Ambassador Dumisani Shadrack Kumalo was born in Kwambunda village, on the banks of the Blood River, Kingsley, Natal, to Khelina Kumalo (nee Mbatha) and Andries Kumalo on 16 September 1947. He was the fifth child of eleven siblings. After the family moved to Evaton, south of Johannesburg, he attended the Evaton Community School. He spent much of his childhood in Evaton and later moved to Soweto to stay with his elder brother and the only remaining sibling, Henry, who raised him like his son.

Mtungwa cut his political teeth as a student activist. He pursued his fight for freedom, justice and equality for all when he took up journalism and was one of the founding members of the Union of Black Journalists (UBJ). This was an epoch when journalists drank hard and lived fast. He slipped into that lifestyle when he joined Jim Bailey's Post and Drum magazine in 1967 and later joined the Sunday Times. Fortunately for him, our country and the world, he stopped drinking on March 31, 1975 and would be celebrating his 44th year of sobriety come April 1, 2019 had he lived.

It is during this time that he also became an activist in the South African Student Organisation (SASO), where he found a platform to contribute and add his voice to the fight against apartheid. From that point on, his family resigned itself to sharing him with the world as he joined the struggle.

While in exile, Ambassador Kumalo became a key figure in the anti-apartheid divestment campaign which led to the passage of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 by the US Congress. In this context, he played an important role in mobilising members of Congress to reverse then President Ronald Reagan's veto on sanctions because, as he put it: "Punitive sanctions, I believe, are not the best course of action; they hurt the very people they are intended to help."

 "The African Agenda" occupied Dumisani Kumalo's mind as a lifelong vocation. He was a true Pan Africanist who believed in the unity of Africa as an essential condition for the Continent to address her challenges so as to improve the lives of the   peoples   of   Africa   for   the   better.

Soon after Nelson Mandela's release from prison in February 1990, Ambassador Kumalo returned to South Africa for the first time after over a decade of exile in the United States (US). He witnessed the historic elections in 1994 that brought the African National Congress (ANC) to power and thereafter started to work for the government in 1997 as Director of the US desk in the then Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

Ambassador Kumalo was subsequently appointed as South Africa's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN) in New York and presented his credentials to former Secretary-General Kofi Annan on 21 April 1999.

He served as South Africa's Permanent Representative to the UN in New York until 2009.   During   his   decade-long   tour   of   duty,   Ambassador

Kumalo gained vast experience in multilateral diplomacy and extensive knowledge and understanding of the challenges facing developing countries broadly and the African continent particular. In this regard, Ambassador Kumalo was vocal in calling for a strengthened and reformed UN that would serve as a beacon of hope and inspiration for all peoples of the world.

From 1999 to 2009, South Africa chaired several organisations and formations, namely, the African Union (AU), the Non- Aligned Movement (NAM), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Group of 77 plus China (G77). As chair, Ambassador Kumalo articulated the views of Africa and the developing world at the UN and mobilised support for the socio- economic development programmes of the South and Africa's New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD).

Ambassador Kumalo advocated for a rules-based multilateral system with development, security and human rights at its centre. He actively participated in the main deliberative and subsidiary bodies of the UN and held several positions as chair or co- chair of various UN bodies: he was Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission; Chairman of the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Guinea Bissau and Burundi; and Co-Chair for the establishment of the Human Rights Council.

From 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2008, South Africa had the honour of serving as an elected member of the UN Security Council for the first time. Ambassador Kumalo led the first South African team to the Council. South Africa's main objective in the Council was to contribute to the resolution of conflicts and stabilisation of post-conflict situations. Ambassador Kumalo also chaired several committees of the Security Council. He was Chair of the 751 Sanctions Committee on Somalia; Chair of the Security Council mandate review; Vice-Chair of the Sanctions Committee on Liberia; Vice- Chair of the Sanctions Committee on Cote d'Ivoire; Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa; and Co-Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

Ambassador Kumalo returned to South Africa in 2009 after completing his tour of duty in New York and was appointed as Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region in the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) before retiring.

On his retirement from DIRCO, Ambassador Kumalo served as the Chief Executive Officer of the Thabo Mbeki Foundation (TMF) until 2015. His contribution to the work of the TMF will forever be appreciated, particularly the establishment of the Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute (TMALI), a TMF initiative in partnership with UNISA, which trains young people in order to contribute to the development of a cadre of thought leaders on the African Continent.

He was a big, exuberant man with a wide and generous smile and a sense of humour to match. In his spare time, Ambassador Kumalo loved music, particularly jazz concerts and jazz clubs – ask the many South African musicians who live with him in exile in New York.

Ambassador Kumalo is survived by his wife, Ntombikayise Kumalo, brother, Henry Kumalo, children and grandchildren.

Ndlelanhle Mntungwa! Mbulase odl'umuntu emyenga ngendaba! Donda weziziba!