum, Bloemfontein Tel: (051) 447 9609
- Die Afrikaanse Taal Museum, Paarl Tel: (021) 872 2018
- The National English Literary Museum, Grahamstown Tel: (046) 622 7095
- Voortrekker Museum, Pietermaritzburg Tel: (033) 394 6834
- War Museum of the Boer Republics, Bloemfontein Tel: (051) 447 3447

- Robben Island Museum Tel: (021) 409 5100
- William Humphreys Art Gallery, Kimberley Tel: (053) 831 1724/5
- Engelenburghuis Art Collection, Pretoria Tel: (012) 328 5082
- Nelson Mandela Museum, Umtata Tel: (047) 532 5110
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