



University of Venda  
Creating Future Leaders

# UNIVEN Weekly e-Newsletter



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## Bandung Reimagined: Global South Voices Converge at Hybrid Conference Hosted by University of Venda and BRICS Research Institute



*Group photo of some of the speakers and delegates who attended the conference in person*

Tohoyandou — Scholars, from across the globe gathered on 21 April 2026 for a landmark hybrid conference revisiting the enduring legacy of the 1955 Bandung Conference, reframing it as both a historical milestone and a living blueprint for Global South solidarity in a rapidly shifting world order.

Hosted by the University of Venda in collaboration with BRICS Research Institute, the conference titled “The Spirit of Bandung at 71: African Liberation and Anti-Colonial Solidarities in Contemporary Perspective” brought together Sixty six (66)

participants from eight (8) African countries including Nigeria, Ghana, Mali, Camerron, Kenya Zimbabwe, Lesotho and South Africa, Three (3) Asian countries including Indonesia, India and China, as well as Brazil, Turkey, Italy and Canada to interrogate the past, present and future of anti-colonial struggle, development, and global justice. Ten (10) of these participants presented in-person while fifty six (56) presented virtually.

Among the distinguished guest were Prof. Mpho Ngoepe, Vice-Principal (VP) for

Research, Postgraduate Studies, Innovation and Commercialisation at the University of South Africa, Prof. Stanley Liphadzi, group executive for Research, Development and Innovation at Water Research Commission, Prof. Kedibone Phago, Dean of the Faculty of Economics, Development and Business Sciences at University of Mpumalanga. Prof. Darwis Khudori, an Emeritus professor at the university of Université Le Havre Normandie in France who also delivered a keynote address virtually as well as Prof Siphamandla Zondi, Director of the Institute for Pan African Thought and Conversation in University of Johannesburg who delivered the second keynote address.



*Prof Fulufhelo Netswera*

Opening the conference, Prof Fulufhelo Netswera, Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Postgraduate Studies, University of Venda (UNIVEN), set a reflective yet urgent tone, calling for a deeper reckoning with Africa's historical experiences of enslavement and colonialism. He challenged scholars to reclaim African narratives through rigorous research and creative expression, positioning knowledge production as a key site of liberation.

Prof Netswera emphasised that the spirit of Bandung is not confined to the past but must

inform contemporary struggles across Africa and Palestine, anchored in unity, solidarity, and inclusive development.

The keynote addresses at the Bandung conference hosted by the University of Venda delivered a sharp, dual-lens interrogation of past and present global power, anchored in the legacy of the Bandung Conference and its relevance today.



*Prof Darwis Khudori*

Emeritus Professor Darwis Khudori from the Université Le Havre Normandie, France, traced Bandung's historical weight as a defining rupture in global power relations, where newly independent Asian and African states asserted sovereignty outside Western dominance and catalysed the Non-Aligned Movement. He framed this moment within the long arc of capitalism, its rise, expansion, and crisis, arguing that Bandung symbolised a collective pushback against centuries of economic and political subordination. Anchored by ten principles and the enduring "Bandung Spirit" of solidarity, equality, and emancipation, the movement inspired global resistance to imperialism and apartheid, even as its momentum later waned under shifting geopolitics and renewed Western hegemony.

Prof Khudori warned that today's global order remains tightly controlled by dominant economic powers, with emerging economies,

particularly in Asia, risking replicating the same extractive, consumer-driven models they once resisted. He contrasted a hegemonic “Western Galaxy” with a cooperative “Bandung Constellation,” posing a stark choice between conflict and collaborative transformation. His call was unequivocal: revive the Bandung Spirit through Africa-Asia solidarity and reimagine development pathways that are just, inclusive, and sustainable.



*Prof Siphamandla Zondi*

Bringing the discussion into the present, the Director of the Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation - University of Johannesburg and Acting Co-Director of the Institute for Global African Affairs - University of Johannesburg and University of the West Indies, Barbados, Professor Siphamandla Zondi positioned BRICS as a contemporary vehicle for that unfinished Bandung project. He highlighted the bloc's growing geopolitical and economic weight, spanning a significant share of the global population and GDP, and its evolution into a platform advocating systemic reform in global governance. Emerging from the fractures exposed by the 2009 financial crisis, the BRICS has matured into a voice for multipolarity, challenging the dominance of Western-led institutions like the G7 while complementing platforms such as the NAM and the G77.

Prof Zondi drew attention to BRICS' hybrid

strategy, combining development finance, institutional reform, and coordinated global engagement while acknowledging internal tensions, geopolitical rivalries, and uneven global perceptions. With ongoing expansion across Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America, the bloc is amplifying its influence and advancing alternatives in finance and trade architecture.

Ultimately, he cast BRICS as a bridge-builder of the Global South: imperfect but pivotal in reshaping global power toward a more balanced, inclusive, and cooperative world order, echoing Bandung's original vision, but adapted to a far more complex geopolitical landscape.

The conference programme reflected a rich tapestry of interdisciplinary engagement, structured around the following key subthemes: African Participation and Historical Agency; Liberation Struggles and Transnational Solidarity; Pan-Africanism and Non-Alignment; Neo-Colonial Political Economy; South-South Cooperation and Multipolarity; Decolonising Knowledge Production; Contemporary Global Challenges and the Afterlives of Bandung.

