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**Ambassadorial Insights**

# South Africa— U.S. Relations

**Her Excellency**

**Barbara Joyce  
Mosima Masekela**

South African Ambassador to the U.S.

**Thursday, 13 April**  
**NOON**  
**238 HRCB**

Barbara Masekela became ambassador of South Africa to the United States on 8 September 2003, after retiring as executive director for public and corporate affairs for De Beers Consolidated Mines in March 2003. Masekela had also served as a trustee of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund and the Nelson Mandela Foundation. Beginning in 1999, she held various executive and non-executive directorships, including director of the Standard Bank of South Africa, the South African Broadcasting Corporation, and the International Marketing Council. She also served as ambassador to France and UNESCO (1995–99). After Nelson Mandela was released from prison, Masekela served as his chief of staff (1990–94). Founder of the African National Congress Office of Arts and Culture, she served as its secretary for seven years. Following her education, she was an assistant professor of English literature at Staten Island Community College in New York and at Rutgers University in New Jersey. After study in both South Africa and Zambia, she received a BA, graduating cum laude, from Ohio University. Born in Limpopo province, north of Johannesburg, Masekela speaks her native Sotho language and is fluent in English, Afrikaans, Xhosa, Zulu, and French. She enjoys gardening, music, and reading and is the mother of two sons, Mabusha and Selema.