

SOUTH AFRICA YEARBOOK 2017/18

International Relations



According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, the President is ultimately responsible for the country's 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.

DIRCO'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 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.

The National Development Plan (NDP) is the overarching apex policy framework that guides the work of the fifth administration. In the area of international relations, the NDP states:

"... in order for South Africa to achieve its national goals of eradicating poverty, lowering inequality, creating jobs and making the transition to a resilient carbon economy, foreign relations must be driven by the country's domestic economic, political and social demands, as well as our regional, continental and global obligations."

In pursuance of this injunction, DIRCO has translated the NDP goals into a strategic programme that seeks to:

- sustain political, economic and social relations
- strengthen political and economic integration and development of the Southern African Development Community (SADC)
- consolidate the African Agenda
- strengthen and consolidate South-South relations
- leverage relations with the North in advancement of national and continental priorities and the agenda of the South
- advocate for the reform and strengthening of the global system of governance.

South Africa maintains diplomatic relations with countries and international organisations through 124 missions in 107 countries abroad, and through the accreditation of more than 160 countries and international organisations resident in South Africa.

South Africa's diplomatic and consular missions implement the country's foreign policy to enhance its international profile and serve as strategic mechanisms for the achievement of national interest.

In addition, training and policy analysis remain of strategic importance for the execution of DIRCO's mandate.

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 (ARF) Act, 2001 (Act 51 of 2001), establishes an ARF 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 of the Republic of South Africa of 1996.

Enhancing economic diplomacy

In anticipation of growth in the African and Asian regions, South Africa took a conscious decision to expand and strengthen its diplomatic missions in the two regions.

As South Africa consolidated its political relations on the continent by expanding its diplomatic footprint through 47 embassies, high commissions and consulates general, South Africa has also rapidly advanced her economic relations in Africa, through the expansion of its trade volumes, investment portfolio and economic relations across the length and breadth of the continent.

South Africa has grown her bilateral trade portfolio with countries on the continent from R11,4 billion in 1994 to the current R429 billion.

This has resulted in Africa becoming a prime destination of South African-originated goods and services, especially value-added goods, which assists in contributing to the R198-billion trade surplus, creating much-needed jobs and opportunities for our people within the manufacturing, retail, fast-moving

Introducing the Ubuntu brand

Ubuntu magazine

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) introduced its quarterly magazine Ubuntu – South Africa's Public Diplomacy in Action, in August 2012 to:

- communicate with and educate stakeholders on South Africa's foreign policy positions, achievements, objectives and goals
- give in-depth analysis and information on key departmental issues ranging from current affairs, bilateral and multilateral milestones, upcoming key events, as well as international work done by other government departments, business and parastatals.

The high-quality glossy magazine spreads South Africa's foreign policy message quarterly around the world. Its footprint extends across the globe. The magazine is also available online on www.dirco.gov.za.

Annual Ubuntu Awards

The Ubuntu Awards, introduced in 2015, are aimed at recognising South African industry leaders and eminent persons for their distinguished service and contribution towards promoting South Africa's national interests and values across the world.

Awards are given in various categories to organisations/individuals who have through excellence, innovation, creativity, inventiveness, social responsibility or patriotism distinguished themselves as true ambassadors of South Africa.

Ubuntu Radio

Ubuntu Radio was launched in October 2013 as an online, 24-hour radio station aimed at enhancing communication on South Africa's foreign policy.

The first of its kind on the African continent, it is accessible on the Internet at www.ubuntu-radio.com and on DSTV Audio Bouquet Channel 888. The objective of Ubuntu Radio is to create a platform to exchange views and opinions by various stakeholders.

consumer goods, financial services and transport/logistics sectors. It is also worth noting that the SADC accounts for approximately 80% of our total trade with the continent.

With regard to Asia and the Middle East, South Africa's trade and investment in these regions have grown considerably and continue to do so. In 1994, trade with Asia and the Middle East combined was approximately R45 billion and has increased to approximately R760 billion for Asia and R116 billion with the

Middle East. South Africa can achieve a trillion rand trade with this region by 2019.

There is a direct correlation between the growth of South Africa's diplomatic missions and the phenomenal expansion of its trade and investment relations on both the African continent and in Asia and the Middle East. The same applies to the Americas and Europe. With additional economic diplomacy efforts and enhanced national coordination, South African trade with the world can reach R2 trillion by 2019.

As South Africa explores new markets, it continues to maintain close economic ties with the industrialised economies of the North, which provide, among others, preferential market access to some of South Africa's exports. Enhancing the economic and political dialogue is an important part of South Africa's economic diplomacy strategy as they remain a primary source of foreign direct investment (FDI) and official development assistance (ODA) flows into South Africa.

DIRCO also uses international summits - Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS), Group of Twenty (G20) SADC, Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) as well as State Visits and Bilateral Consultation mechanisms to promote the trade and investment case for South Africa.

Budget, funding and trade

DIRCO's budget allocation for the 2017/18 financial year was R6.4 billion.

With regard to Asia and the Middle East, South Africa's trade and investment in these regions have grown considerably and continue to do so. In 1994, trade with Asia and the Middle East combined was approximately R45 billion and has increased to approximately R760 billion for Asia and R116 billion with the Middle East. Working together with other government departments, DIRCO can achieve a trillion rand trade with this region by 2019.

Foreign policy

South Africa's foreign policy outlook is based on South Africa's foreign policy outlook is based on its commitment to the values and ideals of Pan-Africanism, solidarity with people of the South and the need to cooperate with all peace-loving people across

the globe in pursuit of shared prosperity and a just, equitable and rules-based international order.

Thus, the country's diplomacy of Ubuntu continues to place cooperation with partners as the thrust of its foreign policy endeavours above all forms of competition. South Africa therefore strive to address its domestic imperatives as enunciated in the NDP and national interest while taking into cognisance the needs and aspirations of others.

South Africa's diplomatic efforts over the past two decades include conflict resolution, prevention, mediation, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Global Governance and Continental Agenda

Global Governance

South Africa participates in a rules-based multilateral system to achieve global political and socio-economic stability and security.

Multilateralism, and by implication the commitment to a rules-based, just, and equitable international order, remains a focal point of South Africa's foreign policy. Consequently, South Africa will continue to engage the multilateral system, particularly the UN, through its agencies, funds, programmes and processes, to advance South Africa's foreign policy priorities.

These engagements take into account that the multilateral system still does not fully reflect global political and economic realities and is in need of reform. A key priority for South Africa is to regain lost momentum that would accelerate the reform of the UN Security Council (UNSC), as well as to advance the reform of the broader global governance architecture with a view to improving its representivity and focus its responsiveness to the needs of, and challenges faced by, developing states.

The current unpredictable global environment poses a number of risks to the UN and the global governance system, particularly as it relates to, among others, the dynamics within the UNSC on issues of peace and security (including the situation in the Middle East), promotion and protection of human rights, funding for multilateral processes and honouring commitments to enable national implementation of multilateral decisions such as the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs) as well as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Ensuring sustainable development in the current global environment will require concerted engagement in the UN system and other multilateral structures such as the G20, on economic growth and the improvement of social well-being and infrastructure through increased trade and investment as well as the fair and equitable movement of goods and services.

Furthermore, in the wake of numerous terror attacks across the world, countering international terrorism remains a priority on the agenda of the UN, particularly with regard to the abuse of cyber platforms for propaganda, recruitment and planning of attacks, radicalising of the youth and inciting extremism leading to terrorist attacks.

Development, human rights, security and international law are promoted through international forums such as the UN and its agencies:

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 peace and security and development agenda and address underdevelopment, social integration, full employment and decent work for all and the eradication of poverty globally.

Through its 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 (UNGA) and the UNSC

Then President Jacob Zuma attended the 72nd Session of the UNGA from 19 to 25 September 2017. The theme for the session was “Focusing on People: Striving for Peace and a Decent Life for all on a Sustainable Planet”. This was the first General Debate for the newly appointed Secretary-General,

António Guterres, who started his term on 1 January 2017. Mr Guterres identified his major priority as the achievement of sustainable peace and security through conflict prevention by establishing a “culture of prevention” in the UN – which South Africa fully supports.

For South Africa, this General Debate coincided with the centenary anniversary of Mr Oliver Reginald Tambo. Then President Zuma hosted an event on 20 September 2017, at the UN, in honour of this global icon of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa.

In addition to addressing the General Debate, he also signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 20 September 2017. Signature of the treaty reflects South Africa’s continued commitment towards the achievement of a world free from the threat posed by nuclear weapons and ensuring that nuclear energy is used for peaceful purposes only.

South Africa has been elected overwhelmingly to serve on the UNSC for the term 2019 – 2020. This will be South Africa’s third term on the UNSC, having previously served in 2007 to 2008 and 2011 to 2012. South Africa’s tenure on the UNSC will be dedicated to the legacy of former President Nelson Mandela and his commitment to peace.

South Africa will also use its experience in the prioritisation of diplomacy, mediation, the pacific settlement of disputes, conflict resolution and peacebuilding through inclusive dialogue and negotiations with the ultimate aim of supporting parties to achieve sustainable peace, national unity and reconciliation; will also actively contribute to achieving a Africa at peace by 2063 by pursuing and promoting Africa’s goal of “silencing the guns by 2020”, but also to promote and achieve peace in all the regions of the world.

In continuing its legacy from the two previous terms on the UNSC, South Africa will advocate for closer cooperation between the UNSC and the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (AUPSC).

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.

As a member of the supplier’s regimes and of the Africa Group and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the importance of non-proliferation is promoted, taking into account that export controls should not become the means whereby developing countries are denied access to advanced technologies required for their development.

In seeking solutions to intractable disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control challenges in the international arena, a bridge-building approach has been followed in order to seek realistic and achievable solutions. Whilst dealing with challenging issues from a pragmatic perspective, due recognition has been given to the role that civil society can play in partnership with the governments of the world, especially in the context of seeking solutions to the divergent views that often characterise international negotiations.

UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

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

Having served at a strategic juncture during the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development from 2013 – 2015, South Africa was re-elected on 21 October 2015 to continue its role on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. South Africa, in July 2018 concluded its tenure as Vice-President of ECOSOC and as council member.

South Africa regards sustainable development as a collective opportunity and responsibility that can be achieved through multilateral cooperation, and will continue its active role in the ECOSOC mandated processes to address the follow-up and review of financing for development outcomes and the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, all of which are crucial to the realisation of the SDGs.

South Africa further actively participates in the functional commissions of ECOSOC such as the Commission for Social

Development, the Commission on the Status of Women as well as the Commission on Population and Development (of which it is a member for the term 2015 – 2018).

