



According to the South African Constitution, the President is ultimately responsible for the foreign policy and international relations. It is the President's prerogative to appoint heads of mission, receive foreign heads of mission, conduct State to State relations, and negotiate and sign all international agreements. International agreements that are not of a technical, administrative or executive nature will only bind the country after being approved by Parliament. Parliament also approves the country's ratification of or accession to multilateral agreements. All international agreements must be tabled in Parliament for information purposes.

The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation is entrusted with the formulation, promotion, execution and daily conduct of South Africa's foreign policy.

- The Department of International Relations and Cooperation's (DIRCO) overall mandate is to work for the realisation of South Africa's foreign policy objectives. This is done by:
- coordinating and aligning South Africa's international relations abroad
- monitoring developments in the international environment
- communicating government's policy positions
- developing and advising government on policy options, creating mechanisms and avenues for achieving objectives
- protecting South Africa's sovereignty and territorial integrity
- contributing to the creation of an enabling international environment for South African business
- sourcing developmental assistance
- assisting South African citizens abroad.

The department's strategic objectives are to:

- protect and promote South African national interests and values through bilateral and multilateral interactions
- conduct and coordinate South Africa's international relations and promote its foreign policy objectives
- monitor international developments and advise

i In October 2014, DIRCO, in partnership with the City of Tshwane, hosted the annual Diplomatic Fair at the Union Buildings in Pretoria. The 2014 Diplomatic Fair takes place under the theme: "Celebrating 20 Years of Freedom and Democracy in South Africa." The main participants were the foreign diplomatic missions accredited to South Africa. The missions took advantage of the event to display and promote cultural diplomacy through arts and music. Through the fair, the department aimed, among other things, to provide the public with information about countries accredited to South Africa and afford government, business, the diplomatic corps, and other sectors of society the opportunity to learn and network.

International Relations

government on foreign policy and related domestic matters

- contribute to the formulation of international law and enhance respect for its provisions
- promote multilateralism to secure a rules-based international system
- maintain a modern, effective department driven to pursue excellence
- provide a world-class and uniquely South African state protocol service.

Legislation

The DIRCO derives its mandate from the following legislation:

- The Foreign States Immunities Act, 1981 (Act 87 of 1981), regulates the extent of the immunity of foreign states from the jurisdiction of the South African courts and provides for matters connected therewith.
- The Diplomatic Immunities and Privileges Act, 2001 (Act 37 of 2001), provides for the immunities and privileges of diplomatic missions and consular posts and their members, heads of state, special envoys and certain representatives of the United Nations (UN) and its specialised agencies, and other international organisations and certain people.
- The African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund Act, 2001 (Act 51 of 2001), establishes an African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund to enhance cooperation between South Africa and other countries, in particular African countries, through the promotion of democracy, good governance, the prevention and resolution of conflict, socio-economic development and integration, humanitarian assistance and human resource development.
- International agreements (multilateral and bilateral): International agreements concluded by South Africa in terms of sections 231(2) and 231(3) of the Constitution.

Budget and funding

DIRCO received R5 755 million for the 2014/15 financial year and required an additional R1,6 billion over the next three years to maintain its level of operation.

Foreign policy

By prioritising Africa and promoting its renewal, development and reconstruction, South Africa is contributing to building a better Africa, which is the central foreign policy goal of the South African Government.

After the democratic elections in 1994, South Africa ceased to be the pariah of the world; it regained its rightful place in Africa, in the UN and

in the family of nations. South Africa emerged as a democratic country into a fundamentally transformed world with a visionary foreign policy that promotes relations with other countries.

Disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control

A primary goal of South Africa's policy on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control includes reinforcing and promoting the country as a responsible producer, possessor and trader of defence-related products and advanced technologies. In this regard, the department continues to promote the benefits that disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control hold for international peace and security, particularly to countries in Africa.

Regarding conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, South Africa actively participates in UN efforts related to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Certain Conventional Weapons Convention, the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and efforts aimed at establishing an arms trade treaty.

Role players

South Africa has key partnerships such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Africa's comprehensive partnership with India, and the Korea-Africa Forum. South Africa's Government spares no effort in strengthening the progressive forums of the South such as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), G77+China, Africa-South America Summit and the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership (NAASP). These forums have demonstrated that they are trusted allies and partners in South Africa's aim for a better world and Africa.

African Union (AU)

The AU emerged from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which was established in 1963 with a charter signed by 32 countries in Addis Ababa. The OAU, which was officially disbanded in July 2002, was replaced by the AU with 51 members who pledged to work for closer political integration and unity among African countries.

Africa will never again tolerate change of governments through undemocratic and

In November 2014, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, in partnership with the University of the Witwatersrand School of Governance and the Oliver and Adelaide Tambo Foundation, hosted the third debate on implementing the National Development Plan.

unconstitutional means. Africa is on a growth trajectory, which must be maintained to ensure that the people of African are truly emancipated from the wrath of underdevelopment, poverty and hunger. The strengthened African Union Commission (AUC) is central in driving the African Agenda. South Africa contributed towards the goal of having a strong AUC and its structure. Resources were also contributed to hosting the Pan African Parliament, which celebrated its 10th anniversary in March 2014.

The continent is engaged in extensive consultations on its vision for the next 50 years, known as Agenda 2063, under the theme “The Africa We Want”. This vision, which is expected to be adopted by the January 2015 Summit of the AU, spells out the aspirations of African people across all sectors and the pledges of leaders, which are translated into a “Call to Action” comprised of a 10-year action plan that will contain flagship projects.

Each AU Member State, including South Africa, is expected to contribute to this vision through inclusive national consultations by October 2015. When the vision is adopted, Member States will have to align their national policies with it through a process of domestication, which, in South Africa’s case, entails harmonising Agenda 2063 with the National Development Plan (NDP). DIRCO has already begun national consultations with different sectors. Agenda 2063 will affect the SADC, especially the pace and direction of the integration of the region. The approach to the SADC region in the next five years was to consolidate bilateral relations with South Africa’s neighbours, and strengthening SADC as an institution. In particular, DIRCO will:

- Strengthen regional integration in the SADC neighbourhood by discharging the department’s responsibilities towards the full implementation of the FTA and concluding the review of the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan. The SADC-EAC-COMESA tripartite trade negotiations were expected to reach finality, as they are an important step towards the realisation of the African FTA by 2017.
- Peace and political stability in the region will remain a priority. The proactive and stabilising effect that resulted from the deployment of the SADC Intervention Brigade in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where the negative forces there were either on retreat or have been defeated, is encouraging. DIRCO will operationalise the Tripartite Agreement between South Africa, Angola and the DRC in support of the Peace and Security Framework Agreement for the Great Lakes Region.

- The department will galvanise political support for major infrastructure projects in the region, notably the Lesotho Highlands Water project Phase II, and the Grand INGA in the DRC.

For the rest of Africa, in the context of Agenda 2063, in the next five years DIRCO will:

- continue to strengthen bilateral relations with African countries through structured bilateral engagements to advance South Africa’s interests throughout the continent
- intensify work in supporting the AU, including the AU institutions South Africa hosts; namely, the Nepad Secretariat, Pan-African Parliament and the APRM headquarters
- strengthen economic diplomacy to increase trade and investment opportunities for South Africa
- give dedicated attention to the North-South Corridor, and other Nepad-driven infrastructure projects in Africa that is championed by President Zuma
- ensure speedy provision of humanitarian assistance where needed to alleviate human suffering in Africa
- implement the African Diaspora programme adopted at the AU Summit South Africa hosted in 2012
- continue peace-building and conflict prevention efforts in conflict situations in support of multilateral institutions
- re-invigorate the Post-Conflict and Reconstruction and Development Strategy in African countries emerging from conflict.

AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC)

South Africa plays an important role in efforts to bring about peace and stability on the continent.

The AUPSC is the organ of the AU in charge of enforcing union decisions. Members are elected by the AU Assembly to reflect regional balance within Africa, as well as a variety of other criteria, including capacity to contribute militarily and financially to the union, political will to do so, and effective diplomatic presence at Addis Ababa.

The AUPSC entered into force in December 2003, after being ratified by the required majority of AU member states. It is made up of 15 member states and is responsible for the resolution of conflict, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD) in conjunction with the UN.

AU regional economic communities (RECs)

The AU is the principal institution responsible for promoting sustainable development at economic, social and cultural level, as well as integrating African economies.

RECs are recognised as the building blocks of the AU, necessitating the need for their close involvement in formulating and implementing all AU programmes.

To this end, the AU must coordinate and take decisions on policies in areas of common interest to member states, as well as coordinate and harmonise policies between existing and future RECs, for the gradual attainment of the AU's objectives.

Seven specialised technical committees are responsible for the actual implementation of the continental socio-economic integration process, together with the Permanent Representatives Committee.

New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad)

Nepad, an AU strategic framework for pan-African socio-economic development, is both a vision and a policy framework for Africa in the 21st century. Nepad provides unique opportunities for African countries to take full control of their development agenda, to work more closely together, and to cooperate more effectively with international partners.

Nepad manages a number of programmes and projects in six theme areas namely:

- agriculture and food security
- climate change and national resource management
- regional integration and infrastructure
- human development
- economic and corporate governance
- cross-cutting issues, including gender, capacity development and information and communication technology (ICT).

South Africa, as one of the initiating countries, played a key role in the establishment of Nepad and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and hosts the Nepad Agency and APRM Secretariat in Midrand, Gauteng.

The APRM process is aimed at addressing corruption, poor governance and inefficient delivery of public goods and services to the citizens of African countries. It encourages the adoption of policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated regional and continental economic integration through the sharing of experiences and best practices, and is important to the sustainability of Nepad.

In January 2014, at the 20th Summit of the Committee of Participating Heads of State and Government of the APRM (APR Forum), South Africa presented its Third Progress Report on the Implementation of the APRM National Programme of Action. Following the presen-

tation of the Third Report, South Africa was in a position to undergo its second APRM periodic review.

Nepad remains the main programme of reference for intra-African socio-economic and developmental relations and Africa's partnerships with international partners such as the European Union (EU-AU) Strategic Partnership, Forum for Africa-China Partnership, the Group of Seven Most Industrialised Nations plus Russia (G8), the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, the NAASP and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Through Nepad, Africa has expanded its development priorities. Development and funding in agriculture, ICT, science and technology, infrastructure and education has improved the quality of life for millions of Africans.

Southern African Development Community (SADC)

The SADC developed from the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), which was established in 1980. It adopted its current name during a summit held in Windhoek, Namibia, in August 1992. Before 1992, the aim of the SADCC was to forge close economic cooperation with southern African countries excluding South Africa, to bolster their economies and reduce their dependence on the South African economy.

From 1992, when the organisation became the SADC, its mandate changed to the following:

- establishing an open economy based on equality, mutual benefit and balanced development
- breaking down tariff barriers
- promoting trade exchanges and mutual investment
- realising the free movement of goods, personnel and labour service
- achieving the unification of tariffs and currencies
- establishing a free trade zone.

The initial member states were Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. South Africa became a member after 1994.

South Africa has consistently sought to nurture regional integration at three levels: SACU, SADC and the Tripartite Free Trade Area (FTA) between SADC, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the East African Community (EAC). In particular, South Africa has championed a "developmental regionalism" approach that combines market integration, cross-border infrastructure development, and

policy coordination to diversify production and boost intra-African trade. South Africa contributed to the development of SACU's Five-Point Plan, which aims to transform the customs union from a tariffs and a revenue-sharing agreement to an integrated institution capable of promoting true regional economic development. The 2014 revenue arrangement made South Africa the biggest development partner of the Botswana-Lesotho-Namibia-Swaziland (BLNS) countries. Work in SADC continues to focus on consolidating the SADC FTA launched in 2008, before considering deeper forms of integration in the region. The ongoing negotiations to establish the Tripartite FTA will combine the three major regional economic communities of 600 million people and combined GDP of USD\$1 trillion, as building blocks towards continental integration. Once established, the T-FTA will contribute to economies of scale, the building of new distribution channels, value addition, and manufacturing in Africa. One of the key areas to stimulate regional economic development has been the finalisation of the SADC Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan (RIDMP), which will focus on the following six priority sectors: energy, transport, ICT/communications, water, tourism and meteorology.

In October 2014, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation arrived in Gaborone, Republic of Botswana, for the launch of the SADC Election Observer Mission.

Minister Nkoana-Mashabane represented President Jacob Zuma, Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation. South Africa was elected at the recent SADC Summit held in Zimbabwe to chair the SADC, which is responsible for the maintenance of peace and stability in the region.

South Africa led the SADC Election Observer missions in Mozambique, Botswana and Namibia.

