



Speech: Celebrating HR Excellence and 43 Years of SABPP

Good Morning Distinguished Guests, Colleagues, and Fellow Champions of the Human Resources Profession.

Today is a momentous occasion as we not only celebrate the **inaugural National HR Day**, but also to mark **43 years of excellence, resilience, and transformation** under the stewardship of the **South African Board for People Practices**. What a powerful convergence of purpose and legacy.

Since its founding in 1982, SABPP has stood as the **beacon of professional HR standards** in South Africa. Over four decades, it has shaped policy, elevated practice, and cultivated a community of professionals who understand that people are not just resources—they are the **heartbeat of every organisation**.

From the early days of establishing HR frameworks to today's dynamic landscape of digital transformation, inclusion, and agility, SABPP has remained steadfast in its mission: to **professionalise and humanise the workplace**.

The launch of **National HR Day** is more than symbolic—it is strategic. It is a call to recognise the strategic role HR plays in shaping the future of work, in building cultures of trust, and in driving sustainable organisational success.

HR is no longer just about policies and payroll. It is about **purpose, people, and progress**. It is about creating workplaces where individuals thrive, where diversity is celebrated, and where leadership is nurtured at every level. Today, we honour the **unsung heroes**—the HR professionals who navigate complexity, champion wellness, and ensure that every voice is heard.

This year, SABPP has declared 2025 as the **Year of Appreciation**. In a world often dominated by criticism and division, appreciation is a radical act. It is a reminder that **gratitude is not weakness—it is strength**. It builds bridges, fosters collaboration, and ignites innovation.

Let us take this moment to appreciate:

- The HR practitioners who stayed resilient during times of crisis.
- The teams who quietly build inclusive cultures.
- The leaders who mentor, uplift, and inspire.
- And the organisations that invest in their people, not just as employees, but as human beings.

As Dale Carnegie once said, “Give honest and sincere appreciation. Be hearty in your approbation and lavish in your praise.” These words are more than advice—they are a philosophy for leadership.

As we look to the future, SABPP's **202030 Vision** sets a bold course. From expanding professional segmentation to launching high-impact events, from rebranding the HR profession to empowering the next generation—this is a time of **strategic renewal**.

Let us commit to:

- **Sharing stories of excellence** within our networks.
- **Opening our organisations** to SABPP initiatives.
- **Encouraging professional registration** and HR audits.
- And most importantly, **planting seeds of gratitude** that will grow into forests of trust and collaboration.

Today, we celebrate 43 years of SABPP's legacy and the birth of a new tradition—**National HR Day**. Let this day be a reminder that appreciation is not a once-off event, but a daily practice. Let us be the leaders who see, hear, and value others. Let us be the HR professionals who shape not just policies, but **possibilities**.

Happy National HR Day. Happy 43rd Birthday, SABPP. Here's to many more years of impact, innovation, and appreciation.

Thank you

Xolani Mawande | MHRP CEO | SA Board for People Practices

HAPPY NATIONAL HR DAY

Being an HR Professional is more important than ever before

Maropeng Sebothoma | HR Executive: Learning & Development | South African Revenue Service (SARS)



Being an HR professional is a profound responsibility. Throughout my experience, I have embraced it as a role that blends the science of human behaviour with the art of organisational leadership and law. At its core, Human Resources is a field of study grounded in scientific methodologies, drawing from psychology, research, analytics to understand, predict, and influence human behaviour in the workplace. It is also firmly anchored in the framework of labour legislation, and ethical governance, thereby ensuring that organisations operate within the bounds of the law while upholding the dignity and rights of every employee.

Therefore, an HR professional is a steward of the people and culture mandated to apply evidence-based practices to recruit, develop, and retain talent. It means using data to inform decisions, measure impact, and drive continuous improvement. Quite often, it is about interpreting and applying labour laws not just as compliance checklists, but to build fair, inclusive, and sustainable workplaces. In the broader context, HR is a strategic lever of organisational capability, aligning People strategies at all levels to achieve strategic goals. Whether it is workforce planning,

performance management, or leadership development, HR professionals play a critical role in ensuring that the right people are in the right roles, doing the right work, at the right time.

The launch of National HR Day is a landmark moment to give recognition to this profession. More than a celebration, this day serves as a platform to create awareness of the strategic importance of HR, to honour the achievements of the profession over the years while instilling a sense of pride and purpose among current and aspiring HR practitioners. National HR Day invites us to reflect on how far we have come, from administrative personnel departments to strategic business partners and change agents.

As we look to the future, HR must continue to evolve to embrace technology without losing our human touch. We must lead conversations on ethical Artificial Intelligence (AI), remote work, and the gig economy. Additionally, we must advocate for labour law reforms that reflect the complexities of modern work arrangements. Preparing the next generation of HR leaders to be bold, data-savvy, and deeply human is a must win battle.