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 is currently serving on the organisation's Executive Board (for the term 2015 to 2019). South Africa is also serving on the following UNESCO bodies until 2017:

- the International Bureau of Education
- the Intergovernmental Council on the Management of Social Transformation (MOST)
- the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS)
- the International Coordinating Council of the Programme on Man and Biosphere (MAB).

Since its return to UNESCO in 1994, South Africa has 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)
- International Convention Against Doping in Sport (November 2006)
- 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 (December 2003) and the Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage (May 2015).

Since South Africa ratified the World Heritage Convention in 1997, it has inscribed 10 world heritage sites under the convention, namely the:

- Fossil Hominid Sites of South Africa (1999)
- Robben Island Museum (1999)
- iSimangaliso Wetland Park (1999)
- Maloti-Drakensberg Park (2000)
- Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape (2003)

- Cape Floral Region Protected Areas (2004)
- Vredefort Dome (2005)
- Richtersveld Cultural and Botanical Landscape (2007).
- #Khomani Cultural Landscape (2017).
- Barberton Makhonjwa Mountains (2018).

The #Khomani Cultural Landscape was inscribed as South Africa's ninth World Heritage Site, the 1 073rd world heritage site in 167 countries, at the 41st session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Poland in July 2007.

The landscape, which covers an area of 959 100ha in Dawid Kruiper District Municipality covers the entire Kalahari Gemsbok National Park and forms part of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park which is bordered by Botswana in the east and Namibia in the west.

The boundary is large enough to accommodate a reasonably complete representation of the landscape values, features and processes which convey the special way in which the #Khomani people were linked with the land.

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.

The Barberton Makhonjwa Mountains were added to the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's prestigious World Heritage List in July 2018, becoming the 10th World Heritage Site for South Africa.

The site comprises 40% of the Barberton Greenstone Belt, one of the world's oldest geological structures. The Barberton Makhonjwa Mountains represent the best-preserved succession of volcanic and sedimentary rock dating back 3,25 to 3,6 billion years.

Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs

South Africa played a leadership role in several intergovernmental processes at the UN pertaining to norms and standard setting in international human rights and humanitarian law, law of international protection for asylum seekers, refugees, including migrants, the empowerment of women and gender equality, the protection of the rights of the child and persons with disabilities, as well as food security and nutrition.

To this end, the South African delegation to this system took leadership roles such as chairing relevant intergovernmental working groups, initiating and negotiating flagship resolutions, influencing as well as impacting the agenda setting in these areas.

In the above context, the most important initiative entails the leadership role in the work of the Ad-hoc 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.

UN-South Africa Strategic Cooperation Framework (UNSCF)

The UNSCF 2013 – 2017 is the overall framework for the work of the UN system in South Africa. DIRCO and the UN Country Team developed the UNSCF in 2012 through a participatory and consultative process.

The UNSCF includes the presentation of the situation in South Africa overall, as reflected in the New Growth Path, the NDP: Vision for 2030, as well as the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) and the 2010 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Country Report. These informed the identification of the four pillars of UN cooperation:

- inclusive growth and decent work
- sustainable development
- human capabilities
- governance and participation.

The UNSCF also considers the role of South Africa on the continent and globally. The UNSCF has been extended to 31 March 2019 to align it with South Africa's MTSF and fiscal cycle.

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, as well as in its Executive Board meetings.

South Africa also participates in the WHO's Regional Committee for Africa, which convenes annually after the WHA to reflect on the decisions taken at the WHA (particularly those

relevant to the continent) and plan for the following year's WHA.

Through its participation in these structures, South Africa contributes to setting international norms and standards on key issues regarding global and public health such as:

- the implementation of the International Health Regulations
- addressing antimicrobial resistance
- the fight against HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria
- building resilient healthcare systems in developing states
- ensuring access to medicines
- achieving Universal Health Coverage (National Health Insurance in South Africa)
- contributing to economic growth through health employment.

Group of 20

South Africa has been a permanent member of the G20 since its inception in 1999 following the Asian financial crises.

The G20 was established to increase multilateral cooperation for the recovery of the global economy, to bring stability to the global financial system, to promote long-term sustainable growth and to strengthen global economic governance.

The G20 economies account for 85% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 80% of world trade and two-thirds of the world's population. Since the escalation of the G20 to Leaders' Summit level in 2008, the agenda has significantly expanded to include issues of geo-political, development and trade significance. South Africa's participation in the G20 has sought to provide strategic foresight in establishing an economic and financial international policy platform that will drive and negotiate the best possible outcomes for South Africa, Africa and the developing world.

South Africa has been the permanent Co-Chair of the Development Working Group (DWG) since 2010 for the promotion of national and continental priorities. A key priority has been to ensure that the scourge of Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) receives priority and for the World Customs Organisation (WCO) to submit a report on trade mis-invoicing that was commissioned by G20 Leaders in 2016. Addressing the scourge of IFFs has the potential to unlock billions of dollars that could be utilised to fund Africa and the developing worlds' development.

In addition, South Africa has consistently advanced G20

support for industrialisation in Africa and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the implementation of the G20 Partnership with Africa and enhanced G20 support to developing countries by providing the means of implementation for achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. These initiatives are aimed at positively impacting the development trajectory of Africa and the developing world and contribute positively to achieving the global commitment of leaving no one behind.

The G20 is unique in its composition of countries of the North and South and therefore as a collective body tends to carry significant profile and influence. South Africa, as the only permanent African member of the G20, has used its participation to advance national priorities, the African agenda of sustainable development, inclusive growth, the reduction of inequality and the promotion of a just economic world order.

In the future, the strategic trajectory of the G20 is anticipated to transform from a crisis response mechanism focusing on short-term policies to one of long-term governance that shapes medium- to long-term policies, and will solidify its role as the premier forum for international economic governance.

South Africa also works together closely with the following international bodies and organisations:

- World Trade Organisation (WTO)
- World Economic Forum (WEF)
- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
- International Labour Organisation (ILO)
- World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

The country continues to engage with key global economic institutions such as the WTO, the OECD, the ILO and WIPO to ensure that South Africa benefits from trade, investment, industrialization and innovation to address the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment as espoused in the National Development Plan.

South Africa pursues a system that is sensitive to the needs of the poorest, while leaving policy space at national level to address the development challenges of the South and Africa.

Continental Agenda African Union

The establishment of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 by 32 countries in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia was intended to continue the fight against colonialism and apartheid on the African Continent, promote unity and solidarity, safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States and coordinate and intensify cooperation for development.

Following the realization of the objectives that were set during the advent of the OAU, particularly the mission to emancipate the African Continent from the shackles of colonial and apartheid rule, the AU was formed and brought to force in 2002, wherein 54 countries agreed to chart a new path for the Continent, more specifically its economic development.

This new path which was set in 2002 by the AU was underpinned in the determination to tackle and address the multifaceted social, economic and political challenges, through forging an integrated Continent that can ultimately realize its full economic potential and play its rightful role in the global economy.

To this end, the AU is making progressive strides and moving towards the right direction in its mission to address the long-standing challenges of underdevelopment, and consequent poverty, unemployment and inequality on the continent.

The AU recognised the need to develop a long-term strategy resulting in the adoption of Agenda 2063, in January 2015 by the Heads of State and Government during the 24th Ordinary Session in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Agenda 2063 has identified 7 cardinal aspirations which provide an indication what the Continent should achieve by the year 2063:

1. A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development;
2. integrated Continent, politically united based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance;
3. An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law;
4. A peaceful and secure Africa;
5. An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics;

6. An Africa where development is people driven, unleashing the potential of its women and youth; and
7. Africa as a strong united and influential global player and partner

Appreciating the need that the realization of the objectives set by Agenda 2063 should be fulfilled; there was a formulation its First Ten-Year Implementation Plan.

Thus far, there's has been progress made in this regard, as evidenced by the adoption of a (a) Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons in Africa, (b) Member States have committed to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the (b) Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) has been launched.

These flagship programmes of Agenda 2063 are the catalyst which will ensure the acceleration of integration within the Continent and will further enable the African countries to maximise the economic opportunities, particularly trade amongst them.

The objective of the AfCFTA is to promote intra-African trade and offer an opportunity to create larger economies of scale, a bigger market and improve the prospects of the African Continent to attract investment. In addition, the AfCFTA will bring together the 55 Member States of the AU, covering a market of more than 1.2 billion people, including a growing middle class and a combined gross domestic of more than US\$3.4 trillion.

Furthermore, the AU has noted that in order to successfully move the Continent forward, it has to transform the manner in which it conducts its business. By mid-2018, the AU was undergoing a rigorous process of reviewing how it had been operating, through engaging the recommendations made during the Institutional Reform process. The successful implementation of the agreement borne out of this process would ensure that the AU becomes more effective and efficient in carrying out its mandate.

The Republic of South Africa, as a Member State of the AU, remains committed to the organisation and it has demonstrated its desire to ensure that the AU succeeds. Currently, South Africa is hosting the Pan African Parliament (PAP), African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), amongst others. Additionally,

the country continues to play a steering role in matters related to Peace and Security on the Continent.

In January 2018, then President Zuma led the South African Government delegation to the 30th Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU IN Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It was held under the theme "Winning the Fight Against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation".

The Summit took a number of important decisions that demonstrated the readiness of AU member states to fully implement the commitments made in the continental organisation's flagship programme, Agenda 2063, relating to, amongst other things, the sustenance of peace and security; free movement of people, good and services; and improving political and democratic governance on the continent.

The summit elected President Paul Kagame of Rwanda as Chair of the AU for the year 2018, taking over from President Alpha Conde of the Republic of Guinea. South Africa will continue to work with the leadership of the AU. South Africa was elected to serve as one of the Vice Chairs of the Bureau of the AU, representing the Southern African region. The other member states of the Bureau are Libya (North Africa), Republic of Congo (Central Africa) and the Republic of Guinea (West Africa).

The summit emphasised the need for continuous engagement and cooperation between the AU and the UN. In this regard, the summit re-appointed then President Zuma to continue his role of championing this initiative. Then President Zuma met the Secretary General of the UN, Mr Antonio Guterres, on the margins of the Summit. The two leaders re-committed themselves to fostering closer cooperation between the AU and the UN.

A dinner to commemorate the centenary celebrations of former President Nelson Mandela was also hosted on the sidelines summit where he thanked the AU and its member states for keeping Mandela's legacy alive.

In March 2018, Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies and his Deputy Bulelani Magwanishe attended the AU Ministers of Trade (AMOT) two-day meeting in Kigali, Rwanda. Delegates reached an agreement to establish the AfCFTA which is envisaged to offer opportunities to create large economies of

scale.