In February 2015, South Africa hosted an Extraordinary Summit of the SADC Double Troika in Pretoria. The Extraordinary Summit considered the political and security situation in Lesotho ahead of the February 2015 elections.

United Nations

The UN occupies the central and indispensable role within the global system of governance. South Africa looks to the UN to advance the global development agenda and address under-development, social integration, full employment and decent work for all and the eradication of poverty globally. Through participation in multilateral forums, South Africa also upholds the belief that the resolution of international conflicts

should be peaceful and in accordance with the centrality of the UN Charter and the principles of international law. South Africa was one of the 51 founding member of the UN in 1945. Since then, UN membership has grown to 193 states. After being suspended in 1974, owing to international opposition to the policy of apartheid, South Africa was readmitted to the UN in 1994 following its transition to democracy.

UN General Assembly

President Jacob Zuma, led the South African delegation to the 69th Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 69), which took place in New York, in the United States of America (USA) from 24 – 30 September 2014.

The UNGA is the main deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the UN. Comprising all 193 members of the United Nations, it provides a unique forum for multilateral discussion of the full spectrum of international issues covered by the Charter of the UN.

The 2014 theme was: "Delivering on and Implementing a Transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda." The theme was building on that of UNGA 68 and took place against the rapidly approaching target date for achieving the millennium development goals (MDGs) by 2015, and the start of the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, which was the major focal point in the multilateral arena.

In accordance with its strategic approach, South Africa's participation was informed by national interests and priorities, its regional and continental commitments, as well as its aspirations for a prosperous world at peace with itself. In this regard, the general debate provided a platform for South Africa to advance its strategic priorities in the world's pre-eminent multilateral forum.

President Zuma addressed the UNGA on 24 September 2014.

UN Security Council (UNSC)

South Africa has served on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as non-permanent member for two terms. More than two-thirds of the UNSC's agenda focuses on African issues. During its second term, one of South Africa's biggest achievements was the adoption by the UNSC of resolution 2033 (2012), which South Africa initiated, to formalise, strengthen and promote the UNSC's cooperation with regional organisations, particularly the AUPSC. Close on 70 years of its existence, the UNSC still remains undemocratic, unrepresentative and unfair to developing nations and small states, which

cannot remain beholden indefinitely to the will of an unrepresentative minority on most important issues of international peace and security. Other notable achievements that South Africa championed are:

- setting the UN members the target to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the UN in 2015, with a reformed, more inclusive, democratic and representative UNSC
- witnessing the birth of the new State of South Sudan.

The issue of Western Sahara remains an important challenge for the AU and for peace and stability in the region.

UN Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc)

Ecosoc is a premier organ of the UN responsible for economic and social development matters of the world.

South Africa assumed membership of Ecosoc on 1 January 2013, giving the country an opportunity to be located at the centre of the debate on the global development agenda, including the acceleration of the implementation of the MDGs.

UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco)

South Africa is an active participant in key Unesco governance structures such as the General Conference and the World Heritage Committee, and has previously served on the executive board.

Since its return to Unesco, South Africa has also ratified a number of Unesco conventions including the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (July 1997), Convention Against Discrimination in Education (March 2000), the International Convention Against Doping in Sport (November 2006) and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (December 2006).

South Africa also acceded to the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention (December 2003). National interaction with Unesco's various areas of work is coordinated through the South African National Commission for Unesco, whose secretariat is hosted by the Department of Basic Education.

UN Human Rights Council

South Africa played a leadership role in several inter-governmental processes at the UN pertaining to human rights and social development issues. It is also the current Chair of the Open-ended Working Group on Private

Military and Security Companies (PMSCs), which objective is to elaborate a legally binding regulatory framework and to ensure that PMSCs are held accountable for their activities.

South Africa is also the current chair of the Adhoc Committee on the Elaboration of Complementary Standards to the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination aimed at combating contemporary forms of racism.

South Africa was one of 14 new Member States elected to serve on the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) from January 2014 until December 2016. The election coincided with the country's celebration of its 20th year of democracy and reaffirmed its commitment to the achievement of human rights for all its citizens, the citizens of Africa, and the citizens of the world.

UN-South Africa Strategic Cooperation Framework (UNSCF)

The UN-South Africa Strategic Cooperation Framework (UNSCF), 2013-17, is the overall framework for the work of the UN system in South Africa. DIRCO and the UN Country Team developed the SCF in 2012 through a participatory and consultative process. The SCF includes the presentation of the situation in South Africa overall, as reflected in the New Growth Path (NGP), Government's National Development Plan (NDP): Vision for 2030, as well as the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) and the 2010 MDGs Country Report. These have informed the identification of four pillars of UN cooperation, which are: inclusive growth and decent work; sustainable development; human capabilities; and governance and participation. In addition, a brief analysis of past cooperation and lessons learned, including those identified in the 2009 Joint Evaluation of the Role and Contribution of the UN System in South Africa, and the planned results to be achieved by all partners in the South African context, with the UN contributions indicated at the outcomes level. The SCF also considers the role of South Africa on the continent and globally.

World Health Organisation (WHO)

South Africa is one of the 194 member states that constitute the WHO. The country takes part in the annual World Health Assembly (WHA), which is the WHO's supreme decision-making body.

South Africa also takes part in the WHO's Regional Committee for Africa, which convenes annually after the WHA to reflect on the decisions taken at the WHA and plan for the following year's WHA.

Through its participation in these structures, South Africa contributes to setting international norms and making decisions on key issues regarding global and public health.

Group of 20 (G20)

The 2014 G20 Brisbane Summit was the ninth meeting of the G20 heads of government. It was held in Queensland, Australia, in November 2014. Up to 4 000 delegates attended with about 2 500 media representatives. The leaders of Mauritania, Myanmar, New Zealand, Senegal, Singapore and Spain were also invited to this summit. European leaders expressed their desire to support the recovery as the global economy moves beyond the global financial crisis. Climate change was not included as a subject for discussion at the summit. G20 finance ministers and central bank governors met several times in 2014. Sydney hosted a meeting in February 2014 followed by a meeting in Cairns, Queensland in September 2014. At the September meeting participating countries agreed to automatically exchange tax information to reduce tax evasion. Canberra hosted a meeting for G20 finance and central bank deputies in 2014. The Youth 20 Summit was the official G20 youth event held in Sydney in July 2014. A meeting of G20 trade ministers took place in Sydney during July, and the annual G20 Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting was held in Melbourne during September 2014. Officials-levels meetings of public servants took place throughout the year to prepare for the ministerial meetings.

In July 2014, DIRCO hosted Australia's G20 Sherpa, Dr Heather Smith, in Pretoria where she met with her counterpart, South Africa's G20 Sherpa, Ambassador Nozipho Mxakato-Diseko. Dr Smith will also delivered a keynote address on "The G20 and the future of global economic growth" organised by the University of South Africa (UNISA), DIRCO, the Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD) and the Australian High Commission.

Australia held the rotating G20 Presidency for 2014.

Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa trade alliance

South Africa's BRICS membership will help the country and the continent to address its socio-economic challenges.

Some of the BRICS achievements include the following:

- BRICS Inter-Bank Cooperation Mechanism to which the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA)

- Master Agreement on Extending Credit Facility in Local Currency where the DBSA would have to consider providing the other Member Banks,
- Multilateral Letter of Credit Confirmation Facility Agreement, which will require the DBSA to either guarantee performance against the obligations to a South African exporter, or in the event of South African imports
- Multilateral Agreement on Infrastructure Co-Financing for Africa
- Multilateral Agreement on Green Economy Cooperation Co-Financing
- The establishment of the BRICS Business Council and BRICS Think Tanks Council.

The BRICS grouping achieved another strategic milestone in February 2014, when the science, technology and innovation (STI) ministers of the five countries met in South Africa to formalise and institutionalise cooperation in STI under the BRICS framework.

South Africa, as the previous Chair, successfully brought to fruition all the key outcomes adopted at the 5th BRICS Summit in Durban 2014. As such, in Brazil, the Agreement establishing the New Development Bank and the Treaty for the creation of the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement were signed. These agreements signal a historic and seminal moment since the creation of the Bretton Woods international financial architecture. The headquarters of the New Development Bank will be located in Shanghai, China and its Africa Regional Centre will be established in South Africa concurrently. Further significant initiatives in respect of strengthening intra-BRICS economic cooperation, included the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation among BRICS Export Credit and Guarantees Agencies that will improve the support environment for increasing trade opportunities among the BRICS countries. In BRICS, the member states are equal in access, shareholding, and representation in leadership positions.

India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) trade alliance

The IBSA Dialogue Forum brings together three large pluralistic, multicultural and multiracial societies from three continents as a purely South-South grouping of like-minded countries, committed to inclusive sustainable development, in pursuit of the well-being for their peoples and those of the developing world. The principles, norms and values underpinning the IBSA Dialogue Forum are participatory democracy, respect for human rights, the Rule of Law and the strengthening of multilateralism.

The intra-IBSA trade is a clear indication of the potential and success of IBSA as the initial trade target of US\$ 25 billion by 2015 is likely to be overshoot given the 2014 intra-IBSA trade figure of US\$23 billion. IBSA has also partnered with developing countries, especially least-developed countries (LDCs) and post-conflict and reconstruction development (PCRD) countries through the IBSA Facility for Hunger and Poverty Alleviation (IBSA Fund) in development projects that will benefit those countries.

IBSA continues to play its unique role as a body bringing together three democracies of the South from three continents.

The realisation of a trilateral alliance between IBSA stems from three commonalities between the three countries, namely: all three countries are vibrant democracies, they share common views on various global issues, and are substantial emerging economies within their subregions.

Apart from promoting South-South dialogue, IBSA also fosters inter-regional cooperation.

The engagement process of the IBSA countries takes place on three levels, namely: heads of state and government, government-to-government and people-to-people cooperation.

Indian Ocean Rim-Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC)

South Africa is one of the founding member states of the IOR-ARC, which was launched in Mauritius in March 1997. There are 20 Indian IOR member states.

The objectives of IOR include promoting the sustained growth and balanced development of the region and of the member states, and creating common ground for regional economic cooperation. This also includes formulating and implementing projects for economic cooperation relating to trade facilitation and liberation, promotion of foreign investment, academic, scientific and technological exchanges, tourism and the development of infrastructure and human resources.

Commonwealth

The modern Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 54 independent member countries. Membership is diverse and includes developed and developing countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas, the Caribbean, Europe and the South Pacific.

Since rejoining the Commonwealth in 1994, South Africa has interacted closely with the work of the Commonwealth contributing politically, financially and in terms of capacity and expertise to the work of the organisation.

In November 2014, the Commonwealth Science Conference (CSC) was held in Bangalore, in India. This was the first CSC for nearly 50. The goals of the conference were to celebrate excellence in Commonwealth science; to provide opportunities for cooperation between researchers in different Commonwealth countries; to inspire young scientists; and to build scientific capacity in the developing nations within the Commonwealth. The scope of the meeting was broad and included physical sciences, life sciences, mathematics, engineering, and science policy.

The 60th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in 2014.

The 2014 Commonwealth Games (officially the 20th Commonwealth Games) were held in Glasgow, Scotland, from 23 July to 3 August 2014.

On 10 March 2014, Commonwealth countries as symbol of their solidarity, celebrated Commonwealth Day under the theme “Team Commonwealth”.

Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

The Islamic Republic of Iran is chairing the NAM from 2012 to 2015. The NAM consists of 120 member states. It is the largest political grouping of countries outside the UN, making it an important lobby group of developing countries in global affairs.

The next NAM Summit is scheduled to be held in Venezuela during 2015.

G77 & China

In June 2014, the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Mr Luwellyn Landers, led a South African delegation at the two-day summit on the 50th Anniversary of the G77 and China, taking place in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

In April 2014, the Board of the Turquoise Harmony Institute, awarded its Ubuntu Media Award to the Department of International Relations and Cooperation's (DIRCO) Ubuntu Radio, South Africa's first government-run, 24-hour, online radio station. The Turquoise Harmony Institute is an independent, non-profit non-governmental organisation aimed at promoting inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue and tolerance among people at grassroots level in South Africa. According to the Institute, Ubuntu Radio is a visionary concept and idea, which has become an important tool of DIRCO's public diplomacy, which is to promote and communicate South Africa's foreign policy and disseminate information about South Africa across the world. In 2014, the station also launched an “Ubuntu Radio Application for mobile devices (Blackberry & Android phones, etc.)” on its website www.ubunturadio.com and receive downloads from countries such as China, USA, UK, France, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Canada, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

The Group of 77 (G77) was established on 15 June 1964 by 77 developing countries, signatories of the “Joint Declaration of the Seventy-Seven Developing Countries” issued at the end of the first session of the UN Conference on Trade and Development, held in Geneva, Switzerland. Although the members of the G-77 have increased to 133 countries, including China as the associate member, the original name was retained due to its historic significance.