As a registered HR professional, I welcome National HR Day with gratitude and hope. It affirms the value of our work as evident in various organisational key performance indicators and balance sheets.

HAPPY NATIONAL HR DAY

Reflection: What HR Day Means to Me

Prof Nasima MH Carrim | Board Member | SABPP



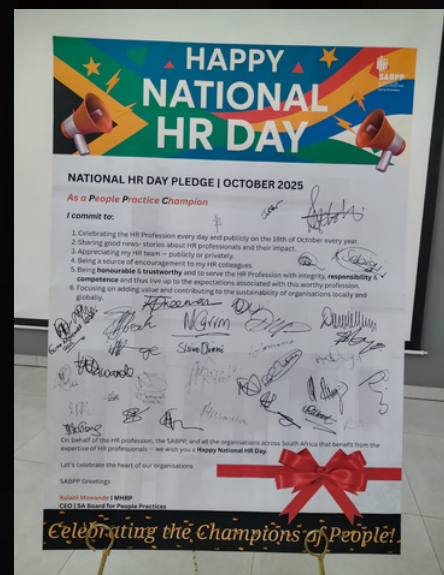
Human Resources (HR) Day holds a special place in my heart because it reminds me of the critical role that HR professionals play in shaping not only workplaces but also people's lives. It is a day that celebrates the heart of every organisation—the people—and those who dedicate themselves to nurturing, developing, and empowering them. To me, HR Day is more than just a date on the calendar; it is a moment to pause and reflect on the value of empathy, leadership, fairness, and transformation in the world of work.

HR Day affirms the purpose behind why I am passionate about people and organisational development. It serves as a reminder that at the core of every policy, training initiative, or recruitment decision lies a human being with aspirations, challenges, and potential. This day inspires me to continue fostering environments where individuals feel seen, valued, and supported. It also encourages me to uphold ethical leadership, fairness, and inclusivity in all HR practices—values that are vital for building trust and promoting employee wellbeing.

Furthermore, HR Day reinforces my belief that HR professionals are change agents.

In a rapidly evolving digital world, we are tasked with leading transformation while preserving humanity in the workplace. Whether it is through promoting diversity, supporting mental health, or driving learning and innovation, HR continues to bridge the gap between organisational strategy and the human experience.

For me, HR Day is both a celebration and a call to action. It reminds me to lead with compassion, to continue learning, and to use my platform to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others. It is a day that reaffirms my commitment to serve, uplift, and empower people—because at its essence, HR is about helping individuals and organisations reach their fullest potential together.



HAPPY NATIONAL HR DAY

SABPP™
SA BOARD FOR
PEOPLE PRACTICES
Setting HR standards

Celebrating South Africa's HR Professionals: National HR Day, 18 October 2025

Dr James Ramakau | Associate Director | Talent Management | KPMG Africa | MHRP – SABPP | Chartered Fellow – CIPD



To Human Resources Professionals,

On this 18th of October, we proudly celebrate the first National HR Day, as declared by the South African Board for People Practices (SABPP). Today, we honour the heart of every organisation—you.

As custodians of culture, ethics, and transformation, you are not only shaping workplaces but also building a profession that leads with humanity in an age of artificial intelligence. In a world increasingly driven by technology, your role in championing empathy, inclusion, and purpose has never been more vital.

Let us continue to build a profession that we are proud to pass on to our children—one that inspires future generations to lead with integrity, compassion, and courage. A profession that doesn't just adapt to change, but defines it.

We also celebrate SABPP's commitment to excellence and its vision of sharing South Africa's HR leadership across the African continent, uplifting standards and empowering professionals far beyond our borders. Thank you for your dedication, your vision, and your impact. Happy National HR Day!

Warm regards



HAPPY NATIONAL HR DAY

Appreciating the HR community in South Africa

Prof Ajay Jivan | Head of Research and Assurance | SABPP



As HR practitioners we are constantly juggling many different priorities, stakeholder demands, and complexities as well as challenges. We need to pay attention to the organisation's present priorities and demands as much as its future, given the rapidly changing global and local landscapes, the many disruptions, and the evolving world of work. As we negotiate the different timeframes and stakeholder spaces we work with, we presume that we are navigating these in a rational, evidence-based, and productive manner. But how do we test this? What informs our decision-making and practice? This is where we can appreciate the role played by the HR community in South Africa. In 2013 and recently in 2022/3, the HR community came together to define the body of knowledge of what are good people practices. These practices can help inform rational, evidence-based, and ethical people practices that will enable the achievement of the business strategy and sustainability of the organisation. The Standards of good people practices was first released in 2013 as the National HRM Standard (HRMS). In 2023 the revised Standards was published as the People Practices and Governance Standard (PPGS) after the facilitated engagements with various working groups and stakeholders.