The AfCFTA, also offers an opportunity to create a bigger market and to improve the prospects of the African continent's ability to attract investment. The ministers approved, for submitting to the Extra-Ordinary Summit of the AU Heads of State and Government, the agreement establishing the AfCFTA as well as the Protocols on Trade in Goods and Trade in Services that will form part of the agreement. They also approved a Work Programme for concluding the outstanding issues for implementation that will start after the Extra-Ordinary Summit of the AU Heads of State and Government that will take place on 21 March 2018 in Kigali.

Negotiations of the AfCFTA were launched in Johannesburg, in June 2015.

South Africa is committed to a coordinated strategy to boost intra-Africa trade and to build an integrated market in Africa that will see a market of over 1 billion people with a GDP of approximately US\$2,6 trillion. Beyond the Tripartite Free Trade Area, the AfCFTA will provide new export opportunities for South African products and services in West Africa and North Africa.

The AfCFTA is being pursued under the development integration approach. This approach combines market integration with industrial and infrastructure development to address Africa's productive capacity and supply side constraints.

The AfCFTA is also expected to facilitate the movement of goods and services among African countries. It will also result in harmonisation of customs documentation and processes thus enhancing trade facilitation.

Peace and Security Council

South Africa continues to promote peace and stability on the African continent through preventative diplomacy, peace-making, peace-building and peacekeeping efforts. In this context, the country's approach to peacekeeping resonates strongly with the AU's aspirational goal adopted by the AU Assembly African Heads of State and Government on 25 May 2013 in Addis Ababa of "Silencing the Guns by the year 2020".

The AU's flagship project on addressing peace and security issues in the context of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), is built around structures, objectives,

principles and values, as well as decision-making processes relating to the prevention, management and resolution of crises and conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD) on the continent.

Furthermore, the AUPSC remains the main pillar of the APSA and is supported by various structures, including the AUC, the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System, the African Standby Force and the Peace Fund.

The relationship between the AU and the regional economic communities/regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution (RECs/RMs) remains crucial for the success of the APSA.

South Africa has actively participated, through both bilateral and multilateral efforts, to resolve some of the continent's pressing conflict areas.

These countries include: Lesotho, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Burundi, South Sudan, Somalia, Central African Republic, Mali and Libya. South Africa also remains engaged in the peace and security dynamics of the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, the Great Lakes Region and the Lake Chad Basin.

South Africa will continue to play its part in conflict resolution in these countries and respective regions. In addition, South Africa reaffirms its continued solidarity to assist the people of Western Sahara in pursuit of their inalienable right to self-determination and decolonisation. South Africa remains steadfast in its rejection of all acts of terrorism and extremism that have increasingly affected countries on our continent, contributing negatively to internal instability.

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.

South Africa's development is intertwined with that of the southern Africa region and the African continent at large. The country's efforts at ramping up industrialisation should be viewed within the overall framework of the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap as approved by the SADC Extra-Ordinary Summit in April 2015. South Africa seeks to industrialise the regional and continental economies in order to develop its own manufacturing capacity.

In addition, the country seeks to radically alter the colonial/post-colonial pattern where Africa was a supplier of raw materials. Africa should produce value-added goods for exports into the global economy.

It is only in this way that Africa can address the paradox of a rich-resource continent inhabited by a poverty-stricken population, and make a decisive break with the past.

New Partnership for Africa's Development

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 communications technology (ICT).

South Africa, as one of the initiating countries, played a key role in the establishment of NEPAD and the 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.

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:

- EU-AU Strategic Partnership
- Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)
- Group of Seven Most Industrialised Nations plus Russia (G8)
- Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD)
- New Asian-African Strategic Partnership (NAASP)
- 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 have improved the quality of life for millions of Africans.

Southern African Development Community

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 SADC, its mandate changed to the following:

- Promoting and defending peace and security
- Evolving common values, systems and institutions
- 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 services
- Achieving the unification of tariffs and currencies
- Establishing a free trade zone.

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

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

SACU held its fifth SACU Summit on 23 June 2017 in Eswatini and among the key issues discussed was the need for SACU to pursue regional economic development for the benefit of its member states through the implementation of a six point work programme.

In addition, the summit agreed to review elements of the SACU Agreement to facilitate implementation of this work programme with a view to:

- review and develop a suitable architecture for tariff-setting, rebates, duty drawbacks and trade remedies;
- review of the Revenue Sharing Formula and the long-term management of the Common Revenue Pool;
- establish a Stabilisation Fund and explore the feasibility of a financing mechanism for regional industrialisation;
- identify financing options for regional projects; and
- develop public policy interventions to promote industrial development and value chains.

The 37th SADC Summit took place from 9 to 20 August

2017 under the theme: “Partnering with the Private sector in Developing Industrial and Regional Value Chains”. South Africa took over from Eswatini as the chair of SADC from August 2017 to August 2018.

During its tenure as Chair, South Africa aims to harness the participation and involvement of the regional private sector in the implementation of the SADC Regional Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap.

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 RECs of 600 million people and a 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, which will focus on the following six priority sectors: energy, transport, ICT/communications, water, tourism and meteorology.

South Africa has played a critical role in promoting peace, security and political stability in the SADC Region including participation in peace missions. This includes creating an environment conducive to regional political integration, facilitation, and the promotion of democracy and good governance.

As Chair of SADC, South Africa co-chaired with Angola, Chair of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation several Summits convened to deal with the political and security situation in the Kingdom of Lesotho, Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Madagascar.

In the Kingdom of Lesotho, South Africa has contributed personnel experts to the South African Development Community Preventive Mission in the Kingdom of Lesotho (SAPMIL), deployed to strengthen peace, security and implement reforms, Constitutional, Security, Parliamentary, Media and Public Sector forms.

Development partners

South Africa has key partnerships such as FOCAC, 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 NAM, G77+China, Africa-South America Summit and the NAASP. These forums have demonstrated that they are trusted allies and partners in South Africa’s aim for a better Africa in a better world

Relations with countries of the South remain strong and South Africa’s Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) membership has yielded benefits for the country and is expected to do so for the rest of the continent. Efforts continue within BRICS on common objectives, including addressing challenges in respective regions and the world at large. BRICS also continues to provide alternative market access as well as strategic political support in pursuit of a just and equitable world.

In the same vein, South Africa continues to support the consolidation of the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum. IBSA serves as an intimate platform from which to coordinate matters of common interest and concern, and to promote development through the IBSA Fund for the Alleviation of Poverty and Hunger.

The Indian Ocean region is of vital importance and of growing geostrategic significance. South Africa views the IORA as the pre-eminent regional organisation linking Africa, the Middle East and Asia via the Indian Ocean. The association is growing in stature and prominence, and South Africa is chairing the IORA in its 20th year of existence from October 2017 to 2019.

Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa trade alliance (BRICS)

Since its formation, BRICS has seen its work evolve and expand from its initial economic mandate to also include a focus on global political-security issues.

As such, the grouping is a strong and vocal promoter and supporter of multilateralism with the UN playing the central role in dealing with global challenges and threats and of the WTO as the institution that sets multilateral trade rules.

This position of the BRICS was again reinforced by the BRICS

Leaders during the 10th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg.

In its 10 years of existence, BRICS has achieved a number of milestones that clearly illustrate that the Grouping has significantly strengthened and delivered on its agenda. The implementation of the “Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership” (2015), is vigorously pursued and encourages measures that support greater participation, value addition and upward mobility in the global value chains of BRICS firms, including through the preservation of policy space to promote industrial development.

BRICS’ commitment to the enhancement of intra-BRICS trade, investment, and financial cooperation is further strengthened and supported through the establishment of the Contingency Reserve Arrangement (CRA) and the New Development Bank (NDB) that focusses on financing infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS countries, as well as in Emerging Markets and Developing Economies (EMDEs).

In addition, the NDB’s Africa Regional Centre (ARC) was established in Johannesburg, and will furthermore streamline financing projects in South Africa and in the region.

The forum also derives benefits through the BRICS Track II institutions such as the BRICS Business Council; BRICS Think-Tank Council; and the BRICS Inter-Bank Cooperation Mechanism.

People-to-people engagements have also flourished and various forums for business people, academics, civil society, youth, and parliamentarians have been established.

Initiatives such as the BRICS Film Festival, Cultural Festival and Sports Games are exciting highlights of the annual calendar of events.

South Africa assumed the rotational Chairship of BRICS on 1 January 2018 and successfully hosted the 10th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg from 25 to 27 July 2018, under the theme: “BRICS in Africa: Collaboration for Inclusive Growth and Shared Prosperity in the 4th Industrial Revolution.”

As part of its Chairship, South Africa proposed new areas of BRICS cooperation, which also formed the outcomes of the 10th Summit. These include:

- 4th Industrial Revolution: As part of the key deliverables, the BRICS Leaders endorsed the establishment of a BRICS

Working Group on the 4th Industrial Revolution through the BRICS Partnership on New Industrial Revolution (PartNIR).

- BRICS Networks of Science Parks, Technology Business Incubators and SMEs: In further support of the above point, BRICS Networks of Science Parks, Technology Business Incubators and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, is to be established.
- Vaccine Centre: A BRICS Vaccine Research Centre is to be established in South Africa to address common challenges in health.
- Women’s Forum: To promote inclusive growth in the development of the BRICS societies, the Forum’s work in establishing a BRICS Women’s Forum and the BRICS Women’s Business Alliance, is ongoing.
- Peacekeeping: BRICS leaders recognized the importance of UN peacekeeping for the maintenance of international peace and security and the contribution of BRICS countries to UN Peacekeeping.
- BRICS Working Group on Tourism: In order to increase economic development and people-to-people relations to further grow intra-BRICS tourism, a BRICS Working Group on Tourism is to be established.
- Foreign Affairs Spokespersons: Work is ongoing in the establishment of the BRICS Foreign Affairs Spokespersons Platform.

In addition, the following agreements were signed during the 10th BRICS Summit:

- The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Regional Aviation Partnership
- The MoU on Environment
- Agreement between Brazil and the New Development Bank on the Hosting of the New Development Bank Americas Regional Office in Brazil.

A key element for South Africa since joining BRICS in 2011, was to strategically position Africa on the Agenda of BRICS through expressions of support for the continent’s objectives of development and industrialisation.

In 2013 during its first tenure as BRICS Chair South Africa introduced the BRICS-Africa Outreach Dialogue – an initiative which South Africa again elected to host in 2018 albeit in an

extended format that also included the BRICS Plus format, represented by Jamaica, Argentina, and Turkey.