The G77 and China is the largest intergovernmental organisation of developing countries in the UN system, and it provides the means for countries of the South to promote their collective economic interests and enhance their joint negotiating capacity on all major international economic issues within the UN system and promote South-South cooperation.

As a member of the G77 and China, South Africa participates in the work of the Group to ensure its strength, unity and cohesion in pursuance of the vision of a fair and equitable multilateral system.

International relations South Africa and Africa

As South Africa undergoes its second transition, Africa also continues to rise. Africa’s renaissance will in years ahead be defined by the Africa Agenda 2063.

In 2014, in the spirit of diversifying South Africa’s trade and investment towards Africa, the Department of Trade and Industry created 15 government-to-government platforms; held 19 trade and outward investment missions; facilitated the signing of 11 enabling agreements; addressed market access barriers (NTBs) in Kenya, Nigeria, Egypt and Benin; and provided institutional and human capacity building initiatives with Angola, DRC, Ethiopia and Nigeria in the area of standards and quality assurance.

In April 2014, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation led the South African delegation to the fourth Africa- EU Summit in Brussels, Belgium, under the theme: “Investing in People, Prosperity and Peace.” The summit afforded Africa and Europe the opportunity to strengthen political and socio-economic cooperation between the two continents. The thematic areas such as peace and security; trade and investment; human development; and the future institutional and financial arrangements of the Africa-EU Partnership were discussed during the summit deliberations.

The Summit also afforded the leaders from the two continents the opportunity to undertake a stocktaking of concrete deliverables that have

been achieved over the past three years as guided by the Africa-EU Action Plan 2010-2013 that was adopted at the third Africa-EU Summit in Tripoli, Libya, in November 2010. As was the case with the Africa-EU Summits in 2007 and 2010, South Africa played a meaningful role in the negotiations at the Senior Officials Meeting, and was active in the Ministerial Meeting.

Three declarations were adopted at the summit, namely: the Brussels Declaration of the Heads of State and Government, which is the main outcome document for the fourth Africa-EU Summit; the Africa-EU Roadmap; and the Declaration on Migration and Mobility.

In addition, Minister Nkoana-Mashabane held bilateral consultations with her counterparts from Africa and Europe on the sidelines of the summit.

Relations with southern Africa Angola

South Africa and Angola continue to work together in maintaining peace, stability, regional integration and the promotion of the SADC Agenda. Both countries are still part of respectively the SADC Troika and the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Troika.

Angola is one of South Africa’s major trading partners in Africa with almost 90% of Angolan exports to South Africa being petroleum-related products.

In January 2014, President Jacob Zuma returned from a working visit to Luanda, Angola where he attended the Fifth Ordinary Summit of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) at the invitation of Angolan President Jose Edouardo dos Santos, who assumed the chair of the ICGLR for a two-year period. The ICGLR Heads of State and Government reviewed, among other things, progress made in the implementation of the “ICGLR Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region” and the “UN Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation for the DRC and the Region.” The ICGLR leaders also focused on the current situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) and South Sudan. The ICGLR leaders committed to offering political and other forms of support to the ongoing mediation efforts in South Sudan led by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). South Africa was requested to assist by intervening in the process of finding an immediate solution and bring about peace in that country due to its experience in conflict resolution and national reconciliation.

Other matters discussed at the ICGLR Summit were on the implementation of the ICGLR Humanitarian Trust Fund; the Lusaka Declaration on the Fight against Illegal Exploi-

tation of Natural Resources; the December 2011 Kampala Declaration on the Fight against sexual gender-based violence (SGBV); the Protocol on Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, War Crimes, Crimes against Humanity and other Forms of Discrimination. Socio-economic development and budgetary matters were also discussed.

Botswana

South Africa hosted the inaugural session of the BNC in November 2013. South Africa and Botswana cooperate on a wide range of areas, including transport, trade and investment, health, education, environmental affairs, water, science and technology, agriculture, justice, immigration, energy, finance, culture, security, and sport.

In October 2014, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, on behalf of the Chair of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, President Jacob Zuma, declared the SADC Electoral Observation Mission to the Republic of Botswana officially launched.

In November 2014, President Zuma, undertook a working visit to the Republic of Botswana. The two delegations took advantage of the Second Session of the South Africa-Botswana Bi-National Commission (BNC) to review the state of cooperation between South Africa and Botswana.

In the same month, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, attended the second Bi-National Commission (BNC) between South Africa Botswana, in Gaborone.

Democratic Republic of Congo

In September 2014, President Jacob Zuma, Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Security and Defence, called for a sitting of the SADC Double Troika Summit plus the DRC and the United Republic of Tanzania in Pretoria. The purpose of the SADC Double Troika Summit is to consider the latest political developments in the SADC region, particularly the political and security situation in the DRC.

Lesotho

Bilateral cooperation between South Africa and Lesotho includes trade and investment, security, energy, transport, agriculture, tourism and water.

With South Africa being Lesotho's only neighbour, the economies of the two countries are interdependent. South African companies have a significant presence in Lesotho and are involved in various sectors such as housing, food and beverages, construction, retail, hotels and leisure, banking, and medical services.

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project has been in operation for over 20 years and supplies South Africa with about 780 million cubic meters of water a year. When fully operational, Phase 2 of the project will substantially increase the volume of water supplied to South Africa.

In July 2014, President Zuma undertook a working visit to the Kingdom of Lesotho. The visit took place within the context of strengthening bilateral relations between the two neighbouring countries.

In September 2014 President Zuma, undertook another working visit to the Kingdom of Lesotho. The visit follows the Ministerial Committee of the Organ meeting in August 2014 as well as the President's meeting with the coalition leaders in September 2014 in Pretoria. During the visit, the President consulted with His Majesty King Letsie III and also held discussions with the coalition leaders to assess the progress in the implementation of the Windhoek Declaration as well as other SADC Decisions.

President Zuma called for a sitting of the SADC Double Troika Summit plus the DRC and the United Republic of Tanzania, in September 2014 in Pretoria. The purpose of the SADC Double Troika Summit was to consider the political developments in the SADC region, particularly the political and security situation in the Kingdom of Lesotho and the DRC.

In the same month, SADC facilitator, Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, concluded his first official visit to the Kingdom of Lesotho as part of regional efforts to assist the people of the country to find a peaceful resolution to their current challenges.

Malawi

South Africa and Malawi share strong historical political, economic and cultural ties and warm relations in the context of regional integration and intra-Africa trade.

In May 2014, President Zuma congratulated Mr Peter Mutharika, President-elect of the Republic of Malawi, on his successful election.

Mozambique

In September 2014, President Jacob Zuma, welcomed the signing of the peace agreement between the President of Mozambique and the leader of RENAMO. President Zuma commended President Guebuza and the RENAMO leader, Mr Afonso Dhlakama, for their commitment to the principles of democracy by signing the agreement, thereby setting aside political differences and ensuring full participation by Mozambicans in the 15 October 2014 presidential, parliamentary and regional assembly elections.

The SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the Republic of Mozambique for the 2014 general elections was launched in October 2014, in Maputo.

Namibia

The economies of South Africa and Namibia are interlinked with South Africa being one of Namibia's major trading partners.

Namibia imports 80% of its consumables from South Africa. South African companies have a large presence in Namibia and are involved in various sectors such as housing, food and beverages, construction, hotels and leisure, banking, and medical services.

South Africa and Namibia enjoy strong and fraternal relations that are characterised by regular and increasing interaction at all levels. In November 2014, following the proclamation of the date for the 2014 Presidential and National Assembly elections and the subsequent invitation by the Electoral Commission of Namibia to President Zuma, the Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, who mandated the SADC Executive Secretary, Dr Stergomena Lawrence Tax, to constitute the SADC Electoral Observer Mission (SEOM) to the Republic of Namibia. To this end, the SEOM arrived in Windhoek, Namibia in line with the provisions of the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections. Prior to deployment of the SEOM, a pre-deployment assessment mission was undertaken by the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC) to ascertain the readiness and preparedness of the country in holding the elections. Based on the assessment, the SEOM was launched on 10 November 2014, by the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation and Head of SEOM to the Republic of Namibia. By November 2104, the SEOM had deployed 95 observers constituted into 23 teams in all the 14 regions of Namibia.

President Jacob Zuma extended his congratulations to Dr Hage Geingob on his election as President of the Republic of Namibia following the country's presidential and legislative elections that were held on 28 November 2014.

Swaziland

The Kingdom of Swaziland and South Africa share common borders and have very strong common cultural links. Since South Africa's re-entry to the Commonwealth, relations have been conducted at high-commissioner level.

Both countries are members of key sub-regional, regional and international organisations, including the Sacu, the SADC, the AU, the Commonwealth and the UN.

A bilateral agreement between Swaziland and South Africa provides a mechanism for the two countries to cooperate in areas of mutual benefit, ensuring that healthy relations are maintained and further developed.

Tanzania

South Africa established formal diplomatic relations with Tanzania in 1994, immediately after attaining its freedom. The bilateral relations have been characterised by high-level interaction between the two countries aimed at consolidating and strengthening political, economic and social cooperation. South Africa is one of the top 10 major investors in Tanzania and accounts for approximately 10% of total investment in Tanzania. South African exports are concentrated predominantly in the areas of manufacturing, including machinery, mechanical appliances, paper, rubber products, vehicles, iron and steel, services and technology.

In October 2014, Deputy President Ramaphosa visited Tanzania for consultation with Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete on the South Sudanese peace process.

Zambia

South Africa and Zambia maintain solid economic cooperation as evidenced by the presence of several South African companies in Zambia. Improved cooperation in a variety of areas such as air services and infrastructural development present economic opportunities to the South African private sector and parastatals.

In October 2014, President Zuma, sent a message of condolences to the Government and people of the Republic of Zambia following the passing of President Michael Chilufya Sata. President Sata belongs to the generation of leaders produced by Zambia during the colonial times and gallantly pursued the anti-colonial struggle. His death reminds the people of South Africa of Zambia's immeasurable sacrifice and the sterling leadership role that Zambia played in ridding the African continent of the yoke of colonial domination and apartheid rule.

Zimbabwe

South Africa and Zimbabwe have a common and long history of regional affiliation and cultural ties. Zimbabwe is one of South Africa's main trade partners in Africa and several South African companies operate in Zimbabwe in sectors such as mining, tourism, agriculture, banking, manufacturing and retail.

Uganda

Relations between South Africa and Uganda date back to the time of the struggle against apartheid when Uganda provided support to and solidarity with the South African liberation movement.

Bilateral cooperation between the countries includes trade and investment, defence and security, agriculture, water and environmental affairs, social development, public works and science and technology.

Kenya

South Africa and Kenya occupy key roles in their respective regions on the continent. Relations between the two countries were upgraded to full diplomatic status on 12 April 1994.

The Sixth Ordinary Summit of the ICGLR will take place in the Republic of Kenya on 15 December 2015.

Ethiopia

In October 2014, Deputy President Ramaphosa visited Addis Ababa, where he held talks with major stakeholders to the peace process in South Sudan, including the Chairperson of the AUC, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn and South Sudanese Vice President Riek Machar.

The visit to Addis Ababa was preceded by another to South Sudan, which saw Deputy President Ramaphosa meeting with South Sudanese President Salva Kirr in Juba.

Bilateral economic relations with Ethiopia were revived in 1995, when South Africa opened an embassy in Addis Ababa. The two countries have a number of bilateral agreements in place that establish a regulatory framework to facilitate political, economic and social interaction such as an agreement on the avoidance of double taxation. The umbrella agreement provides for the establishment of a Joint Ministerial Commission that will meet every two years.

In March 2014, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation lead a delegation to the 2014 Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) in The Hague. Building on the 2010 Washington and 2012 Seoul Summits, the main objective of The Hague Summit was to review progress achieved since the NSS process started in 2010 and to contribute to the strengthening of nuclear security through stronger national measures and improved international cooperation. South Africa's participation in the NSS process is informed by the shared vision of a world free of weapons of mass destruction, and in particular nuclear weapons. The 2014 Nuclear Security Summit took place within this broader framework of South Africa's triple objectives of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Indian Ocean islands

South Africa's political, economic and diplomatic relations with the Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles remain strong.

In December 2014, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation launched the SADC Election Observer Mission in Port Louis, Republic of Mauritius. Minister Nkoana-Mashabane represented President Zuma, Chairperson of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation.

Relations with central Africa

Gabon

South Africa and Gabon have a legal framework through a cooperation agreement.

Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe

Diplomatic relations between São Tomé and Príncipe and South Africa were established in May 1994.