More than a commemorative event, the conference positioned Bandung as an active framework for confronting 21st-century challenges. Across panels and keynote addresses, a common thread emerged: the Global South is no longer a passive participant in global affairs but an increasingly organised and assertive force.

As presentations continue around sovereignty, justice, and sustainability, the message from the conference was clear: Bandung is not just history. It is a call to action. In addition to research paper presentation, the conference had called for submission of poems aligned with the conference theme which were peer-reviewed and 18 of which were accepted and included into the Bandung Commemorative Poetry Volume and the selected best poem titled, “We Refuse the Silence” was recited by Mr. Kingdom M Moshounyane during the conference opening ceremony.

Prof Fulufhelo Netswera’s closing remarks highlighted the conference as a resounding success that brought forward critical reflections on post-COVID-19 challenges, global power dynamics, and the role of multilateral platforms such as BRICS in advancing the interests of the Global South. He emphasised the importance of preserving the rich scholarly contributions through publications to ensure their long-term

impact. Importantly, he called for continued collective action and advocacy for meaningful transformation, urging societies to confront neo-colonial constraints, reclaim economic and resource ownership, and pursue self-sufficiency. He concluded by encouraging ongoing dialogue and collaboration across platforms to sustain the struggle for equality, development, and genuine global equity.

*Pictures below: Some of the presenters, Chair of sessions and delegates:*



# University of Venda Brings Hope to Rural Learners Through Career Exhibition Initiative



*The University of Venda student recruitment team poses for a group photo upon arrival at Ramotshinyadi Village*

Ramotshinyadi Village, Limpopo learners from rural communities in Limpopo received renewed hope and inspiration during a career awareness exhibition hosted by the Rural Youth Information Network and Development Agency on 20 April 2026 at Ramotshinyadi Village (Fahlogang Hall) in the Letsitele area.

The University of Venda played a central role in the event, engaging over 670 learners from Ramotshinyadi Secondary School, Mashooro High School, Makobo High School, and Khesethwane Secondary School. Representatives from the institution provided critical information on higher education opportunities, admission requirements, and career pathways.



*Mrs Musutwa Monyai engages with learners, while Ms Calfonia Malatjie and Ms Takalani Mulaudzi attentively listen to the speaker inside the hall*

Mr Takalani Thabo from Marketing, Branding, and Communication emphasised the importance of early applications, reminding matric learners that the first step towards university admission is submitting their applications on time. He highlighted that applications for the 2027 academic year close on 30 September 2026 and encouraged learners to apply online before the deadline. He also outlined the faculties available at the university, student life opportunities, and funding options such as the National Student Financial Aid Scheme. "The aim is to bridge the information gap and inspire learners to pursue academic success despite socio-economic challenges," said Thabo.

Adding a personal touch to the engagement, Ms Calfonia Malatjie, a native of Ramotshinyadi Village, introduced learners to freshwater technology as an entry point into diploma studies within the Faculty of Science, Engineering, and Agriculture. She explained the minimum admission requirements in science-related fields and encouraged learners to achieve at least 26 Admission Point Score (APS) to access various programmes. Her presentation highlighted future career prospects driven by innovation and sustainability. Ms Takalani Mulaudzi further unpacked opportunities within Environmental Sciences, outlining entry requirements and career paths in conservation, climate change, and natural resource management. From the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education, Ms Tshimangadzo Mudau encouraged learners to consider teaching as a career, detailing programme requirements and the growing demand for qualified educators.



*Pictures above: Mr Takalani Thabo and Mr Tlabo Leboho during a University of Venda presentation*

*Ms Tshimangadzo Mudau delivers her presentation, while Ms Malatjie outlines the programmes offered by their respective faculties.*

Motivating learners further, Mr Tlabo Leboho presented programmes offered within the Faculty of Management, Commerce and Law. He introduced 13 mainstream programmes alongside extended curriculum options designed to support students academically. "Enrolling in extended curriculum programmes is not a sign of failure, but an opportunity to succeed," emphasised Dr Goitsemodimo Molocwa, encouraging learners to apply confidently regardless of their academic challenges.

Learners expressed appreciation for the initiative. A Grade 12 learner, Mr Mathebula, shared that it was his first time attending a career exhibition. "I feel motivated and informed. I now understand the programmes and financial aid opportunities available to me," he said.



*Grade 12 Learners from different schools pays attention to the presentation on the day*



*Dr Goitsemodimo Molocwa encourages learners to apply with confidence, regardless of their academic challenges*

Event organiser Dr Oscar Nkuna noted that the initiative had previously been halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic and financial constraints but was successfully revived this year. He emphasised the importance of such platforms in ensuring that learners from Limpopo access local higher education opportunities.

Other institutions present included the University of Limpopo, the South African Police Service, and the Independent Electoral Commission, all of which contributed to a holistic career guidance experience. Through this impactful outreach, the University of Venda reaffirmed its commitment to community engagement and its mission to empower rural learners with knowledge, opportunity, and hope for a brighter future.



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THE PRESIDENT OF CONVOCATION  
MR SYLVESTER MOTADI, INVITES YOU TO

2026

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*Awards*



**Venue:** Hotel Sky,  
Sandton, Johannesburg



**Time:** 18:00



SCAN QR OR CLICK BELOW TO RSVP

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