Heads of State and Government of SADC were also in attendance. The 2018 edition was thus a joint meeting with Leaders from the continent and those from the Global South, discussions were centred on (i) BRICS support for Africa’s industrial and infrastructure as contained in the NEPAD programmes and the AU’s Agenda 2063; and (ii) on the implementation of the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the building of broad partnerships for development.

India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) Forum

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 of 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 realisation of the 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 sub-regions.

The engagement process of the IBSA countries takes place on a number of levels, namely: Summit (Heads of State and Government), the IBSA Trilateral Ministerial Commission meeting - ITMC (Ministers), Senior Officials (Sherpas), and Technical (through various working groups).

An informal meeting of IBSA’s Foreign Ministers met on 4 June 2018 and adopted the IBSA Declaration on South-South Cooperation.

IBSA continues to play its unique role as a body bringing together three democracies of the South from three continents as well as representing the interests of the continents in which they reside, in issues such as the reform of the UNSC, as well as the global financial institutions such as the International

Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Indian Ocean Rim Association

IORA is a charter-based regional organisation is an economic cooperative community of 21 littoral and island states around the Indian Ocean and seven dialogue partners. It represents one of the most diverse and geo-strategically important regions of the world, with a heterogeneous mix of developed, developing, LDCs and Small Island Developing States.

South Africa plays a leading role in IORA and assumed the Chair at the 17th Meeting of the IORA Council of Ministers (COM) in Durban on 18 October 2017 under the theme: "IORA – uniting the peoples of Africa, Asia, Australasia, and the Middle East through enhanced co-operation for peace, stability and sustainable development". This theme encompasses South Africa's view that the Indian Ocean Region should be characterised as a region of peace, stability and development.

The 17th Council of Ministers meeting followed-on the historic IORA Leaders' 20th Commemorative Summit held in Jakarta, Indonesia on 7 March 2017 at which "The Jakarta Concord" was adopted. South Africa was at the forefront of drafting the IORA Concord's Action Plan (2017-2021) which provides a firm set of realistic and measurable commitments.

Milestones include an agreement to establish a new Working Group on the Blue Economy as a means to strengthening the Blue Economy as a common source of growth and development, innovation and job creation; the importance of addressing security challenges in the region through a new Working Group on Maritime Safety and Security; and commitment to gender equality and women's economic empowerment through the creation of a new Working Group on Women's Economic Empowerment.

South Africa also prioritized IORA's relations with other international multilateral bodies such as the UN and the AU through the 2050 African Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIMS) and Agenda 2063, as well as deepening and broadening IORA's engagement with its Dialogue Partner countries.

Dr Nomvuyo Nokwe South Africa's former High Commissioner to Mauritius, Ambassador is the current Secretary-General of IORA.

South Africa successfully hosted the 8th Biannual meeting of the IORA Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) in Durban from 30-31 July 2018 and the 18th meeting of the IORA Council of Ministers on 2 November 2018 in Durban.

Commonwealth

The modern Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 53 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.

A South African delegation led by President Cyril Ramaphosa attended the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM 2018), under the title "Towards a Common Future" that took place in London on 19 and 20 April 2018.

South Africa actively participated through interventions delivered at the Executive Sessions of the CHOGM, the Pre-CHOGM Foreign Ministers Meeting as well as side-events arranged during this period.

CHOGM 2018 provided South Africa with an opportunity to market and promote South Africa as an investment destination. The South Africa delegation also utilised the opportunity to continue to lobby for South Africa's candidature to the UNSC for the term 2019 – 2020. It further provided an ideal opportunity to promote the centenary year of the birth of President Nelson Mandela.

On 20 April 2018, the meeting adopted the Final Communiqué, a Leaders' Statement as well as the Commonwealth Blue Charter on Oceans Economy; the Commonwealth Cyber Declaration on Security in the Cyber Space; the Commonwealth Guidelines on Election Observation on Electoral Support and the Declaration on the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda for Trade and Investment on Promotion of Trade and Investment.

Non-Aligned Movement

The NAM, consisting of 120 members, is chaired by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela until 2019. It is the largest

political grouping of countries outside the UN, making it an important lobby group of developing countries in global affairs.

Deputy Minister Landers led the South African delegation to attend the 18th Mid-term Ministerial Conference that was held in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 5 to 6 April 2018. The meeting took place under the theme: "Promoting International Peace and Security for Sustainable Development".

South Africa actively participated through statements delivered by the Deputy Minister during the General Debate and the NAM Ministerial Committee on Palestine.

South Africa also introduced a Special Declaration on the Commemoration of the Centenary of the Birth of Nelson Mandela, which was adopted by consensus.

The Ministerial Conference concluded on 6 April 2018 with the adoption of the Baku Final Document; The Baku Declaration; Political Declaration of the Committee on Palestine and the Special Declaration on the Commemoration of the Centenary of the Birth of Nelson Mandela South Africa's participation was guided by her own national priorities, namely consolidation of the Africa agenda, close South-South cooperation and countering the marginalisation of the South.

South Africa's main priority still remain the monitoring of the debate on Palestine and to actively show solidarity with the Palestinian people.

As a member of the NAM Committee on Palestine, South Africa supports all initiatives of the Movement aimed at the realisation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to return to their homeland.

Group of 77 (G77) and China

The 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 G77 have increased to 134 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, provides

the means for countries of the South to promote their collective economic interests, enhances its joint negotiating capacity on all major international economic issues within the UN system and promotes South-South cooperation.

South Africa chaired the Group of 77 (G77) and China in 2006 and 2015. Significant during South Africa's chairing of the G77 was the adoption of the landmark 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which builds on the MDGs and sets the global development trajectory until 2030.

As Chair of the G77, South Africa was also at the forefront of the negotiations and successfully carried out its mandate to ensure that the positions of developing countries were advanced.

Additionally, during South Africa's chairing of the G77 developing countries were able to influence the outcomes of the Paris Climate Change negotiations, and international outcomes on development financing.

West Africa

Senegal

Senegal and South Africa are bound by their historic ties of friendship that were established during the struggle against colonialism and apartheid. Full diplomatic relations were established on 6 May 1994.

Senegal is a bastion of stability in Francophone West Africa. It is a strong constitutional democracy and one of the only African countries that have never experienced a coup d'état or any type of violent transition since its independence from France in 1960.

South Africa and Senegal enjoy cordial bilateral political, economic and social relations underpinned by strong historical ties dating back to the years of the liberation struggle.

Then President Zuma hosted the President of the Republic of Senegal, Mr Macky Sall, for a State Visit to South Africa in Cape Town on 24 October 2017.

The visit took place after the successful commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the Dakar Talks of 1987 which were held in Senegal in July 2017.

The Dakar Talks are widely considered to have paved the way towards a negotiated settlement between the African National Congress and the then Government in South Africa.

South Africa and Senegal conduct their bilateral relations through a Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation and 14 bilateral agreements have been signed since 1996.

Mali

South Africa and Mali established bilateral relations in May 1994. The bilateral relations between the two countries are conducted through the Joint Commission for Cooperation (JCC) signed in December 2000.

South Africa assisted the Government of Mali in the preservation of the Ahmed Baba Institute of Higher Learning and Islamic Research in Timbuktu through an African Renaissance Fund contribution.

Peace, security and stability remain a challenge in Northern and Central Mali. South Africa supports the current peace process in Mali and encourages all the parties involved to remain committed to the implementation of the Peace Agreement in an effort to ensuring lasting peace.

The Gambia

South Africa and The Gambia established formal diplomatic relations on 7 August 1998. The South African Ambassador in Dakar, Senegal, is accredited to The Gambia on a non-residential basis.

Guinea-Bissau

South Africa and Guinea Bissau established formal diplomatic relations on 11 October 1994, even though the relations between South Africa and Guinea-Bissau date back to the common struggle against apartheid and colonialism.

Cabo Verde

South Africa and Cabo Verde exchanged diplomatic notes to establish diplomatic relations in 1994 followed by the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of a Mechanism for Bilateral Consultation during an AU Summit in June 2015. It is expected that this agreement will strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries.

Guinea-Conakry

Then President Zuma undertook a Working Visit to the Republic of Guinea from 12 to 13 January 2015. During this visit, the two Presidents exchanged views on bilateral, regional and international issues of common interest.

At bilateral level, the two Heads of State expressed satisfaction at the excellent relations of friendship and cooperation existing between the two countries and reaffirmed their commitment to reinforce and consolidate them by regular holding of the JCC.

In March 2017, South Africa handed over the Rice and Vegetable Project to the Republic of Guinea. The main objective of the project, which began in 2008 as a trilateral arrangement involving South Africa, Vietnam and Guinea, was aimed at ensuring food security for the Republic of Guinea through the African Renaissance Fund.

Farmers in Guinea were trained on the use of more effective techniques for farming. The Project was a resounding success, and it generated interest from other countries in the West African region.

Liberia

The formal diplomatic relations between South Africa and Liberia were established in 1997. The Liberian Government opened its Embassy in Pretoria in October 1997 while South Africa opened a resident diplomatic mission in Monrovia in October 2010.

In August 2017, former President Zuma hosted the former President of the Republic of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, for a State Visit to South Africa, in Pretoria.

The visit was an important vehicle for economic growth and cooperation between the two countries and further contributed to strengthening intra-trade relations in the continent of Africa.

South Africa and Liberia maintain good diplomatic and political relations since the attainment of freedom and democracy in South Africa. South Africa provided technical support and assistance for the Presidential and Legislative Elections in Liberia held in October 2017. The technical support and assistance provided was in line with South Africa's Foreign Policy to support the Continent in ensuring free, fair and democratic electoral processes in pursuit of the goals outlined in Agenda 2063.

The Government of the Republic of South Africa and the Government of the Republic of Liberia signed an Agreement on Visa Exemption for Holders of Diplomatic and Official Passports on 3 May 2018.

The two countries have also since the establishment of diplomatic relations signed a General Cooperation Agreement, the MoU on Economic and Technical Cooperation.

These agreements allow the two countries to engage on a number of areas of possible cooperation, including agriculture, energy, infrastructure development, capacity and institutional building and trade as well as in the health sector.

Sierra Leone

The diplomatic relations between South Africa and Sierra Leone were established in 1998 through the exchange of diplomatic notes.

In August 2017, the South African Government expressed its deepest and heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of the Republic of Sierra Leone following one of the worst floods on the African continent.

This natural disaster devastated significant parts of the country, resulting in massive loss of life, destruction of property and leaving behind a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. Through DIRCO, South Africa pledged R8 million to assist in disaster relief.