Republic of the Congo

In February 2014, the Republic of the Congo bestowed its Order of Merit on Mathews Phohoza at a ceremony in Brazzaville occurring during the 25th anniversary celebrations of the signing of the Brazzaville peace accord, which paved the way for the end of the Angolan civil war and Namibia attaining independence.

In February 2014, President Jacob Zuma, at the invitation of President Dennis Sassou-N'guesso, President of the Republic of Congo, undertook a working visit to Brazzaville. President Zuma attended the celebrations of the 25th Anniversary of the Signature of the Brazzaville Accord on Peace in Southern Africa. The occasion marked the end of the Brazzaville negotiations, which ended the Angolan civil war with the signing of the Brazzaville Protocol on 22 December 1988, and prepared the ground for the independence of Namibia and ultimately South Africa. South Africa continues to enjoy cordial bilateral relations with the Republic of Congo. The formal relations between the two countries are structured through the Joint Commission of Cooperation (JCC) as a mechanism to monitor and guide the implementation of agreements.

Equatorial Guinea

In June 2014, President Zuma concluded a working visit to Equatorial Guinea, where he led the South African delegation to the 23rd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly (AU Summit) under the theme: "2014 Year of Agriculture and Food Security in Africa." An emerging issue identified by the AU leaders was the need for young people

to appreciate the importance of agriculture in the economy of their countries. African leaders also noted with concern that women are still involved in subsistence farming. Women must take the lead in agriculture and contribute to this growing economic activity, which is vital for dealing with food security.

The AU Heads of State and Government also discussed peace and security matters, in particular the mobilisation of resources and operationalisation of the African Capacity for Immediate Crisis (ACIRC). In this regard, countries that have volunteered to contribute resources to the ACIRC met during the summit to discuss the state of readiness of the ACIRC. The AU Summit took decisions on key issues on the agenda pertaining to development, peace and security, climate change and the mobilisation of resources. The finalisation of the Agenda 2063 Continental Framework, as part of the vision of Africa in the next 50 years and the Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, were part of the outcomes of the summit.

Cameroon

Cameroon is the economic hub of the Central African Region and exports commodities to most countries of the zone. The seaport of Doulla in Cameroon is used to export goods to landlocked countries in the region such as Chad and the Central Africa Republic (CAR). Many South African companies have already seized business opportunities there. Cameroon is a member of the AU, has adopted Nepad programmes and subscribes to the MDGs. In pursuit of South Africa's regional economic integration and developmental agenda for the continent, Cameroon has been identified as a strategic partner.

Guinea

The Joint Commission for Cooperation (JCC) between the Republic of Guinea and South Africa, took place at the OR Tambo Building, Pretoria, in April 2014. South Africa enjoys a long-standing relationship with the Government and the people of Guinea, solidified by the unconditional support that the people of Guinea extended to the people of South Africa during the time of the struggle against apartheid.

Central African Republic

In April 2014, the AU welcomed the establishment of a UN peacekeeping operation in the CAR.

The UNSC adopted a resolution during the same month authorising the establishment of a nearly 12 000-strong UN peacekeeping

In October 2014, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea and the Embassy of South Africa in Asmara hosted the launch of the Eritrea – South Africa Festival (ERISA) The event took place with the theme “People, Liberation and Development.” This launch event paved the way for a range of activities in Eritrea to celebrate 10 years since the establishment of the Embassy of South Africa in Asmara. The planned range of activities included ERISA films, public lectures, handicraft/design/fashion event, food and music festival, and a mining seminar. Activities were arranged jointly with a number of institutions, such as the Eritrean Institute of Technology, the Marine Sciences College of Massawa, the Eritrean National Mining Corporation, the People’s Front for Democracy and Justice’s Political, Cultural and Economics departments, EriTV, the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students, as well as the National Union of Eritrean Women.

operation – the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Central African Republic (MINUSCA) – to protect civilians and facilitate humanitarian access in the war-torn country.

The mission took over the responsibilities of the African-led International Support Mission (MISCA) from September 2014. The establishment of the new UN mission would mark a new step in the international community’s efforts to assist the CAR overcome the challenges confronting it.

In particular, MISCA, with the support of the French Operation ‘Sangaris’ and the planned EUFOR-RCA, would continue to lead the ongoing efforts to complete the initial stabilisation phase, building on the significant progress made on the ground, so as to create conditions conducive to the success of MINUSCA.

Burundi

In November 2014, President Jacob Zuma hosted President Pierre Nkurunziza of the Republic of Burundi who undertook a two-day State Visit to South Africa. This was President Nkurunziza’s first State Visit to South Africa since his assumption of office in 2005. The visit enhanced existing cordial relations between South Africa and Burundi. South Africa actively supported Burundi’s quest for peace and democracy.

President Zuma took over from President Nelson Mandela in 2000 as the mediator in the Burundi peace talks. Then Deputy President Zuma led the protracted but successful mediation process, which led to a resolution of the Burundi conflict and the ushering of a new government in 2005. The highlights of the mediation process led by President Zuma included a key achievement for the African continent, the deployment of South African peacekeeping troops in Burundi for seven years, 2003 to 2009.

This became the first-ever AU peacekeeping force. To turn this historic bond into stronger socio-

economic ties, President Zuma and President Nkurunziza discussed further cooperation in priority areas such as trade, health, arts and culture, mining, agriculture, higher education and defence. Two bilateral agreements were signed during the visit. A South Africa-Burundi Business Forum aimed at increasing trade and investment between the two countries met in Cape Town during the visit.

The two Presidents used the occasion of the State Visit to exchange views in respect of developments at regional level, both with regard to the East African Community and the SADC, as well as discussed broad issues affecting the continent within the context of the AU. They also discussed enhanced cooperation in dealing with multilateral issues such as reform of global institutions of governance such as the UNSC and the Bretton Woods Institutions.

Rwanda

In March 2014, the South African Government expelled four Rwandan diplomats and one from Burundi for violating their status. Investigations revealed direct links between these diplomats and criminal activities. The action targeted only those who violated the Vienna Convention, Article 41 and South Africa's own Diplomatic Immunities and Privileges Act. The Ambassador of Rwanda, the Military Attaché and other functionaries in the Rwanda Diplomatic Mission in Pretoria are in place and functioning normally.

Regrettably, the Rwandan Government reciprocated disproportionately by expelling all South African diplomats except the Ambassador thus making the work of the mission in Rwanda difficult as it cannot discharge its services that South Africans and Rwandans normally receive.

Relations with North and West Africa and the Horn of Africa

Algeria

South Africa and Algeria continue to work hand-in-hand in building a stronger AU and its structures. To this end, regional developments such as the Mali and CAR crises and the general security situation in the Sahel and Maghreb regions also featured prominently in the consultations with President Bouteflika.

In May 2014, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation attended the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Ministerial Conference, in Algiers, Algeria.

Saharawi

Formal diplomatic relations were established at ambassador level in 2004. South Africa continues to render political support and humanitarian

assistance to the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic. Under the African Renaissance Fund (ARF) South Africa coordinates several projects that aim to benefit the Saharawi population. These include a contribution to a landmine clearance project in the east of the territory and construction of a sport development complex in the territory.

South Africa's international solidarity and support for the self-determination of Western Sahara is based on the following principles:

- The principles of multilateralism and international legality in seeking a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.
- The centrality of the AU and UN in the resolution of the conflict.
- The Constitutive Act of the AU, in particular the principle of the sanctity of inherited colonial borders in Africa and the right of peoples of former colonial territories to self-determination and independence.
- Respect of international human rights law in the occupied territories, notable the right to freedom of association, assembly, movement and expression.
- Respect of international humanitarian law and support for the provision of humanitarian assistance to the Saharawi refugees in a way that is predictable, sustainable and timely.
- An end to the illegal exploration and exploitation of the natural resources of Western Sahara in the illegally occupied territory and the discouragement of the involvement of foreign companies in such activities.
- Support for the integration and stability of the Maghreb Union as a building block of the AU.

Mauritania

In August 2014, Deputy President Ramaphosa, represented President Jacob Zuma at the inauguration ceremony of the President-Elect, Mahomed Ould Abdel Aziz, of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, in Nouakchott, Mauritania. The inauguration ceremony was the culmination of the 21 June 2014 elections that saw the incumbent President re-elected for a second term with more than 80% majority vote.

South Africa made a constructive contribution in Mauritania in support of the implementation of the democratic roadmap undertaken by the military transitional government following the coup d'état of August 2005. These efforts contributed to the restoration of constitutional order and stability in Mauritania leading to South Africa's support for the lifting of the AU suspension of the country on 10 April 2007.

In terms of economic relations, progress has been recorded between the two countries in the areas of fisheries and mining. In addition, the Economic Cooperation Agreement that was ready for signature would facilitate the opening of trade and investment opportunities for the two countries.

President Abdel Ould Aziz appointed a special envoy to represent him during the inauguration of President Jacob Zuma on 24 May 2014.

Egypt

South Africa and Egypt have created a political environment that is conducive to business. The visit to Egypt in February 2014, conducted by a South African delegation came to reflect a notable change in South Africa's position on Egypt and its revolution, and to contain the tension in the relations between the two countries. It aims to restore the historic relationship and to develop bilateral relations without excluding the other party.

The major expected change in this regard is South Africa's approval of Egypt's return to its position in the AU to restore its role in the different African organisations.

South Africa's total exports to Egypt by the end of 2014 reached R973 million, whereas imports from Egypt recorded R659 million at the end of 2014. South Africa's exports to and imports from Egypt are mainly mineral products and prepared foodstuffs.

Côte d'Ivoire

South Africa is committed to working with the government of Côte d'Ivoire in its quest for national unity and reconciliation.

South Sudan

South Sudan and South Africa upgraded the missions in their respective capitals to fully fledged embassies. By January 2014, South Africa had trained more than 1 600 government officials from South Sudan as part of a capacity-building programme within the context of the AU PCRD initiative.

Various engagements with senior Sudanese and South Sudanese officials to discuss the negotiation process illustrated South Africa's ongoing support to the AU negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan over post-independence issues.

In January 2014, the South African Government welcomed the signing of Agreements on the Cessation of Hostilities and the Status of Detainees, under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), by the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/

In February 2014, the International Solidarity Conference on Cuba, Western Sahara and Palestine, hosted by the Parliament of South Africa, took place at the Good Hope Chamber.

Army. South Africa views the signing of the agreements as key developments in resolving the political differences in South Sudan and crucial moves to bring the country back onto the road to development and stability.

In March 2014, Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, the Special Envoy to South Sudan, concluded his visit to South Sudan and some countries that are part of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) involved in the efforts to find a resolution to the ongoing conflict in South Sudan. The Deputy President undertook this visit to familiarise himself with the unfolding events in South Sudan and to meet with key role-players. To this end, Mr Ramaphosa met with the President of South Sudan, Mr Salva Kiir Mayardit, cabinet ministers, leaders of Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and other stake holders.

Mr Ramaphosa also paid courtesy calls on President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia and Ambassador Seymour who facilitated the South Sudanese talks on behalf of the IGAD.

In December 2014, President Zuma, hosted the President of the Republic of South Sudan, Salva Kiir Mayardit, who undertook a working visit to South Africa within the context of consolidating the African Agenda through the enhancement and deepening of bilateral political, economic and social relations.

The visit was aimed at strengthening the already existing cordial relations between South Africa and South Sudan, which are anchored on the agreement establishing bilateral relations, signed in September 2011.

Since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, South Africa has been actively supportive of AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) projects in both Sudan and South Sudan under the umbrella of the AU Ministerial Committee on PCRD, which South Africa chairs.

By 2014, and as part of a capacity-building programme taking place within the context of the AUPCRD, more than 1 600 officials from the Government of South Sudan have been trained by the Government of South Africa. The training ranges across a spectrum of fields such as policing, justice, communications and foreign services.

With regard to bilateral trade, South Sudan represents a growing export market for South African goods into the Horn of Africa.

The two Presidents used the occasion to exchange views on the latest developments on the continent and globally. President Kiir briefed President Zuma on the ongoing peace process in South Sudan, which is facilitated by the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD).

Somalia

In January 2013, South Africa pledged its support for Somalia's new government and the country on its road towards a prosperous and stable democracy.

Nigeria

Nigeria is considered one of South Africa's most important partners in pursuing the vision of African renewal. As two of the strongest economies in Africa, cooperation between the two countries is pivotal to the growth of the continent.

The South African Government sympathised with the next of kin, relatives, friends and communities of the deceased South Africans who lost their lives at the Synagogue Church of all Nations in Lagos, Nigeria, on 12 September 2014. DIRCO arranged that the mortal remains were brought to South Africa on a single flight properly equipped for this task. Government identified appropriate facilities where the mortal remains were taken to upon arrival; and it was at these facilities where families received the mortal remains.

