

BIOGRAPHY OF SOUTH AFRICA'S MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION, PROFESSOR BONGINKOSI EMMANUEL BLADE NZIMANDE

PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERSHIP

Professor Bonginkosi Emmanuel Blade Nzimande has a long and distinguished career in public service. He served as Minister of Higher Education and Training from May 2009 until October 2017. Between 2018 and 2019, he served as Minister of Transport.

He also holds the distinction of being South Africa's first Minister of Higher Education and Training and first Minister of Higher Education, Science, and Innovation, in the democratic era after 1994. He is currently serving his second term as South Africa's Minister of Science, Technology, and Innovation.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Before the transition to democracy in South Africa, Professor Nzimande played a seminal role in the struggle of national liberation which brought an end to apartheid rule. He was at the forefront of scholarship on labour studies at the former University of Natal and also supported the independent labour movement as an activist in the 1980's.

He played a key role in the period leading to the negotiated settlement that ended the apartheid political system and South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994. Since then, Professor Nzimande held various senior political leadership roles.

These include serving as a member of the National Deployment Committee of the African National Congress (ANC) and Chairperson of the ANC's Parliamentary Study Group on Education. He is also served as the first Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee of Education in a democratic National Assembly from 1994 – 1997.

Professor Nzimande is also the former Chairperson of the Financial Sector Campaign Coalition. He also served as a member of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress (ANC) from 1994 to 2017, and again from 2019 up to December 2022.

He was also the General Secretary (GS) of the South African Communist Party (SACP) from July 1998 until 16 July 2022 and elected the National Chairperson of the SACP from July 2022 until present.

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

Professor Nzimande holds a Doctorate in Philosophy specialising in Sociology from the University of Natal. In November 2023, he was conferred with honorary Professorship by the Beijing Jiaotong University (BJTU) in Beijing, China.

POSITIONS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Professor Nzimande has held various teaching and administrative positions in South Africa's higher education sector.

These include lecturing at the University of Zululand in 1985 and at the University of Natal in 1987. He also served as chairperson of the Board of Trustees at the Centre for Educational Policy Development.

PUBLICATIONS

Professor Nzimande has published numerous academic and other articles covering politics, psychology, civil society, political violence, and labour studies over a period of close to 40 years. Some of his published works include the following-

- Unsocial Science Indicator SA Vol. 11, No. 2;
- Schooling in the context of violence in SA: The Challenges of Change, edited by V Maphai, published by Harare SAPES Books;
- Schooling in The Context of Violence, Durban: Education Policy Unit;
- Civil Society and The Role of the National Education Coordination Committee (NECC), Durban: Education Policy Unit;
- Civics are the National Democratic Revolution, Mayibuye No. 5;
- Political Violence and The Struggle for Control in Pietermaritzburg, Journal of Southern African Studies Vol. 15. No. 3;
- Civics and Civil Society: a reply to M Mayekiso, work in progress co-author with M. Sikhosana; and
- Professor Nzimande has also authored a book titled 'Children of Wars: The Impact of Violence on Schooling in Natal Durban: Education Policy Unit.

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