In April 2018, President Ramaphosa congratulated Julius Maada Bio on his election as President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

President Ramaphosa also commended the outgoing President, Mr Ernest Bai Koroma, after serving two five-year terms and stated that the peaceful and democratic manner under which these elections were conducted signify yet another positive step towards the deepening of democracy on the African continent.

President Ramaphosa concluded by assuring President Bio of his commitment to strengthen bilateral relations between South Africa and Sierra Leone.

Niger

Diplomatic relations were established in May 1994. In March

2008 South Africa opened an Embassy in Niamey which is headed by a Chargé d 'Affaires. Niger opened its Embassy in Pretoria during the last quarter of 2012.

An Agreement on the Establishment of a Joint Commission of Cooperation (JCC) was concluded on 8 May 2007 and the inaugural session of the JCC took place in October 2013.

Côte d'Ivoire

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Côte d'Ivoire were established in May 1992. The Agreement on the Establishment of a Joint Commission of Cooperation (JCC) was concluded in December 2015.

At a political level, given South Africa's firm commitment to the African Renaissance and its attendant features of stability and democratisation on the continent, South Africa previously played an important role in assisting to find a peaceful resolution to the stalemate following the disputed Presidential Elections in Cote d'Ivoire.

Bilateral trade between South Africa and Cote D'Ivoire has experienced an upward trend. South African investors are present in the following sectors: banking, transport and telecommunications, namely: Standard Bank, SAA and the MTN Group.

South Africa was invited to be the featured country at the 4th Biannual Edition of the International Exhibition of Agriculture and Animal Resources (SARA) that was held in Abidjan in November 2017.

The Departments of Trade and Industry (the dti), Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), the Mpumalanga Province and other small and medium businesses active in the agricultural sector participated in the SARA Exhibition.

Nigeria

President Ramaphosa undertook a Working Visit to Nigeria from 10 to 11 July 2018, during which he met with his counterpart, President Muhammadu Buhari.

During the visit, President Ramaphosa also participated in the 2018 Annual Meeting and 25th Anniversary Celebrations of the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) hosted by

Nigeria.

As the continent's two largest economies, South Africa and Nigeria enjoy good political, economic and social bilateral relations formally established in 1994, immediately after South Africa's first democratic elections.

Formal relations between South Africa and Nigeria have been conducted through the BiNational Commission (BNC), established in 1999 as a structured bilateral mechanism to promote political, economic, social, cultural, scientific and technical cooperation between the two countries.

Through eight (8) successful biennial sessions over the years, the BNC has deepened and solidified the relations between the two countries, and laid the foundation for increased bilateral political and economic cooperation.

There are a number of signed bilateral agreements between the two countries which cover various areas such as arts and culture, education, agriculture, trade and investment, mining, defence, policing, immigration, taxation, science and technology, health, tourism, environment and energy amongst others.

There are over 120 South African companies currently doing business in Nigeria in various sectors, mainly in telecommunications, banking, retail, hospitality, mining, tourism, agriculture and construction and tourism.

Some of the South African companies that have invested in Nigeria include MTN, Multichoice, Stanbic Bank, Shoprite Checkers, South African Airways, Sasol and Bon Hotels.

Ghana

On 5 July 2018, President Ramaphosa hosted President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo from Ghana on a State Visit to South Africa. This was the first State Visit that President Ramaphosa hosted since he became President of the Republic of South Africa.

The State Visit strengthened the already good political, economic and social relations that South Africa and Ghana enjoy, which were formalised at the advent of democracy in South Africa. The two countries established in May 2007 a Permanent JCC (PJCC), as a structured bilateral mechanism to provide for political, economic, social, cultural, scientific and technical cooperation between the two countries. During the

State Visit in July 2018, and after four (4) successful biennial sessions, the PJCC was elevated to become a BNC at the presidential level.

The PJCC essentially oversees the implementation of more than 20 bilateral agreements and memoranda of understanding, which cover various fields, including trade and investment, avoidance of double taxation, information and communication, transport, electricity, oil and gas, tourism, environment, science and technology and arts and culture.

There are over 80 South African companies that have invested in Ghana, which include MTN, Anglo-Gold Ashanti, Goldfields, SABMiller, Woolworths, Engen, Hytech Engineering, Afripa African Explosives Limited, Multichoice, Alliance Media, Broll, Group Five Steeldale, Stanbic Bank, Shoprite Checkers, Sherwood, Steers, South African Airways, 3M and First National Bank.

Benin

South Africa and Benin established formal diplomatic relations in May 1994. South Africa opened an Embassy in Cotonou in 2007 and Benin opened its Embassy in Pretoria in January 1999.

The Agreement for the Establishment of a Joint Commission on Cooperation (JCC) was concluded on 14 June 2015.

Burkina Faso

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Burkina Faso were established in May 1995. South Africa has an Embassy in Ouagadougou since February 2007 and Burkina opened an Embassy in Pretoria in June 2007.

An Agreement to Establish a Joint Cooperation Commission (JCC) was concluded in April 2007.

South Africa and Burkina Faso work closely through regional bodies, SADC and ECOWAS, as well as the continental body, the AU, to address all challenges that hinder Africa's development and to ensure that the set objectives in relation to the Agenda 2063 are achieved without fail.

Togo

Relations between South Africa and Togo were established in

1997. The South African Ambassador in Benin is accredited to Togo on a non-residential basis. South Africa and Togo are currently negotiating a Framework Agreement for Cooperation.

The agreement will establish cooperation in a number of fields including agro-processing, port management, mining and energy. Nedbank and the Public Investment Corporation (PIC) are the second and third largest shareholders respectively in the Lomé Head-Quartered West African Bank, Ecobank.

East Africa

Burundi

South Africa's relations with Burundi are sound and cordial. South Africa participated as the mediator in the AU-led Burundi Peace Process, which was first led by former President Nelson Mandela, followed by former President Thabo Mbeki and then by then Deputy President Zuma. The process led to the Arusha Peace Accords in 2000 – 2005 that brought an end to the long civil war.

South Africa has invested significantly in Burundi's peace and stability and it closely follows developments in Burundi, a small but key role player in the Great Lakes Region.

Peace and stability in Burundi are seen as crucial factors to the achievement of peace in the entire region.

South Africa strongly supports the current mediation efforts in Burundi as led by the EAC under former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa.

In this regard South Africa stands ready to assist and support the mediation process, if and when it is called upon. South Africa continues to stand by the people of Burundi in their search for sustainable peace, security and development.

Djibouti

South Africa and Djibouti enjoy excellent relations. Current infrastructure development programmes, including the free development zones, provide fertile ground for active investment by South African companies.

Eritrea

Eritrea serves as one of the fastest-growing economies in the Horn of Africa with a GDP growth rate of 8,5%. The country is

rich in mineral resources, including copper, gold, granite, marble, oil and gas reserves. The promotion of trade and investment between South Africa and Eritrea is important, especially in the fields of tourism and infrastructure development.

Ethiopia

Bilateral economic relations with Ethiopia, which were revived in 1995 when South Africa opened an embassy in Addis Ababa, remains strong.

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 (JMC) that will meet every two years.

In April 2018, President Ramaphosa extended his warm congratulations to Abiy Ahmed on being chosen to lead Ethiopia's Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) ruling coalition on 28 March 2018, and his subsequent swearing-in as Prime Minister on Monday, 2 April 2018.

A South Africa-Ethiopia Senior Officials Meeting was held in March 2018 and that was followed by the JMC in August 2018.

Indian Ocean Islands

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

Greater emphasis is being placed, in terms of South Africa's Operation Phakisa, on building partnerships with the islands in respect of the Ocean Economy to enhance trade and investment in areas such as, among others, marine manufacturing and transport; aquaculture; offshore oil and gas exploration; and marine protection and governance.

The South Africa-Seychelles Senior Officials Meeting, which was held in March 2018, was upgraded to a Joint Commission due to the increased bilateral interaction between the two countries.

Further emphasis on South Africa's relations with the islands is being provided through the IORA, which is chaired by South Africa.

South Africa and Seychelles established formal relations in 1992. The relationship has been progressive, with a display of support for strategic tourism events hosted in each country and a shared vision for regional tourism development and integration. South Africa and the Seychelles will this year mark the 25th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations.

In March 2018, International Relations and Cooperation Deputy Minister Landers hosted the Executive Head of the Seychelles Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Barry Faure, for the second session of the Joint Commission of Cooperation (JCC) between South Africa and the Seychelles on Friday.

The meeting reaffirmed the close friendship and common interests and values that are the foundation of the strong relationship between the two countries.

The two countries used the occasion to review bilateral political and economic relations, expressing satisfaction at the progress achieved in various areas of cooperation since the last session of the JCC in 2014. The parties demonstrated their commitment to increase cooperation.

They agreed to explore other areas of cooperation over the coming years in trade and investment; agriculture and fisheries; education and human resource development; environment and the blue economy; youth and sports; defence and police; tourism and culture; health; science and technology; maritime and air transport; higher education; and social development.

Kenya

At the end of May 2018, Deputy President David Mabuza arrived in Nairobi, Kenya, on a Working Visit that also coincided with the Madaraka Day (Freedom Day) celebrations, marking the day when Kenya attained internal self-rule in 1963 from Britain.

South Africa and Kenya enjoy strong bilateral relations, with the two countries' heads of state meeting on the margins of various international and multilateral engagements to discuss matters of mutual interest. South Africa also undertook a State Visit to Kenya on 11 October 2016 in Nairobi.

Following his re-election in November 2017, President Uhuru Kenyatta undertook a Working Visit to South Africa during January 2018 to attend the African National Congress annual

anniversary celebrations in East London.

During the Working Visit, President Kenyatta and former Deputy President Ramaphosa discussed issues of mutual concern, including the proposed reform initiatives of the AU, the ongoing security challenges in South Sudan and Somalia, as well as mutually beneficial economic opportunities between the two countries.

Rwanda

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1995 between South Africa and Rwanda, the two countries continue have close interaction at a high political level.

Rwanda is an important partner in the advancement and the championing of the African Agenda by being among the first countries to volunteer for the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and by actively contributing troops to the African Peacekeeping Missions in Sudan and the African Central Republic (CAR).

In January 2018, President Ramaphosa met the President of Rwanda, Mr Paul Kagame during several High Level meetings, which included the WEF's Annual Meeting in January which was held in Davos, the 10th Extraordinary Summit of the AU which took place in Rwanda in March 2018 and the G20 Summit in Canada in June 2018. In his capacity as the Chairperson of the AU, President Kagame also participated in the BRICS Africa Outreach meeting as part of the 10th BRICS Summit in South Africa in July 2018.