Ghana

South Africa participated in a National Pavilion at the Ghana International Trade Fair in 2014.

Burkina Faso

South Africa and Burkina Faso are working on a draft MoU on economic and technical cooperation, and a draft agreement between the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Burkina Faso and Business Unity South Africa.

In October 2014, the Government of South Africa expressed its concern the ongoing political developments in the Republic of Burkina Faso. South Africa joined the call made by the AU on the Government of Burkina Faso to respect the wishes of the people, as well as the prevailing Constitution of the Republic of Burkina Faso. South Africa reminded all those involved in the developments in Burkina Faso of the AU's position of rejecting unconstitutional changes of government.

Cape Verde

Bilateral discussions on a General Cooperation Agreement, lead to the signing of a Joint

Commission for Cooperation (JCC), early in 2013.

Senegal

South Africa and Senegal continue to play an important role in promoting peace and stability through participating in peacekeeping operations in their regions.

Tunisia

In January 2014, the South African Government congratulated the people of the Republic of Tunisia on the adoption of their new constitution. Three years since the revolution of 14 January 2011, and just over two years since the start of their mandate, the elected representatives of the people of Tunisia have shown the world the value of dialogue, consultation and consensus.

Despite many challenges to the security and stability of the country and the region, the people, elected officials and government of Tunisia have remained steadfast in their determination to reach this significant milestone in their quest for the establishment of a democratic dispensation.

South Africa remains committed to support democratic transition in Africa as well as in the Middle East and North African regions through sharing of its own experiences of its own democratic transition 20 years ago.

Relations with Asia and the Middle East The People's Republic of China

South Africa and China have enjoyed 16 years of formal diplomatic relations.

South Africa is China's largest trading partner in Africa and the bilateral trade volume accounts for more than a quarter of China-Africa trade.

According to the Beijing Declaration, China and South Africa will work together to improve the structure of bilateral trade by encouraging the trade of high value-added manufactured goods and increasing China's investment in South Africa.

The two sides will continue to deepen their cooperation in infrastructure development, including the construction of roads, railways, ports, power plants, airports and housing.

China and African countries have pledged to ensure the full implementation of the proposals enshrined in the Beijing Action Plan 2013 to 2015 of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC).

South Africa has taken over co-chairmanship of the FOCAC from Egypt, on behalf of Africa, for the next six years. The forum is one of the most strategic partnerships between Africa and its development partners.

The sixth Ministerial Conference of the FOCAC will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2015.

In September 2014, the Minister International Relations and Cooperation, Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, went to Beijing, People's Republic of China, to co-chair the first meeting of the South Africa-China Inter-Ministerial Joint Working Group on Cooperation. During the State visit to South Africa by President Xi Jinping in March 2013, the "Terms of Reference of the South Africa-China Inter-Ministerial Joint Working Group on Cooperation" were signed. The objectives of the Joint Working Group on Cooperation were to monitor the implementation of cooperative projects, manage and solve challenges, which may arise during the implementation of such projects and further elevate bilateral economic relations through the deepening of practical cooperation.

South Africa-China bilateral relations have enjoyed phenomenal progress in the space of 15 years and have grown from a partnership to a strategic partnership and subsequently to a comprehensive strategic partnership. South Africa and China have committed to building, developing and strengthening relations based on shared principles of friendship and mutual trust; equality and mutual benefit; coordination; mutual learning; and working together for development.

The objectives of the Joint Working Group on Cooperation are to:

- achieve a more equitable trade balance
- encourage trade in manufactured value-added products
- increase inward-bound trade and investment missions
- finalise the working group on trade statistics
- increase investment in South Africa's manufacturing industry
- promote value-adding and beneficiation activities in close proximity to the source of raw materials
- cooperate and provide mutually beneficial technical support in the areas of the green economy, skills development and industrial financing
- pursue opportunities to cooperate in infrastructure construction projects such as roads, railways, ports, power generation, airports and housing.

The overall aim of South Africa's approach was to use this mechanism to address inequality, poverty and unemployment, through enhancing bilateral economic relations.

In December 2014, President Jacob Zuma was on a State Visit to the People's Republic of China. President Xi Jinping paid a State Visit to

In December 2014, the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa, Mr. Luwellyn Landers, attended the 100th Session of the African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group Ministerial Council Meeting in Brussels. This historic session of the ACP considered the final report on the future perspectives of the 79-member strong ACP Group. Changing global circumstances have dictated that the group reinvents itself and carve a new, dynamic independent identity. The meeting also served as a platform for an exchange of ideas on poverty eradication and sustainable development within the rubrics of on-going debates for a Post-2015 Development Agenda and a Climate Change compact.

South Africa in March 2013, when the two leaders agreed to designate 2014 as the "Year of South Africa in China" and 2015 as the "Year of China in South Africa." The "Year of South Africa in China" coincided with South Africa's celebration of 20 years of freedom and democracy.

The overall objective of the "Year of South Africa in China" 2014, was to profile South Africa's political, economic, social and cultural achievements since the advent of a first democratic government in South Africa in 1994.

The year also sought to explore more economic opportunities and also showcase South Africa's innovations and best practices in various sectors such as science and technology, mining, arts and culture, tourism and people to people interaction.

South Africa and China share a sound political relationship, which can be used to lay the basis for implementing South Africa's economic objectives. China has become South Africa's single largest trading partner in the world, and South Africa has become China's largest trading partner in Africa.

Some of the objectives of President Zuma's State Visit to China were to:

- review the status of bilateral relations with the People's Republic of China to ensure that the strategic relationship already defined is further strengthened, focussing on the priority issues of development in South Africa and Africa
- adopt the China-South Africa 5-10 Year Framework on Cooperation that will further entrench the implementation of agreements entered into since the conclusion of the Beijing Declaration in 2010 and expand on the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership
- discuss ways of supporting our industrialisation agenda by agreeing to invest in the development of Science and Technology, agro-processing; mining and mineral beneficiation, renewable energy, finance and tourism
- review progress in the locomotive procurement project, particularly cooperation in equipment manufacturing and the localisation of procurement through joint ventures with South African companies

- review progress with cooperation on infrastructure development
- ensure that relations with China remain central to realising South Africa's developmental agenda through its foreign policy
- continue to partner with China in addressing Africa's developmental agenda through co-chairship of FOCAC until 2018.

The establishment of the BRICS Development Bank in 2014 to be headquartered in Shanghai and the decision to locate its African Regional Centre in South Africa not only raised the level of cooperation between China and South Africa in addressing global challenges, but it was another clear indicator of South Africa's growing significance in driving the African Agenda.

China regards South Africa as a key partner in advancing its relations with Africa. While the two countries are strikingly different in their cultural, political and socio-economic orientation, they are very close in the positions they take on key issues affecting mankind. Both appreciate the importance of strengthening cooperation based on respect for each other's core values and interests.

Mongolia

South Africa and Mongolia could work together to meet that country's international commitments on climate change.

Mongolia's vast coal reserves offer an opportunity for collaboration on clean coal technologies. South Africa's coal-to-liquid technology would mitigate and possibly reduce the country's contribution to greenhouse gases.

East Asia

Japan

In 2014, Japan and South Africa celebrated 104 years of official relations. Japan is South Africa's third-largest trading partner with the two countries cooperating in various fields such as training and skills development.

The Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) is a strategic partnership between Africa and Japan that was launched in 1993, with a view to serve as a consultative forum for development assistance to Africa.

In September 2014, President Zuma conveyed a message of condolence to the Government and people of Japan, following the loss of life of Japanese hikers because of the volcano eruption at Mount Ontake on 27 September 2014.

Republic of Korea (ROK)

Formal diplomatic relations between South Africa and the ROK were established in December 1992. Increasingly the focus of the bilateral

relationship is on economic and business links.

The ROK is South Africa's fourth-largest trading partner in Asia, while South Africa is the ROK's largest trading partner in Africa. Trade between the two countries encompasses a wide variety of products ranging from minerals to sophisticated high-technology electric products.

In October 2014, the Deputy Minister International Relations and Cooperation, Nomaindiya Mfeketo, undertook a working visit to the ROK. Deputy Minister Mfeketo co-chair the eighth Policy Consultative Forum together with the Deputy Minister for Political Affairs of the ROK, LEE Kyung-soo, in Seoul, Korea.

Its national interests and priorities, its regional and continental commitments, as well as its aspirations for a prosperous world at peace with itself informed South Africa's participation in the Policy Consultative Forum. During the Policy Consultative Forum, Deputy Minister Mfeketo conveyed the priorities of the Government of South Africa as outlined in the National Development Plan (NDP), South Africa's roadmap to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. South Africa and the ROK share similar views on the importance of multilateralism. The ROK provides ongoing support for the continued development of Africa through the Korea-Africa Forum. The next Korea-Africa Forum is scheduled for 2015.

Korea is South Africa's fourth largest trading partner in Asia and South Africa is Korea's largest trading partner in Africa. Korea enjoyed a favourable trade balance with South Africa in 2013 – approximately R6,1 billion. Total trade in 2013 was R30,2 billion, with South African exports to Korea in the region of R12,1, and South African imports from Korea in the region of R18,1 billion.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

South Africa established diplomatic relations with the DPRK in August 1998. The two countries enjoy cordial relations, which date back due to the historic support that the DPRK provided during the struggle against colonialism and apartheid. The South African ambassador to China is also accredited to the DPRK's capital, Pyongyang.

Economic relations between the two countries remain limited owing to the sanctions imposed by the UNSC because of the DPRK's nuclear programme, which affects the ongoing tension in the Korean Peninsula.

Central Asia

There is no South African representation in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and

Kyrgyzstan, but the South African ambassador in Turkey is accredited to these countries on a non-resident basis.

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan and South Africa established diplomatic relations in March 1992. The South African Embassy in Kazakhstan was opened in December 2003 in Almaty, and relocated to Astana in February 2008.

South Africa and Kazakhstan have substantial economic interests, which overlap in several important areas such as trade, the production and collaborative marketing of strategic minerals, technology exchange, machine production, as well as oil procurement for South Africa.

Azerbaijan

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Azerbaijan were established in 1991.

The South African Embassy in Ankara, Turkey, is accredited on a non-residential basis to Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan opened a new embassy in South Africa in January 2012.

In February 2014, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation hosted the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr Elmar Mammadyarov. The objectives of the visit were to strengthen bilateral political and economic relations as well as cooperation in defence, energy, education and skills development. The visit was the first official visit of an Azerbaijan Foreign Minister to South Africa.

Turkey

South Africa's major exports to Turkey comprise mineral products, base metals, machinery and mechanical appliances, electrical equipment, chemical and allied products, vehicles, aircraft, iron and steel, organic chemicals, ores, slag and ash.

In November 2014, Deputy President Ramaphosa attended the second Africa-Turkey Summit in Equatorial Guinea. The summit took place around the theme "New Model of partnership for the strengthening of sustainable development and integration" discussed among other key issues, the matrix of the key projects, an implementation plan as well as summit outcomes declaration. While Africa proposed a number of projects for consideration, the key focus of the Africa-Turkey matrix projects is focused on the following areas:

- peace and security looking into counter-terrorism and the training of national police forces
- trade and investment focussing on capacity building
- culture, tourism and education

- youth empowerment
- technology transfer
- rural economy and agriculture
- infrastructure, energy, ICT and transport

The summit was preceded by a ministerial and senior government officials meetings whose recommendations served as a basis for discussions and decision-making by heads of states and government culminating in the adoption of the summit declaration. Deputy President Ramaphosa also held several bilateral discussions on the margins of the summit.

South Asia

South Africa's economic strategy is strongly focused on deepening trade and investment linkages with the south, particularly with countries that offer potential for future growth and where synergies and complementarities in products and technologies exist.

In South Asia, South Africa enjoys cordial relations with India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Afghanistan and the Maldives.

India

South Africa and India enjoy strong historical relations that have been formalized through various bilateral and multilateral mechanisms. The two countries share membership of multilateral groupings such as BRICS, IBSA and the G20.

In May 2014, President Zuma congratulated the Prime Minister-elect of India, Mr Narendra Modi, on his successful election.

Pakistan

Pakistan and South Africa enjoy cordial, bilateral relations.

South Africa views Pakistan as an important role-player in the international arena and South Africa welcomes the strengthening of democracy in Pakistan. South Africa has identified additional avenues of cooperation regarding law enforcement issues, an Extradition Treaty, an Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, an MoU on Cooperation in Combating the Illicit Trafficking in Narcotics, Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursor Chemicals.

Sri Lanka

Bilateral trade between Sri Lanka and South Africa has seen a steady increase in growth in both exports and imports.