The Standard provides an enabling framework for systemic and systematic people practices in organisations.

In 2013 the National HRM Standard (HRMS) was developed to serve as the professional grounding for the HR community and uplift the HRM practices and outcomes in South Africa. The HRMS was developed by HR professionals for the HR profession, through a series of consultative workshops. The HRMS is based on a conceptual model, the HR Management Systems Model. The Model integrates all the various aspects of HR work and people management and structures these in terms of the phases of quality management practice: prepare, implement, review, and improve phases. The HRMS also provides a framework to integrate the fields of academia, research, and practice. Many universities have adapted their curricula to include or be based on the Standards.

Since the launch in 2013, the HRMS has increasingly been adopted in both industry and academia. During this time our global and local contexts and the world of work have evolved and continue to evolve, with significant changes to work, the workplace and the workforce. The pandemic has accelerated certain of these changes, but we see many organisations struggling with navigating and adapting to these in terms of developing long-term organisational design and development solutions. This is where the PPGS can help navigate the evolving world of work and ensure rational, evidence-based, and ethical people practices. We identified the need to respond strategically to the evolving world of work and to ensure that the organisation's duty of care to employees and the broader stakeholders, as per the King Code of good governance for example, is implemented. The HR community, as before, heeded the call and helped us shape the body of knowledge of good people practices and governance for the evolving world of work. I appreciate the many members of the HR community and other stakeholders who took up the call and participated in the review of the HRMS.

On the National HR Day we can appreciate and celebrate the HR community for their commitment to sound and good people practices. The Standards of good people practices embody the collective voices and insights of the HR community of South Africa to help achieve good people and organisational outcomes. It serves to enable constructive and positive processes, results, and outcomes for our people and organisations in the present and future.

HAPPY NATIONAL HR DAY

Honouring the Unrecognised Heroes of Work: SABPP Launches National HR Day

Musengeli Ravele | HR Intern



The South African Board for People Practices (SABPP), the professional body for HR in South Africa, has officially declared 18 October as National Human Resources (HR) Day, to be observed annually from 2025 onwards. This milestone initiative coincides with SABPP's declaration of 2025 as the Year of Appreciation, a campaign dedicated to recognising and celebrating the invaluable role of HR professionals in shaping ethical, inclusive, and future-ready workplaces across the country.

Human Resource professionals are the heartbeat of every organisation. They are responsible for building sustainable talent pipelines, fostering organisational culture, ensuring compliance with labour laws, and embedding ethical and inclusive practices into the workplace. Beyond processes HR is about people, guiding employee wellbeing, nurturing professional development, and creating environments where both individuals and businesses can thrive. The establishment of National HR Day is therefore more than symbolic; it is a national call to action for leaders, managers, and employees to pause and appreciate the professionals who dedicate their work to enabling others' success.

The Year of Appreciation provides the perfect background for the first National HR Day in 2025. SABPP is encouraging organisations to actively acknowledge the contributions of HR teams by hosting appreciation events, sharing stories of HR impact, and providing professional development opportunities. These efforts aim to foster a culture of gratitude and recognition within the HR community and across workplaces, amplifying the message that HR is central to organisational performance and national development.

At the heart of this initiative lies the SABPP HR Competency Model, which sets the benchmark for HR professionalism in South Africa. The model highlights the competencies needed for HR to thrive in a rapidly changing world, including leadership, business acumen, talent management, employee wellness, analytics, and digital innovation. Celebrating National HR Day reinforces the importance of these competencies and showcases the credibility, ethics, and professionalism that HR brings to every organisation.

The initiative also aligns with SABPP's long-term vision as outlined in the 'PEOPLE' Factor Strategy 2020–2030 (#HR202030). This strategy envisions HR that is purpose-driven, ethical, open to innovation, professional, leadership-focused, and executing with excellence. It reflects SABPP's commitment to positioning HR as a transformative force that places people at the centre of sustainable business practices. National HR Day is a reminder that when HR professionals are empowered and appreciated, they create workplaces that are resilient, inclusive, and future-ready.

HAPPY NATIONAL HR DAY

As SABPP leads this historic movement, the declaration of 18 October as National HR Day strengthens the recognition of HR as a profession that goes beyond administration to drive transformation, equity, and innovation in South Africa. It is a celebration of the people who make organisations human, ethical, and high performing. It is also a call to honour HR professionals as strategic partners in building the future of work. Ultimately, when HR thrives, people thrive and when people thrive, organisations and nations thrive. On 18 October, let us not only recognise HR professionals but also recommit to building workplaces where appreciation, transformation, and people come first.

lines for social media

Behind every thriving organisation is a strong HR team. That's why SABPP has declared 18 October as National HR Day. Starting in 2025, we celebrate the heroes of the workplace during the Year of Appreciation.

#NationalHRDay #SABPP #YearOfAppreciation