South Africa and Rwanda signed over 20 bilateral Agreements in various fields and continue to enjoy cordial relations

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.

On 8 February 2017, President Mohamed Adullahi Mohamed was elected as President of Somalia, which is expected to pave a new path towards political stability in the country and further strengthen relations between South Africa and that country.

Sudan

The relations between South Africa and Sudan remain cordial. South Africa is also playing a key role in the resolution of conflicts and the post-conflict reconstruction efforts in that country. Moreover, Sudan serves among key African countries with the potential for increased trade and investment. South Africa and Sudan are in the process of finalizing an Agreement on JCC.

South Sudan

On 29 January 2018, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, visited the capital of South Sudan, Juba, to meet with her counterpart, Lt. General Kuol Manyang Juuk, and sign a MoU on Cooperation in the field of Defence between the Government of the Republic of South Africa and the Republic of South Sudan.

The MoU is a product of long existing bilateral relations between the two countries dating back to the liberation struggles and South Sudan's independence, in which South Africa played a critical role.

It is intended that the MoU will facilitate better relations between the two countries, enhance security sector reforms as well as ensure peace and stability in South Sudan.

Uganda

South Africa and Uganda have enjoyed good political and economic relations since 1994. The relations were cemented when the South Africa-Uganda JCC was inaugurated in Pretoria during November 2012.

South Africa and Uganda continue to cooperate closely and coordinate their positions on issues in a number of regional and multilateral forums, such as the AU and the UN, and share similar perspectives, particularly on the political and economic integration processes on the African continent.

North and Central Africa

Egypt

South Africa and Egypt have a Joint Bilateral Commission (JBC), convened at ministerial level, for enhancing and strengthening bilateral relations.

South Africa is committed to forging closer strategic cooperation with Egypt, focusing in particular on economic and security cooperation, and to continue working together in pursuance of continental integration, peace and security as well as the fight against all forms of terrorism and extremism.

Libya

South Africa is deeply concerned over the prevailing political and security situation in Libya, which has gravely affected peace and security in the region.

At the same time, South Africa has also noted, with satisfaction, the positive developments regarding the UN Political Agreement to establish a Government of National Accord in Libya.

In this regard, South Africa urges the Libyan people and its leaders to set aside their differences and unite in the interest of peace, stability and prosperity in Libya. Further, South Africa is ready to assist the Libyan people by sharing her experiences on democratic transition and reconciliation.

Algeria

South Africa enjoys historic and cordial relations with Algeria and regards it as a strategic partner in the region and continent. Since the establishment of the Presidential BNC in 2000, bilateral political trade and economic links have been growing steadily.

Algeria's relations with countries of the Maghreb, the Mediterranean, the Arab Peninsular and the Sahel regions serves as a platform to promote joint Algeria-South Africa partnerships/ventures in the mutual interest of all parties.

Morocco

South Africa and Morocco enjoy cordial diplomatic relations. Morocco recalled her Ambassador to South Africa in 2004 following South Africa's recognition of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). Bilateral relations have since been maintained at the level of a Chargé d'Affaires en titre (Morocco) and Chargé d'Affaires ad interim (South Africa).

In December 2017, then President Zuma held a historic bilateral meeting with King Mohammed VI of Morocco on the sidelines of the 5th Joint AU-EU Summit underway in Abidjan,

Côte d'Ivoire.

During the meeting, the two Heads of State agreed to work together for a promising future, especially as South Africa and Morocco are two important poles of political stability and economic development, respectively in the extreme north and the extreme south of the continent.

They also agreed to maintain direct contact and to launch a fruitful economic and political partnership in order to build strong, lasting and stable relations, and to go beyond the situation that had characterised bilateral relations for decades.

In this regard, then President Zuma and King Mohammed have decided to raise the level of diplomatic representation through the appointment of high level ambassadors in Rabat and in Pretoria.

President Zuma also reaffirmed South Africa's unwavering support for the Saharawi people's struggle for independence.

Western Sahara is Africa's longest-running territorial dispute and an issue of continental and international law and diplomatic controversy, having been on the decolonisation agenda of the UN and AU for more than 50 years.

Morocco contends that the Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony, is an integral part of its kingdom. On the other side, the Polisario Front, which is campaigning for the territory's independence, demands a referendum on self-determination.

The SADR is a full member of the AU, while Morocco withdrew from the AU, then the OAU, in protest at the SADR's inclusion. Morocco was only re-admitted as a member of the AU this year.

Throughout the years, Pretoria has maintained the same position on the right to self-determination for the Saharawi people, as enshrined in the UN Charter and the AU Constitutive Act.

During the meeting, the two leaders agreed that there should be continuous engagement on this matter.

The move to rebuild relations is part of Morocco's new policy of opening up to other African nations.

Western Sahara

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. Through the African Renaissance Fund, South Africa supports projects that aim to benefit the Saharawi population.

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

- 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 for international human rights law in the occupied territories, notably the right to freedom of association, assembly, movement and expression;
- respect for 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; and
- support for the integration and stability of the Maghreb Union as a building block of the AU.

South Africa reiterates its call for two parties to return to a discussion table and have constructive direct dialogue.

Gabon

Relations between South Africa and Gabon are sound and the visit aims to further strengthen and expand the partnership. The visit also provides an opportunity for the exchange of views on regional, continental and international issues of mutual concern.

Mauritania

South Africa made a constructive contribution in Mauritania in support of the implementation of the democratic road map 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 will facilitate the opening of trade and investment opportunities for the two countries.

Tunisia

The South African Embassy in Tunisia was officially opened in 1994. South Africa and Tunisia enjoy a very healthy and mutually beneficial political and economic relationship.

Chad

South Africa and Chad established diplomatic relations in 1994, but it was only in 2013 that both countries appointed resident ambassadors.

Chad is a member of the Economic Community of Central African States (CEMAC), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States, the Grouping G5 of the Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, member and host of the Multi-National Joint Task Force (in the fight against Boko Haram) and is the designated Chair of the CEMAC. On 25 January 2017, South Africa signed a Bilateral Air Services Agreement with Chad. South Africa and Chad are currently engaged in finalising an Economic Cooperation Agreement.

Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe

Following its independence in 1975, the Government of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe expanded its diplomatic relationships. Since the establishment of full diplomatic relations with South Africa in 1994, the relations between the two countries have grown significantly.

Republic of the Congo

Bilateral cooperation between the two countries takes place within the framework of the GPA, signed in 2003 and which establishes a JCC, the deepening of bilateral relations between the two countries have seen the signing of a number of

agreements.

The Joint Trade Committee (JTC) is playing an important role in facilitating the trade and investment relationship.

Equatorial Guinea

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Equatorial Guinea were established on 5 May 1993. South Africa and Equatorial Guinea enjoy cordial bilateral relations.

Cameroon

South Africa and Cameroon enjoy cordial bilateral relations. Cameroon is the economic hub of the Central African Region.

The seaport of Doualla in Cameroon is used to import goods to landlocked countries in the region such as Chad and the Central Africa Republic (CAR).

Central African Republic

South Africa opened its Embassy in Bangui in 2017 and the two countries enjoy cordial relations.

Southern Africa

Angola

South Africa and Angola continue to work together in maintaining peace, stability and regional integration and promoting the SADC Agenda.

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.

President Ramaphosa, in his capacity as Chair of the SADC, was in Angola on a Working Visit in April 2018.

The President held a consultative meeting with President João Lourenço of Angola.

Namibia

South Africa and Namibia enjoy strong and fraternal relations that are characterised by regular and increasing interaction at all levels. 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.

In March 2018, President Ramaphosa paid a courtesy visit to Namibia.

Lesotho

South Africa's bilateral relations with the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho remain strong and are based on a shared language, history and culture. Lesotho is landlocked in South Africa, creating a unique dependence.

South Africa supplies nearly 90% of Lesotho's total imports and it is critical to the economic success of the Kingdom. In this regard, total trade between the two respective countries reached R22, 10 billion in 2017, with exports by South Africa totalling R17, 96 billion and imports from Lesotho, R4,14 billion.

The last session of the Joint BNC of Cooperation (JBCC) met in 2013 in South Africa, and the agreement expired in 2017. Due to political instability since 2014 the JBCC has not taken place. It was agreed between the respective countries that the JBCC is to be resuscitated and will convene in the latter part of 2018 in Lesotho.

The strong cooperation that exists between the two countries cover a wide range of areas such as the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), the Metolong Dam Project and the revamping and upgrading of the Mokhotlong road and the Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier.

Eswatini

Bilateral relations between the Republic of South Africa and the Kingdom of Eswatini, reflected in the Joint Bilateral Commission for Cooperation (JBCC) Agreement, are amiable and informed essentially by historical and cultural affinities, including the geographical proximity between the peoples of the two countries.

Eswatini has from 2015 experienced devastating droughts from the El Nino effects, which resulted in the loss of thousands of livestock, crops and the ability to feed the vulnerable in the country.

South Africa, through the World Food Programme Project in

Eswatini, has offered assistance in the form of food aid for the vulnerable children.

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 March 2018, President Ramaphosa received a courtesy call by President Edgar Chagwa Lungu of the Republic of Zambia. President Ramaphosa had a working visit to Zambia on 9 August 2018.

The two Presidents committed that South Africa and Zambia would continue to work together on the region's common agenda relating to, among others, peace, security and economic integration.

Structured bilateral cooperation between South Africa and Zambia formerly took place under the framework of the JCC, which was signed on 18 October 2005.

During the Second Session of the JCC held in Zambia from 9 to 11 October 2017, the two countries agreed to elevate the JCC to a BNC which would be chaired at the level of Heads of State.

South Africa was expected to host the inaugural session of the BNC in 2018.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

South Africa and the DRC maintain good diplomatic and political relations. The highest expression of the quality and significance of these diplomatic relations is the annual BNC, co-chaired by the heads of state.

The General Cooperation Agreement, signed by South Africa and the DRC on 14 January 2004, is the principal agreement establishing bilateral cooperation between the two states in the form of the BNC, which provides the basis for political, economic and technical cooperation.

On 10 August 2018, President Ramaphosa undertook a Working Visit to the DRC as the country prepared for the

elections scheduled for 23 December 2018.

The SADC is committed to assisting the Government and the people of the DRC to achieve sustainable peace, security and stability.

Zimbabwe

South Africa and Zimbabwe enjoy historic political and fraternal relations which also incorporate 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.

In March 2018, President Ramaphosa as Chair of SADC visited Harare for a consultative meeting with President Emmerson Mnangagwa.