In July 2014, Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa was in Sri Lanka for an official visit in his capacity as special envoy of President Zuma. The Deputy President's visit to Sri Lanka follows two earlier visits to South Africa by senior delegations from

both the Sri Lankan Government and the Tamil National Alliance respectively in February and April 2014. Both these delegations also met Deputy President Ramaphosa and invited him to visit Sri Lanka.

South-East Asia

Strengthening South-South relations remains an important pillar of South Africa's foreign policy, especially in Asia, a region that has surpassed the EU as the country's biggest trading partner.

Thailand

During the past two decades, Thailand has become South Africa's biggest trading partner in Southeast Asia and South Africa has become Thailand's biggest trading partner on the continent.

Thailand is also the second most important destination for South African tourists.

Malaysia

Malaysia remains the largest investor in South Africa from the Southeast Asian region.

Since 1994, Malaysia has assisted more than 300 South Africans in their studies that range from short courses to full scholarships for degrees in engineering and information technology.

A number of South African universities have signed MoUs with their Malaysian counterparts.

Singapore and Indonesia

In December 2014, the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Nomaindiya Mfeketo, paid an official visit to Singapore and Indonesia.

In Singapore, Deputy Minister Mfeketo met with her Singaporean counterpart, Deputy Minister Zukifli Bin Masagos, where South Africa and Singapore bilateral relations were discussed. Issues discussed during the meeting, were the upcoming Foreign Office Consultations, scheduled for January 2015, engaging and involving other government departments such as the dti and education.

Collaboration on tourism was identified as area of closer cooperation and Singapore expressed a keen interest in signing the Bilateral Air Services Agreement with South Africa. Singapore also indicated an interest in importing meat and vegetables from South Africa. The two leaders also discussed the impact of the Ebola virus on trade and tourism with African countries. They recognised the need for the two countries to exchange visits of political principals and trade delegations. Collaboration with the Singapore Civil Service College was acknowledged. Deputy Minister Masagos also underscored the

importance of BRICS to Singapore as there are areas that the two countries can collaborate on within the context of BRICS.

The Deputy Minister concluded her visit with a luncheon with the Singapore Business Federation.

In Indonesia, Deputy Minister Mfeketo delivered the inaugural Sheik Yusuf Memorial Lecture at the Sultan Hasanuddin University in Makassar. The aim of the lecture was to celebrate 20 years of freedom in South Africa and the relevance of Sheikh Yusuf to the bilateral relations between South Africa and Indonesia. It is hoped that the lecture will become a key annual event during which South Africa and Indonesia can demonstrate a shared commitment to strengthen and sustain the enduring historical relations that exist between the two countries.

Whilst in Indonesia, the Deputy Minister also held a meeting with the Deputy Governor of South Sulawesi, Mr Arisin Numang. During the meeting, the province of South Sulawesi was congratulated on the re-election of Mr Yusuf Kalla as Vice-President of Indonesia, who is from Makassar. The Deputy Minister used the opportunity to encourage members of the Indonesian private sector to consider South Africa as a destination of choice for investment, trade and tourism.

Deputy Minister Mfeketo also met with the Mayor of Makassar, Mr Ramdhn Pomanto, and the Rector of Sultan Hasanuddin University. Discussions at these meetings touched on trade and investment, tourism and the proposal for a Twinning Agreement between the Western Cape and South Sulawesi Provinces. The Deputy Minister was also updated on the construction of the Nelson Mandela and Sheik Yusuf statues in both Makassars, to honour the legacies of these two icons. During the meeting with the Rector of Sultan Hasanuddin University, Prof Dr Dwia Ariestina Palubulu MA, Deputy Minister called for the strengthening of ties between South African institutions of higher learning and their counterparts in Indonesia.

Vietnam

Over the past 20 years, the relationship between South Africa and Vietnam has grown into a multifaceted relationship with growing cooperation in many fields, rapid growth in people-to-people links and strong state-to-state and government-to-government relations, which includes cooperation at many levels – bilateral, as well as multilateral.

Political relations with Vietnam are strong, with a substantial exchange of high-level visits between the two countries over the past few years.

The protection of South Africa's wildlife, particularly the rhino, has been high on the agenda of discussions with Vietnam.

Regarding cooperation in the field of wildlife protection, the two countries shared concerns about the illegal trade in protected wildlife species and products, especially rhino, and agreed to work together to put an end to this issue.

Brunei-Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Timor-Leste

South Africa's political relations with Brunei-Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Timor-Leste are cordial and friendly.

Myanmar

Like the rest of the international community, South Africa has welcomed the political reform process underway in Myanmar and has supported all efforts aimed at opening up the political space for participation by all the people of Myanmar through the political parties of their choice.

Philippines

The South African government established formal diplomatic relations with the Philippines in November 1993. The Philippine Embassy in Pretoria was established in June 1994. South Africa, in turn, established an embassy in Manila in December 2004.

Relations between South Africa and the Philippines are strong both at bilateral and multilateral levels. Both countries are influential in organisations of the south, including the NAM and the G77+China.

On the economic front, both countries have undertaken efforts to enhance bilateral trade and commercial relations.

Australasia and the Pacific islands

Australia

South Africa and Australia have a history of productive cooperation across a range of sectors and issues, including fisheries protection, mining, law enforcement, sport, tourism, education and training in fields such as ICT, public administration, mining and resources management, defence relations and customs cooperation.

Australia is the sixth-largest export destination for South African goods. The majority of exports from South Africa to Australia are finished goods. Exports of high-quality passenger motor vehicles head the list.

With its renewed focus on Africa, Australia has committed to work together with the African continent to address development challenges in

such areas as human resource development, mining and resources management and infrastructure development.

South Africa and Australia work closely together for the benefit of third countries such as Zimbabwe in the areas of sanitation and revenue collection.

South Africa and Australia also work closely together at multilateral level in organisations and institutions such as the Commonwealth, the UN and the Cairns Group particularly on issues that affect African.

In October 2014, the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ms Nomaindiya Mfeketo, delivered the opening statement at the 14th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Perth, Australia.

New Zealand

At bilateral level, South Africa and New Zealand enjoy close cooperation in business, tourism, agriculture, disarmament, fisheries, environmental protection, indigenous people and human rights issues.

In sport, South Africa and New Zealand have strong ties – especially in rugby and cricket, but in recent years also soccer.

The two countries enjoy productive cooperation at multilateral level. Both countries are members of the Valdivia Group (Group of Temperate Southern Hemisphere Countries on Environment), which aims to promote the Southern Hemisphere's views in international environmental meetings and enhance scientific cooperation.

The two countries also enjoy a close working relationship within the context of the Antarctic Treaty and Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement, and interact regularly within the context of the World Trade Organisation and the Cairns Group.

Relations with the Middle East

South Africa's relationship with the Arab States remains cordial, with ongoing engagements at various political and economic levels that are anchored by the strategic objective of strengthening South-South relations.

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

South Africa is committed to maintaining cordial diplomatic and trade relations with the UAE. South African companies have made a major contribution to the development of the UAE economy with over 200 of them having representative offices in the UAE.

The potential for greater interaction between the two countries is enhanced through the 56

weekly flights between South Africa and the UAE. South Africa and the UAE have signed five bilateral agreements, which provide the framework for cooperation.

Iran

South Africa and Iran have established a Joint Bilateral Commission (JBC) to allow for a high-level review of existing bilateral relations and to consider ways in which these could be expanded.

The JBC, chaired by South Africa's Minister of International Relations and Cooperation and Iran's Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, meets alternatively in South Africa and Iran biannually. The JBC is regarded as one of South Africa's most successful and longest-running bilateral mechanisms. Several South African companies are involved in major projects in Iran.

South Africa maintains a friendly relationship with Iran, even though the international sanctions imposed against the Islamic Republic have made trade increasingly difficult.

In June 2014, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation went to the Islamic Republic of Iran for a two-day working visit in Tehran. The Minister delivered a keynote address at a seminar under the theme: "20 years of South Africa's freedom and relations between South Africa and the Islamic Republic of Iran."

The objective of the seminar was to share with Iranians, South Africa's holistic, political and constitutional experience; to enhance South Africa-Iran trade relations and investment through the promotion of mutually beneficial investment opportunities; and to develop cultural exchange programmes between South Africa and Iran. During her visit, the Minister participated in the 20th anniversary celebrations of South Africa's freedom and democracy, hosted by the South African Embassy in Tehran. While in Tehran, the Minister met with her Iranian counterpart, Dr Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and paid a courtesy call on the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr Hassan Rouhani.

Saudi Arabia

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Saudi Arabia were formalised during a visit by former President Nelson Mandela in November 1994. Two missions were established in the kingdom during March of 1995: an embassy with a chargé d'affaires in the capital Riyadh and a consulate-general in the commercial capital of Jeddah.

The consulate-general is responsible for looking after the needs of South African pilgrims

In October 2014, The Glasgow City Council unveiled a statue of former President Nelson Mandela in the City Chambers. This follows an announcement made by Lord Provost of Glasgow City Council on Mandela Day in 2014, that the City had commissioned the bust. At the time of making the announcement, Lord Provost pronounced that the bust will "act as a lasting legacy of former President Mandela and as a permanent reminder of Glasgow's long standing support for the people of South Africa". This ceremony marked exactly 21 years since the City Council awarded former President Mandela with the Freedom of the City in October 1993.

The UK High Commissioner, Mr Obed Mlaba, and its Honorary Consul for the Scotland region, Mr Brian Filling represented the South African Government during the ceremony.

performing Hajj and Umrah duties in the holy cities of Makkah al Mukarramah and Medina al Munawarra.

Saudi Arabia is a fellow G20 member and remains South Africa's largest supplier of crude oil.

Qatar

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and the State of Qatar were established in 1994, strengthened by official visits to Qatar by former presidents Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki, as well as by visits of several Cabinet Ministers.

In terms of trade relations, Qatar has traditionally enjoyed a healthy trade surplus, primarily owing to its export of crude oil and petrochemicals to South Africa.

Kuwait

Kuwait has become an increasingly important market for South African exports and several Kuwaiti companies have made major multimillion-rand investments in the construction and development of hotels and real estate in South Africa, as well as investments on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

Iraq

Relations between South Africa and Yemen are cordial, and the two countries share membership of the Indian Ocean Rim Association and the NAM.

In January 2014, the then Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Mr Ebrahim Ebrahim, undertook a working visit to Sana'a, Yemen, to take up the case of Mr Pierre Korkie, a South African citizen kidnapped nine months ago in the city of Taiz. Mr Korkie was kidnapped together with his wife, Yolande, while in Yemen in May 2013. The kidnappers released Yolande on 10 January 2014, and Pierre remained in captivity.

While in Yemen, the delegation held a wide range of meetings, including with representatives

of the Yemeni Security Services; the Deputy Foreign Minister, Dr Ali Muthana Hassan; the Foreign Minister, Dr Abu Bakr Al-Qirbi; the Minister of the Interior, Mr Abdul Qader Qahtari; the Prime Minister, Mr Mohammed Basindwah; and held consultations with the President of Yemen, Abdel-Rabbuh Mansour Hadi.

Arab-Israel peace process

South Africa supports peace between Israel and the Arab world, which must involve an end to the illegal occupation by Israel of Arab land, namely in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon, which has led to conflict and violence between the peoples of the region over the last six decades.

South Africa does not have a policy aimed at boycotting Israel, but discourages people from visiting Israel because of the country's continued occupation of Palestinian land.

South Africa remains committed to the aspirations of the Palestinian people in their struggle to achieve freedom and independence.

As part of South Africa's contribution to international diplomatic efforts towards the resolution of Israeli-Palestine conflict, the special envoys appointed by President Zuma travelled to Israel and Palestine in June 2014. The delegation conveyed South Africa's grave concern over the escalating violence, the civilian displacement and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip in particular and the West Bank in general.

In Palestine, they met with the Prime Minister Dr Rami Hamdallah-Hamdallah, the Foreign Minister Dr Raid Malki, the Secretary of Fatah's International Relations Commission, Dr. Nabil Shaath State of Palestine to work towards an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and ultimately the resumption of comprehensive negotiations to find a peaceful and lasting solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. The special envoys congratulated them on the formation of the Unity Government of the Palestinian National Authority and asked them to maintain their unity with Hamas despite the current crisis.

In Israel, the special envoys met the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Tzachi Hanegbi. They shared with him President Zuma's concern with the situation in Gaza. The special envoys requested all to apply maximum restraint, work towards a permanent cease-fire and a solution of the conflict with Palestine.

The special envoys also met with the member of civil society Mr Mustafa Barghouti of the Council of the Palestinian National Initiative and encouraged him and the general members of the civil society to continue working towards a two-state solution.