The meeting aimed to further strengthen the strong economic, political and social relations that exist between South Africa and Zimbabwe. The heads of state exchanged views on important regional, continental and global issues of mutual concern.

South Africa and Zimbabwe enjoy excellent bilateral relations which date back to the days of the liberation struggle.

On 2 August 2018, President Ramaphosa congratulated President Emmerson Mnangagwa on his election as the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, following elections held on 30 July 2018.

Malawi

South Africa and Malawi enjoy cordial and fraternal bilateral relations inclusive of political, economic and cultural relations and within the context of regional integration and intra-Africa trade. These bilateral relations are conducted under the framework of the JCC.

Since its inception in May 2007, three sessions of the JCC were held in June 2008, September 2012 and April 2016, respectively. The fourth session of the JCC was held in South Africa in 2018.

Mozambique

President Ramaphosa undertook a Working Visit to the Republic

of Mozambique in March 2018 as the Chair of the SADC.

The visit formed part of a standing tradition in the SADC region, whereby newly elected heads of state pay courtesy calls to the neighbouring countries.

Tanzania

The bilateral relations have been characterised by high-level interaction between the two countries aimed at consolidating and strengthening political, economic and social cooperation.

Economic relations between South Africa and Tanzania have since 1994 grown significantly and continue to expand. The two countries have elevated their bilateral relations by signing a BNC Agreement in 2011, thus increasing the scope of areas of cooperation between the two countries.

Botswana

South Africa and Botswana cooperate in 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 March 2018, President Ramaphosa paid a Working Visit to Botswana.

Relations with Asia and the Middle East

The People's Republic of China

South Africa and China are marking the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. They first established formal ties on 1 January 1998.

Over the past 20 years, the two countries achieved a significant number of bilateral cooperation agreements in areas including trade, investment, economic and people-to-people relations.

South Africa and China share a common developmental agenda based on the principle of internationalism and enjoy strong diplomatic and trade relations. China is South Africa's biggest trading partner and also the second biggest economy in the world.

The two countries share membership of and participate as partners in numerous international bodies, including BRICS, the

Group of 77+ China, G20 and are co-chairs of FOCAC.

The year 2017 saw South Africa and China strengthening their friendship through the inaugural South Africa-China High-Level People-to-People Exchange Mechanism, which took place in Pretoria, South Africa in April. The mechanism seeks to enhance mutual trust, friendship and strategic partnership between the people of both countries.

China successfully hosted the ninth BRICS Summit in Xiamen, with South Africa scheduled to host the 10th BRICS Summit in 2018.

South Africa's bilateral relations with China are guided broadly through mechanisms such as the Beijing Declaration establishing the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, the BNC, Joint Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Cooperation (JWG), Strategic Dialogue Mechanism and the 5-10 Year Strategic Framework on Cooperation signed in 2014.

South Africa-China bilateral relations 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.

South Africa and China's bilateral relations are managed through structured mechanisms, including the BNC, the Joint Working Group (JWG) and the Strategic Dialogue. These mechanisms are chaired at the Deputy President, Ministerial and Deputy Ministerial level respectively.

South Africa is China's largest trading partner in Africa and China is also South Africa's largest trading partner as reflected in the total trade volume of R343 billion.

South Africa and China 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 continue to deepen their cooperation in infrastructure development, including the construction of roads, railways, ports, power plants, airports and housing.

It should be noted that the current bilateral trade volume is skewed in favour of China and through the numerous high-level

engagements the leaders have sought to redress the trade deficit through signing of Agreements and MoUs among others which provide further opportunities for increased exports to China.

On 24 July 2018, President Ramaphosa hosted the President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping, on a State Visit to South Africa.

The two Heads of State used the State Visit to engage in bilateral talks and evaluate the progress achieved by the two countries on the Strategic Programme of Cooperation with specific reference to the six priority areas identified in 2015.

They include the alignment of industries to accelerate South Africa's industrialisation process; enhancement of cooperation in special economic zones; enhancement of marine cooperation; infrastructure development; human resources cooperation; and financial cooperation.

President Ramaphosa paid a successful State Visit to China on 02 September 2018, to further deepen bilateral relations with China. South Africa signed several agreements with China during the two State Visits, with an overall investment commitment from China to the value of US\$14,7 billion.

Japan

South Africa and Japan enjoy excellent diplomatic relations in the fields of trade and investment; science and technology cooperation; and skills development support.

Since 2010, the relations have been upgraded to that of a Strategic Cooperation Partnership.

Japan is a major investor in the South African economy, with a current presence of approximately 140 Japanese companies providing over 150 000 local job opportunities.

Total bilateral trade between the two countries in 2017 was R93,2 billion (in South Africa's favour by R17.8 billion), with exports to Japan of R55,5 billion and imports from Japan of R37,7 billion.

During 2017, South Africa exported mainly precious metals, minerals, as well as iron and steel products to Japan, whilst importing machinery, vehicles and equipment components from that country.

An average of approximately 28,751 Japanese tourists visit

South Africa annually (period 2010-17). The number has been increasing over the last two years.

The 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.

TICAD's 1st Japan-Africa Public-Private Economic Forum (JAPPEF) was held in Sandton, Johannesburg in 2018. The JAPPEF provides USD30 billion for joint public-private African development projects.

The Forum brought together Japanese and African Ministers of Trade and Investment, as well as captains of industries from both Japan and the African continent.

The primary aim of the Forum was to promote trade and investment between Japan and Africa, in further support of TICAD's development goals.

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 between South Africa and ROK is on trade and investment links, as the latter houses some of the world's leading companies such as Hyundai, Samsung, KIA, Daewoo and LG, which have been sources of investment into South Africa.

The ROK is South Africa's fourth-largest trading partner in Asia. Total bilateral trade between the two countries in 2017 was R39 billion (in South Africa's favour by R12 billion), with exports to the ROK of R25 billion and imports from the ROK of R13 billion. The trade relationship encompasses a wide variety of products, ranging from minerals to sophisticated high-technology electronic products.

By mid-2018, there were over 30 ROK companies in South Africa, with investments in the manufacturing, energy, science and technology, shipping and transport sectors. The ROK regularly makes technical skills training and development opportunities available to South Africa, from which many South Africans have already benefitted, including human resource capacity building programmes as part of rural development and rural teaching projects.

Structured South Africa-ROK bilateral relations have so far

been conducted within the Policy Consultative Forum (PCF) framework, co-Chaired at Deputy Ministerial level. The first PCF took place in Pretoria in 2003. The 8th PCF was held on 17 October 2014 in Seoul, ROK, where a decision was taken to elevate the PCF to a JCC, at Ministerial level.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

South Africa established diplomatic relations with the DPRK in August 1998 and the two countries enjoy cordial bilateral relations. Due to the imposition of various UNSC sanctions against the DPRK as a consequence of the country's controversial nuclear weapons and missile programmes, economic relations with South Africa remain limited.

South Africa is encouraged by the recent positive developments on the Korean Peninsula and the efforts on all sides to promote direct contact and dialogue to ensure holistic and durable solutions to the regional security tensions and welcomes the rapprochement, which culminated into two inter-Korean Summits between the DPRK leader Kim Jong-un and the ROK President Moon-Jae-in on 27 April 2018 and 26 May 2018.

The two leaders adopted the Panmunjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Unification of the Korean Peninsula, followed by a Summit meeting between President Donald Trump of the United States of America (USA) and the DPRK leader Kim Jong-un in Singapore, which also adopted a Joint Statement in the interest of peace and security.

South Africa has consistently called for the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, as it firmly believes that nuclear weapons and the pursuance of such capabilities do not enhance security, but rather constitute a source of regional and international insecurity.

Mongolia

South Africa and Mongolia established diplomatic relations on 25 May 1994. The Mongolian Embassy in Egypt is accredited to South Africa, while South Africa's Embassy in Beijing is accredited to Mongolia.

Mongolia's mining sector and its vast coal reserves potentially offer an opportunity for collaboration with South Africa, especially

in terms of clean coal technologies.

South and Central Asia

Central Asia

The South African Ambassador to Kazakhstan is accredited to Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan, while the South African Ambassador in Turkey is accredited to Uzbekistan, both on a non-residential basis. Both Tajikistan's Ambassador to Egypt and Kyrgyzstan's Ambassador in Saudi Arabia are accredited on a non-residential basis to South Africa.

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. Bilateral relations are managed through annual political consultations at deputy ministerial level.

Total bilateral trade reached its highest level of R702 million in 2016, with South Africa enjoying a trade surplus of R338 million. In 2017, total bilateral trade registered at R274 million, with South Africa having a trade surplus of R95 million.

South African exports to Kazakhstan are mainly machinery; steel and steel products, vehicles, aircraft and vessels; whereas imports are primarily steel products and chemicals.

South Africa participated at EXPO 2017 in Astana from 10 June to 9 September 2017. The exhibition was focused on achievements with regard to the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) Project and showcased the largest science project in the world, illustrating how renewable energy technologies would support this project in the future.

The former Deputy Minister, Ms Nomaindiya Mfeketo paid an Official Visit to Astana, Kazakhstan, from 17 to 20 July 2017.

South Asia

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

South Africa enjoys cordial relations with India, Pakistan, Sri

Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Afghanistan and the Maldives.

India

South Africa and India enjoy strong historical and fraternal bonds forged through India's steadfast opposition to racial discrimination and its support for the liberation struggle in South Africa.

Formal diplomatic relations were established in November of 1993 and close cooperation occurs within multilateral groupings such as BRICS, IBSA, IORA and the G20. Formal bilateral relations are structured via a JMC and Foreign Office Consultations (FOC), which takes place at a senior official's level. A FOC Meeting was held in New Delhi in January 2018.

A South Africa-India Business Summit was held in Johannesburg on 30 April 2018, and succeeded in promoting closer ties between the private sectors of both countries. Commercial relations have grown steadily over the last few years, especially in the areas of trade, investment and tourism.

The value of trade conducted in 2017, between India and South Africa, was R107 billion and scope exists to grow the trading relationship even further. Identified priority areas for future cooperation include the mining sector, agro-processing, infrastructure development, the defence sector, pharmaceuticals and financial services.

During the July 2018 BRICS Johannesburg Summit, President Ramaphosa and Prime Minister Modi signed a MoU establishing the Mandela-Gandhi Centre of Specialisation for Artisan Skills which will be situated at the Tshwane South TVET campus and which will specialise in skills training.

Pakistan

Pakistan and South Africa enjoy cordial bilateral relations and a strong historical bond. Bilateral relations are structured via a Joint Commission (JC). In 2015, a decision was taken to elevate the JC from senior officials' level to the level of Deputy Minister.