In October 2014, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation concluded her visit to Cairo in the Arab Republic of Egypt, where she represented the South African Government today in the International Donors' Conference on Palestine, entitled "Reconstructing Gaza." The governments of Egypt and Norway, together with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, hosted the conference, which was aimed at securing financial pledges and other contributions required for reconstructing the Gaza Strip, following the Israeli bombardment and ground invasion of Gaza from 8 July to 26 August 2014, which resulted in large-scale human suffering, displacement and unprecedented material destruction in Gaza. Over 60 countries participated in the conference, including a number of regional and international organisations.

Palestine

South Africa and Palestine have enjoyed warm relations since the inception of democracy, and the establishment of official diplomatic relations between a democratic South Africa and Palestine in 1995.

In May 2014, the Minister International Relations and Cooperation hosted her Palestinian counterpart for bilateral consultations. Some of the issues they discussed were the state of South Africa-Palestine relations, the consolidation of Africa-Palestine relations, and the recent reconciliation agreement reached between Fatah and Hamas, as well as the Middle East Peace Process. The meeting between the Ministers is the culmination of a weeklong programme in support of the UN Declaration of 2014 as the 'International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.' In showing South Africa's support for the Palestinian cause, the South African Government played host to the Palestinian Heads of Mission Conference for African Ambassadors, held in Cape Town in April. In addition, DIRCO also hosted a Palestinian Solidarity Seminar in Cape Town, with the involvement of civil society and academia to create awareness of the Palestinian cause.

In November 2014, President Jacob Zuma received President Mahmoud Abbas of the State of Palestine on his State Visit to South Africa. During his visit, President Abbas conducted bilateral discussions with President Zuma on issues of mutual interest and common concern, bilateral relations between South Africa and Palestine, the Middle East Peace Process, as well as other multilateral issues.

Bilateral relations between Palestine and South Africa are facilitated through a Joint Commission of Cooperation (JCC) that was

established in 1995. Progress in establishing bilateral cooperation agreements proceeded apace, resulting in the signing of nine bilateral cooperation agreements and during President Abbas' State Visit, three agreements were signed, namely:

- Agreement for the Establishment of a Joint Commission Of Cooperation
 - Memorandum of Understanding on Political Consultations
 - Agreement on Higher Education and Training
- In addition, South Africa supports international efforts aimed at the establishment of a viable Palestinian State, existing side by side in peace with Israel within internationally recognised borders, based on those existing on 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Syria

In January 2014 the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation accepted an invitation from United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon to attend the High Level International Meeting on the Conflict in Syria, scheduled to start in Montreux, Switzerland. The meeting formed part of the Geneva II Peace Conference.

The meeting, was chaired by the UN Secretary-General. It brought selected states and international organisations together in an effort to assist the Syrian parties in ending the violence and achieving a comprehensive agreement for a political settlement, implementing fully the Geneva Communiqué, while preserving the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria.

The international meeting was followed by negotiations between the two Syrian parties, facilitated by the UN-League of Arab States Joint Special Representative for Syria, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi.

Relations with the Americas

United States of America

Formal relations between South Africa and the USA go back as far as 1789, when the USA opened a consulate in Cape Town. South Africa continues to place a high premium on high-level political exchanges.

In March 2014, DIRCO hosted the USA Mission in Pretoria for the fifth Annual Bilateral Forum (ABF) under the United States-South Africa Strategic Dialogue. The ABF was co-chaired by USA Ambassador Patrick H. Gaspard and South African DIRCO Chief Director: North America Ambassador John Davies.

The ABF is a key component of the USA-South Africa Strategic Dialogue, which meets annually to review the depth and breadth of cooperation

between the two nations across a range of bilateral working groups. During the ABF, officials from across the South African Government hosted their counterparts from the USA Mission to review bilateral cooperation in 14 separate areas: basic and higher education, agriculture, health, protocol and administration, economic development, trade and investment, energy, water, environment, transportation, science and technology, defence, and safety and security. Separate sessions during 2014 also addressed cooperation through the African and Global Affairs Working Group.

The USA is a major economic partner for South Africa and continues to feature high on the list of trade and investment partners. There are about 600 companies from the USA trading in South Africa, which provide over 120 000 local jobs. These companies contribute about 30% of all corporate social investment for corporate social projects.

The USA is South Africa's third-largest trading partner and 98% of South Africa's exports enter the USA market duty-free and quota-free under the current dispensation of Agoa and the Generalised System of Preferences.

While the USA is a significant market for South Africa, South Africa is the USA's biggest market in Africa. South Africa is also an important investor in the USA, with the announcement of an investment by Sasol in Louisiana, which could prove to be one of the biggest investments in the history of the USA.

The USA is an important supporter of South Africa's domestic priorities and has made an effort to align its assistance programmes and projects with these. The USA is a major source of official development assistance (ODA) to South Africa, contributing approximately US\$541 million in ODA per year. The major area of focus is health and AIDS in particular. Under the USA President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Pepfar), South Africa is the 15th largest recipient of foreign aid from the USA.

South Africa has been very successful in using Pepfar funding to address HIV and AIDS.

The USA will reduce its annual assistance from US\$484 to US\$250 by year 2017. The transition plan has a five-year timeline.

The USA regards South Africa as a global model because it is the first country to go from a development assistance-led effort to a country-led approach. Both countries committed that there would be no interruption of treatment and care services during the transition of direct service provision to the South African Government. The USA understands the importance of the African Agenda to South Africa, particularly regional

economic integration, which is the cornerstone of continental integration. Initiatives such as USA trilateral cooperation between the USA and the SADC region and the rest of the continent in the area of food security have been pivotal to this relationship.

In August 2014, President Jacob Zuma addressed the National Press Club, Washington DC, USA on the 20 years of democracy in South Africa.

Canada

Canada has a long-standing and wide-ranging track record of constructive engagement, at bilateral and multilateral levels, in Africa, ranging from peacekeeping and development aid to foreign direct investment (FDI).

About two thirds of South African exports to Canada relate to minerals and mining equipment, with agricultural and chemical products making up the rest. Canada views South Africa as a gateway into the SADC and the rest of Africa.

Canada's involvement in South Africa focuses on strengthening service delivery, HIV and AIDS and rural development.

In June 2014, Canada's minister of international trade, Ed Fast, announced that the Canadian trade finance agency Export Development Canada would open its first African office in Johannesburg in 2015.

Canada chose Johannesburg as the location for its first Export Development Canada (ECD) office because of the city's economic position as the financial gateway to southern Africa. The ECD, through its Johannesburg-based team, would focus on connecting more Canadian businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to the growing supply chains within intra-African trade. South Africa is Canada's most important commercial and political partner in Africa and is the only country in Africa – and one of only 20 around the world – to be identified by our government's recent Global Markets Action Plan as an 'emerging market with broad Canadian interests.' On-the-ground support in southern Africa would help Canadian SMEs to boost their exports and create jobs and opportunities at home.

The South Africa-Canada Chamber of Commerce would be revitalised to provide a forum for Canadian companies and investors in the country.

There were several areas in which South Africa and Canada could co-operate, including mining, infrastructure, agriculture and education, he said, adding that the success of Africa was critical to the success of the world.

Mexico

Bilateral relations between South Africa and Mexico are good and the two countries work closely together in multilateral forums on issues such as South-South cooperation and nuclear disarmament. South Africa is Mexico's biggest trading partner in Africa.

In October 2014, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation received the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, Dr José Antonio Meade Kuribreña, for bilateral consultations. The Ministers signed three agreements covering various areas of cooperation between the two countries.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America

The developing countries in Latin America continue to play an important role in international political bodies and formations such as the NAM, the G20 (Brazil and Mexico), BRICS (Brazil), IBSA (Brazil) and the UN. South Africa's business sector has extensive interests in the region, including SAB Miller, AngloGold Ashanti, Naspers, Denel, Sasol, PetroSA.

These relate to exports of capital equipment, intermediary goods and investments as well as a growing presence of South African companies in the service sector.

South Africa's bilateral relations with Latin America and the Caribbean continue to advance the development agenda of the South, and strengthen cooperation among developing countries through active participation in groupings of the south at regional, inter-regional and multilateral levels. In this regard, the need to build stronger and balanced relationships with Latin American and Caribbean countries is of particular importance. South Africa has observer status in Caribbean Community and Common Market (Caricom) and acts as the region's voice in the G20.

Brazil

The presidents of South Africa and Brazil meet regularly to discuss issues of mutual interest. South Africa maintains the view that the Rio+20 Conference, which took place in Brazil, helped to ensure the issue of sustainable development remained a top priority on the agenda of the UN and the international community.

Argentina

Argentina is South Africa's third largest trading partner in the Latin American and Caribbean region after Brazil and Mexico.

Regular Ministerial meetings ensure continuous improvement in bilateral ties.

Chile

Political relations between South Africa and Chile remain sound. The Joint Consultative Mechanism (JCM) continues to serve a constructive purpose in the ongoing political dialogue between the two countries at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels.

From South Africa's perspective, Chile is seen as a "like-minded" country in terms of multilateral relations, North-South and South-South relations.

In August 2014, President Jacob Zuma hosted the President of the Republic of Chile, Dr Michelle Bachelet Jeria, for a State visit to South Africa. This was President Bachelet's first visit to South Africa. The purpose of visit was to strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries.

The Caribbean

South Africa enjoys cordial relations with the countries of the Caribbean. The majority of inhabitants of the Caribbean are of African descent and have strong historical and cultural links to the continent.

South Africa's endeavour in conjunction with the AU and Caricom to strengthen cooperation between Africa and the African Diaspora in the Caribbean has given added impetus to bilateral and multilateral relations.

South Africa attaches importance to strengthening its relations with the Caribbean and developing common positions on global issues such as access to the markets of the industrial north, reform of international institutions and promoting the development agenda and protection of small island states.

Colombia and Ecuador

Colombia and Ecuador are experiencing growing interest from South African companies primarily in the mineral resources sector.

Peru

South Africa is one of the largest investors in Peru, with SABMiller and Anglo American operating in that country.

The main South African exports to Peru are mining equipment, paper and carton, metal sheeting and specialised structural steel.

Venezuela

The two countries have a MoU regarding bilateral consultations. Three MoUs were also signed by PetroSA and Petróleos de Venezuela, which granted PetroSA a block to explore Venezuela's oil reserves.

South African exports to Venezuela consist mainly of ferro-vanadium and related products,

followed by liqueurs. South African imports from Venezuela consist mainly of oil.

Cuba

Cuba remains a strategic partner of South Africa and the region.

South Africa continues to be a beneficiary of Cuba's ongoing assistance in support of the five priorities of the South African Government, through joint programmes in health, labour, social development, housing and infrastructure. One of the success stories is the extensive cooperation between South Africa and Cuba regarding skills development and training.

During 2014, more than 1 828 South African students received medical training in Cuba. So far, more than 420 South Africans from disadvantaged backgrounds have graduated in Cuba as medical doctors, providing much needed primary healthcare services to their local communities. Another 73 final year medical students are doing their final year at South African universities and graduated in 2014. Similarly, 11 South African students have graduated from the International Sport School in Havana and a number of teachers in South Africa have benefitted from the Mathematics and Science skills development programme.

The deployment of Cuban doctors, engineers and technical experts across South African provinces is a demonstration of Cuba's commitment, as is the training on Cuban scholarships, of South African medical students under the auspices of the Health Agreement, and of over 1 000 students, under the Extended Health Agreement. Following the success of cooperation in the sphere of health, various projects are being pursued in areas as diverse as arts and culture, sports, trade, agriculture, education, housing and water affairs.

Cuba's commitment to Africa is evidenced by the presence of Cuban medical brigades in 28 African countries, comprised of more than 1 800 doctors and other health personnel, and close to 2 300 young people from 48 African countries studying in Cuba. A number of trilateral projects involving South Africa and Cuba in Africa have borne fruit in Sierra Leone, Mali and Rwanda.

The Cuban Government's plans to open their economy to foreign investments, emphasises the scope for doing business with Cuba and could form part of the Parliamentary Plan of Action to grow trade with Cuba. South Africa implemented the Economic Assistance Package Agreement in favour of Cuba in 2014. The agreement, signed in 2012 became fully operational before the end of 2013 and approval has been granted by the South African Reserve

Bank for the package to be delivered through the conduct of a series of international payments.

United Kingdom (UK) and Ireland

United Kingdom

Bilateral relations between South Africa and the UK cover a wide spectrum and have a far-reaching impact.

Cooperation between the two countries is broad and includes health, education, science and technology, energy, the environment, defence, police, arts and culture, and sports and recreation.

There is a healthy flow of investment in both directions.

The UK is recognised as the foremost source of FDI into South Africa, while South African companies equally have made large investments in the UK.

South Africa and the UK have important trade and economic relations, which continue to strengthen, although the global economic crisis has had a significant impact on bilateral trade.

The UK is by far South Africa's most significant source of long-haul tourists, a position it has not relinquished for the past 15 years.

In March 2014, the then Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe undertook a working visit to the United Kingdom (UK). The visit to the UK was in honour of an invitation extended by the British Government to the South African Government to attend "A Service of Thanksgiving to Celebrate the Life and Work of Nelson Mandela." The Service was held at Westminster Abbey on 3 March 2014.

Ireland

The Republic of Ireland was the only EU member country that did not have full diplomatic relations with South Africa until the dawn of democratic South Africa.

Ireland continues to be a valued source of FDI in the following sectors: business services, alternative/renewable energy, software and IT services, and plastics.

Through the previous and current Irish aid programmes, the Irish Government has been providing development assistance to South Africa, focusing on education and skills development thereby contributing to the promotion of South Africa's national priorities. The current programme has a budget of R39 million per year.

Relations with Europe

European Union (EU)

Since 1994, building on shared values and mutual interests, South Africa and the EU have

developed a comprehensive partnership based on the Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement (TDCA).

The SA-EU relationship is guided by the principle that the EU should support South Africa's national, regional and African priorities and programmes to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment.

The EU is South Africa's main development assistance partner.

Benelux countries

The Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg) remain important trade and investment partners of South Africa, and major providers of tourism. The Netherlands is the second-most important source of FDI into South Africa.

There has been important trilateral cooperation with the Netherlands and Belgium in the past in support of peace and security in Africa, inter alia on capacity building in the Great Lakes Region. Such trilateral cooperation can be further expanded in the future.

There is a regular exchange of views between South Africa and Belgium, as well as with the Netherlands, on the issues and complicated processes necessary to find durable solutions to the conflicts in the region.

Belgium

Relations between South Africa and Belgium are strong and dynamic, covering a number of areas that are important to South Africa's national development objectives. Belgium is South Africa's 12th largest export destination globally and ranks sixth in the world in terms of FDI in South Africa, among other things focusing on mining, green energy, ports, logistics and agriculture.

Belgium has allocated substantial resources to South Africa in the form of ODA since 1994. This support has covered such areas as health, ports management and logistics, education, rural development and further education and training. The budget of the development cooperation programme, which will run up to 2016, is R66 million a year. The Belgian region of Flanders also has a long-standing development programme in South Africa, also with a budget of R66 million per year up to 2016.

The Netherlands

Apart from being the second-most important source of FDI into South Africa, the Netherlands is South Africa's seventh-largest trading partner in the world. The Dutch Government has consistently supported South Africa in terms of bilateral and multilateral relations. A large number

of bilateral agreements have been signed and high-level bilateral Ministerial meetings are held regularly.

In March 2014, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation concluded her working visit to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, where she led a South African Government delegation to the Nuclear Security Summit (NSS), which took place on 24-25 March 2014 in The Hague. Building on the 2010 Washington and 2012 Seoul Summits, the main objective of The Hague Summit was to review progress achieved since the NSS process started in 2010 and to contribute to the strengthening of nuclear security through stronger national measures and improved international cooperation. South Africa has participated in all the Summits. Fifty-three States were represented at the Summit in The Hague. South Africa's participation in the NSS process is informed by the shared vision of a world free of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, as well as its triple objectives of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The South African Government remains committed to maintaining effective nuclear security of all nuclear and other radioactive material within South Africa consistent with its national and international obligations.

Luxembourg

Bilateral and economic relations, especially in the financial services and funds sectors, remain strong between Luxembourg and South Africa.

German-speaking countries

Bilateral relations between South Africa and the German-speaking countries cover various issues, including investment and trade, science and technology, defence, culture, the environment, tourism, sport, development cooperation and energy, but also entail multilateral and trilateral engagements.

Germany

In July 2014, DIRCO presented a discussion forum with Mr Markus Meckel, former Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic and Member of Parliament after German unification, to discuss the "The Fall of the Berlin Wall and its impact on current events in Europe, Eastern Europe and Germany's role globally."

In November 2014, The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, hosted and co-chaired together with the German Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the eighth session of the South Africa-Germany Bi-National Commission (BNC)

in Pretoria. The BNC consists of nine working committees that report to it and continue meeting between sessions under supervision of lead departments in implementing outcomes of earlier BNCs:

- Foreign and Security Policy Committee
- Culture Committee
- Defence Committee
- Development Cooperation Committee
- Economic Committee
- Environment Committee
- Labour and Social Affairs Committee
- Science and Technology Committee
- Vocational Education and Training Committee

During the BNC, the Ministers reflected on developments in Africa, Europe and the Middle East, where South Africa and Germany have common interest.

Germany is a good partner in terms of offering South Africa technical assistance in agriculture.

Switzerland

Relations between South Africa and Switzerland are based on equal partnership. There are some 200 Swiss companies in South Africa, employing around 36 000 South Africans.

Consultations at the level of deputy ministers of international relations and a Joint Economic Commission at the level of Ministers of trade occur annually.

Switzerland has granted South Africa special status on the Swiss foreign-policy agenda as one of the focus areas for Swiss interests outside Europe.

Switzerland actively contributes to numerous development assistance programmes in South Africa and elsewhere in Africa.

Switzerland remains South Africa's major trading and investment partner in the European Free Trade Association.

Austria

South Africa continues to enjoy cordial bilateral relations with Austria, focused primarily on economic exchanges. South Africa ranks sixth among Austria's overseas trading partners, and is by far Austria's major trading partner in Africa. Some 400 Austrian companies are engaged in trade relations with South African companies. More than 50 Austrian companies have direct investments in South Africa.

Nordic countries

South Africa enjoys good relations with all the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Flowing from the strong grassroots support in these countries for democratisation in South Africa, relations have

been established in virtually every field at both public and official levels. The scope of Nordic development cooperation is broad and has benefited civil society and government.

Relations in the international arena have seen close cooperation on multilateral issues. The Nordic countries are strong supporters of Nepal and are directly involved in conflict resolution and reconstruction projects in Africa. This was reinforced by the signing of the Declaration of Intent on Partnerships in Africa in June 2008, which laid a framework for future trilateral cooperation.

Denmark

Denmark was a very strong supporter of the anti-apartheid struggle and a major force in sanctions and disinvestment. The Danish Government is focusing on renewable energy development in South Africa. This programme has been developed in response to the commitments made in the MoU of October 2011 between Denmark and South Africa and to the Declaration of Intent on the South African Renewable Initiative (SARI) to which Denmark is a co-signatory.

The programme has been designed with the intention of assisting South Africa in implementing its policy of developing a low-carbon economy with special focus on electricity supply.

Norway

In December 2014, the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Mr Luwellyn Landers co-chaired with his Norwegian counterpart Mr Hans Brattskar, the second South Africa-Norway High Level Consultations (HLC). The South Africa-Norway HLC was established in 2013, to expand relations and stimulate bilateral trade and investment between the two countries at the Deputy Minister level.

The second session of the HLC took place within the context of solid structured bilateral relations between the two countries and the commitment to enhance the North-South dialogue. South Africa and Norway share deep historical relations because of Norway's support for the anti-apartheid struggle. In recognition of this relationship Norway has decided to jointly celebrate the 200 years of their Constitution together with South Africa's 20 years of freedom under the theme: "200 + 20".

Finland

South Africa attaches great importance to its Nordic partners, and this visit provided a platform to further consolidate and strengthen the already cordial relations between South

Africa and Finland. The meeting also served to deepen Africa-Nordic cooperation.

Sweden

In May 2014, DIRCO hosted South African students who received scholarships from Sweden. The students travelled to Sweden to commence their studies in August 2014. The students from across South Africa will pursue their masters studies in a wide range of fields, including sustainable energy, entrepreneurship, global health, international human rights law, child and gender studies and sustainable development. The Swedish Institute funds the programme that offers 10 scholarships a year over a period of three years.

The scholarship programme for 30 students to pursue post-graduate studies in Sweden was agreed to at the Eighth Session of the South Africa-Sweden Bi-national Commission (BNC), which took place in October 2013 in Pretoria. The BNC is co-chaired by South Africa's Deputy President and Sweden's Deputy Prime Minister and takes place on a biennial basis. Bilateral relations between South Africa and Sweden are excellent and have a strong historical basis with Sweden supporting South Africa's struggle for freedom and democracy.

Mediterranean Europe

France

France is a significant trade, investment, tourism and development cooperation partner for South Africa. About 250 French companies have invested in South Africa and employ around 300 000 people.

South Africa will count on France's support in ensuring the effective implementation of the United Nations Resolution 2033, which provides for closer coordination between the Security Council and the AUPSC.

The Kingdom of Spain remains South Africa's strategic partner by continuing cooperation to promote trade and investment, and preserve peace and prosperity in Africa and the world.

In June 2014, President Jacob Zuma congratulated His Majesty, King Felipe VI, on His Majesty's investiture as King of Spain.

President Zuma also expressed his gratitude to His Majesty, King Carlos I, for steering Spain from military dictatorship to democracy and for his personal contribution and mutual support to the further advancement of South Africa-Spain bilateral relations during his reign as King of Spain.

Italy

South Africa's relations with Italy are cordial.

Spain

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Greece

South Africa and Greece enjoy traditional and close ties of friendship and cooperation as well as a convergence of views and cooperation on various regional and international issues in general.

Bilateral relations between the two countries continue to grow in a number of strategic and mutually beneficial areas.

Cyprus

South Africa has excellent and long-standing bilateral relations with Cyprus. It has maintained strong ties with Cyprus, partly because of the large and influential Cypriot community in South Africa, of about 60 000 people.

Portugal

Bilateral relations between South Africa and Portugal are cordial and cover many areas, underpinned by the High-level Political Consultative Forum, which provides a platform for the two countries to explore the deepening of relations across the spectrum of South Africa's national priorities, political cooperation, the strengthening of trade and investment and development cooperation.

Bilateral relations between both countries have not reached their full potential especially considering the historical and current political and cultural links between the two countries.

Eastern Europe

The Eastern Europe region is of crucial importance to South Africa's strategic objectives, straddling a wide spectrum of political and economic interests.

The region is well endowed with strategic commodities and minerals that are of vital significance to South Africa's economy.

Cooperation in gas and oil and the peaceful use of nuclear energy can go a long way towards alleviating South Africa's energy needs.

Poland

Polish-South African relations entered a new phase after the fall of apartheid. Poland is regarded as one of the countries in central Europe with great strategic importance to South Africa.

Poland is not only one of the strongest role players in the political and economic arenas in central Europe, but also an emerging power in the EU.

In May 2014, DIRCO, in collaboration with the South African Institute of International Relations (SAIIA), the Embassy of the Republic of Poland to South Africa and the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM), hosted a discussion forum entitled "Poland and South Africa towards 2030."

The 20th anniversary of democracy in South Africa and the 25th anniversary of democracy in Poland were both celebrated in 2014. The discussion forum reflected on mutual interest, which will enhance cooperation between South Africa and Poland for a better future within a regional and global framework.

Russian Federation

South Africa regards the Russian Federation as an important strategic partner and close bilateral and multilateral ties exist between the two countries.

With the dissolution of the USSR, South Africa became the first African state to recognise the independence of the Russian Federation. Full diplomatic relations were established between South Africa and the Russian Federation in February 1992.

In August 2014, President Jacob Zuma undertook a working visit to the Russian Federation. The visit came after the successful working visit of President Putin to Durban, South Africa, and President Zuma's working visit to Sochi, Russian Federation, in March and May 2013 respectively, as well as Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane's successful working visit to the Russian Federation in September 2013, and the 2014 meeting on the margins of the BRICS Summit in Brazil.

During the bilateral talks, the two Presidents assessed the state of bilateral cooperation, the status and implementation of Intergovernmental Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) agreements, key trade and investment issues, and the 12th ITEC Session hosted by South Africa during the course of 2014. The visit further strengthened the bilateral relations with a view to consolidating and opening new avenues towards job creation, skills development, exchange and transfer of technology and trade and investment.

The two Presidents focused on developments on international issues of mutual concern, including, the situation in Syria, and the Israel-Palestine matter, as well as developments in Ukraine, which is Russia's neighbour.

In November 2014, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, hosted the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation, Mr Sergey Donskoy, in Pretoria. The two Ministers co-chaired the 12th Session of the Joint Intergovernmental Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) between South Africa and the Russian Federation. The ITEC is a structured mechanism aimed at improving trade and economic relations between South Africa and the Russian Federation, as well as investment, critical skills development and technology exchanges.

Belarus

In September 2014, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, received the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, Vladimir Makei, for bilateral consultations in Pretoria.

South Africa and Belarus marked the beginning of an important relationship when the two countries established a working group to facilitate bilateral cooperation in agriculture.