The Fifth South Africa-Pakistan JC is scheduled to be held in Pakistan in 2018. Bilateral trade has shown impressive growth and in 2017 reached R13 billion, with the trade balance being in South Africa's favour.

Both countries are keen to grow the trade relationship further

concentrating on deep mining and technology, energy and agro-processing.

Sri Lanka

The bilateral relations between the two countries are cordial and conducted under the umbrella of the structured Partnership Forum.

The two countries held the Sixth Session of the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of the Partnership Forum on 7 April 2017 followed by the Seventh Session of the Partnership Forum in Colombo, Sri Lanka, during October 2018.

Bilateral trade between South Africa and Sri Lanka has grown significantly since the establishment of diplomatic relations, from R 184 million in 1994 to R 3, 2 billion in 2017.

The major exports to Sri Lanka are the export of minerals, primarily coal. Bilateral relations have shown a marked strengthening as a result of growing collaboration over a wide spectrum of activities, most notably tourism, investment, trade, educational exchanges.

Bangladesh, Nepal and Maldives

The South African High Commissioner in Colombo, Sri Lanka, is accredited to Bangladesh, Nepal and Maldives on a non-residential basis.

The Fourth Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) was held in Pretoria on 12 July 2017, in Pretoria. Bilateral trade between South Africa and Bangladesh grew from R28 million in 1994 to R3,2 billion in 2017.

The trade balance is R1,149 billion, in favour of South Africa. Bangladesh has been identified as a country with enormous potential for the expansion of trade and economic relations with South Africa.

South Africa and Nepal share good bilateral relations, consolidated further through the exchange of high-level bilateral visits. Various visits from Nepal have also focused on learning from the South African model of transitional justice, best practices and good governance.

South Africa exports to Nepal stood at R41 million, and imports at R12 million in 2017. The major export product is base metals, and South Africa imports textiles from Nepal.

In 2017, 460 Nepalese tourists visited South Africa, while an estimated 3 000 SA tourists visited Nepal.

While bilateral relations between South Africa and the Maldives are cordial, there is currently no bilateral mechanism in place to advance relations between the two countries.

In an effort to enhance bilateral relations, the Maldives Government has made a request to open a Diplomatic Mission in South Africa during May 2018. In June 2018, the Government of South Africa has approved the request.

South-East Asia

ASEAN has dramatically outpaced the rest of the world in both economic and GDP per capita growth, since the late 1970s.

Already some 67 million households in the ASEAN member states are part of the consuming class, with incomes exceeding the level at which they can begin to make significant discretionary purchases.

That number could almost double to 125 million households by 2025, making ASEAN a pivotal consumer market of the future, and hence of strategic importance to South African trade.

Trade between South Africa and ASEAN is growing quickly. In 2017, total trade with ASEAN was R112 billion, but with a trade deficit of R42 billion. South Africa's largest trading partners in South East Asia are: Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam.

Thailand

South Africa is Thailand's largest trading partner in Africa, while Thailand is South Africa's largest trading partner in ASEAN.

For 2017 total bilateral trade was R41.4 billion, up from R38 billion in 2016.

South Africa imports from Thailand amounted to R33.2 billion, while South African exports amounted to only R8.2 billion, leaving the country with a large bilateral trade deficit of R25 billion, up from R24.6 bn in 2016.

The South African Embassy in Thailand is also accredited to Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia.

Malaysia

Malaysia is the fourth-largest new investor into the African

continent.

Malaysia continues to remain an important partner to South Africa and is instrumental in working together with South Africa on the latter's Operation Phakisa initiatives.

Bilateral trade between South Africa and Malaysia is on an upward trend, growing from R18.6 billion in 2016 to R20.5 billion in 2017.

Singapore

Total trade between South Africa and Singapore was at R13.8 billion in 2017, exports to Singapore during 2017 amounted to R6.9 billion while South African imports from Singapore totalled R6.8 billion.

As a country, world-renowned as a centre of excellence, Singapore has been particularly involved in providing South Africans with skills development opportunities under the Singapore Cooperation Programme sponsored by the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Many South African public servants have attended training courses, including the Economic Diplomacy Leadership course in Singapore over the years, thereby improving skills levels in South Africa.

Indonesia

In July 2017, South Africa and Indonesia agreed to identify sectors with a view to maximise the existing investment opportunities in both countries. The Minister of Trade and Industry, Rob Davies, and his Indonesian counterpart, Enggartiasto Lukita, met during the Third Joint Trade Committee meeting that was followed by the South Africa-Indonesia Business Forum.

The total volume of bilateral trade between South Africa and Indonesia in 2017 was R15, 6 billion, with R5.76 billion exports from South Africa, and R9.88 billion imports from Indonesia (compared to R3.79 billion exports and R9.72 billion imports in 2016).

Vietnam

South Africa and Vietnam celebrate 25 years of diplomatic relations in 2018.

The former Minister of International Relations and

Cooperation, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, undertook a Working Visit to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam from 6 to 7 September 2017 during which she met with Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Phạm Bình Minh, on 6 and 7 September 2017, respectively.

The talks between the two governments focussed on growing bilateral trade and investments, particularly in the oceans economy.

Bilateral trade between the two countries has been growing year-on-year and amounted to R16 billion in 2017.

Brunei-Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), and Timor-Leste

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

The South African Mission in Thailand is accredited on a non-residential basis to Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar; the Mission in Malaysia is accredited on a non-residential basis to Brunei-Darussalam; and the Mission in Indonesia is accredited on a non-residential basis to Timor-Leste.

Philippines

South Africa and Philippines are celebrating 25 years of diplomatic relations in 2018. Strong relations have been established through a shared history and a friendship that goes back to the Asian-African Bandung Conference of 1955.

The Governments of South Africa and the Philippines established a structured Bilateral Consultative Forum (BCF) which aims at furthering cooperation between the two countries.

The last BCF was held in Manila on 9 November 2017 and has shown that the bilateral relationship between South Africa and the Philippines have improved not only in substance, but also in various areas of technical cooperation, such as mining, trade, agriculture and the Blue Economy, especially in aquaculture.

Australasia and the Pacific Islands

Australia

South Africa and Australia enjoy cordial relations and interact biennially through a Senior Official Meeting (SOM).

South Africa and Australia cooperate across a range of

sectors and issues, including law enforcement, sport, tourism, education, defence relations, and science and technology.

Australia is South Africa's 23rd-largest trading partner. The majority of exports from South Africa to Australia are finished goods. Exports of high-quality passenger motor vehicles head the list. Total trade between South Africa and Australia amounted to R25, 2 billion in 2017.

New Zealand

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

Relations are coordinated through a biennial SOM. New Zealand is South Africa's 33rd-largest trading partner. Total trade between South Africa and New Zealand amounted to R3, 3 billion in 2017.

A significant feature of the South Africa-New Zealand relationship is its sporting ties, in particular, rugby, cricket, netball and in recent years, soccer. The two countries also enjoy productive cooperation at a 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 at international environmental meetings and enhance scientific cooperation.

They also work closely together within the context of the Antarctic Treaty and Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement, and interact regularly within the context of the WTO 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.

Palestine

South Africa and Palestine have enjoyed warm relations since the inception of democracy. Official diplomatic relations between

a democratic South Africa and Palestine were established in 1995.

Bilateral relations between Palestine and South Africa are facilitated through a Joint Commission of Cooperation (JCC) that was established in 1995 and renewed in 2014.

Progress in consolidating bilateral cooperation agreements remain afoot and was demonstrated by the three agreements signed during President Mahmoud Abass' November 2014 visit, namely:

- Agreement for the establishment of a JCC;
- MoU on Political Consultations; and
- 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.

South Africa remains committed to the aspirations of the Palestinian people in their struggle to achieve freedom and independence. And continues to promote the peaceful resolution of the Middle East conflict utilising all international forums available.

Syria

Diplomatic relations between Syria and South Africa were established on 1 June 1994, with Syria having opened an Embassy in South Africa in 1998.

Since the start of the Syrian civil war in 2011, the two countries have continued to maintain diplomatic relations.

South Africa affirmed its support for Syria's territorial integrity and reiterated its support for a political solution to the conflict in Syria.

South Africa also declared its condemnation of all violence and human rights violations and remains concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian and security situation in Syria.

South Africa has called on all parties involved to work for a comprehensive and peaceful resolution of the conflict taking into account the legitimate aspirations of the people of Syria, through inclusive national dialogue and a Syrian-led political process.

Iraq

Iraq opened its Embassy in Pretoria in December 1999 and an Iraqi Ambassador was accredited to South Africa in 2001.

South Africa's intention to open a Mission in Baghdad in April 2003 was delayed because of the outbreak of the United States (US)-led war.

South Africa will resuscitate those plans once the security situation normalises in Iraq. The South African Ambassador to Jordan is accredited to Iraq on a non-residential basis.

An agreement on economic and technical cooperation was signed between the two countries and includes issues related to energy, agriculture, housing, transportation, tourism, healthcare and telecommunications, as well as practical steps to increase trade and enhance economic cooperation.

Jordan

Jordan was the first Arab country to establish diplomatic relations with South Africa in 1993. The Embassy of South Africa was established in Amman in December 1993, and the Embassy of Jordan was opened in Pretoria in June 1994.

In December 2018, South Africa and Jordan will celebrate 25 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations, a very important milestone in the relationship.

The two countries enjoy a warm and increasingly diverse relationship, underpinned by strengthening political ties. The relationship would be further strengthened by concluding a MoU on Bilateral Consultations between the two countries.

Lebanon

South Africa enjoys cordial relations with the Republic of Lebanon, with formal diplomatic relations having been re-established on 27 June 1994.

At present South Africa has no residential diplomatic presence in Lebanon. The South African Ambassador in Syria is accredited to Lebanon on a non-residential basis. The Government of South Africa attaches great importance to the ties that have been built between the two countries.

A MoU on Bilateral Consultations is to be signed that would institutionalise regular and structured political engagement

between the two countries.

In February 2017, the Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, Gebran Bassil, undertook a Working Visit to South Africa, and met the former Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane.

The visit focused on enhancing an understanding of the developments in Lebanon and the region broadly, particularly insofar as it relates to the political, socio-economic and security challenges that confront Lebanon and the region.

The visit also identified areas of future co-operation and increasing trade, tourism and investment relations.

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

South Africa is committed to maintaining cordial diplomatic and trade relations with the UAE.

During the State Visit of President Ramaphosa to the UAE in July 2018. The country committed to invest US\$10 billion in South Africa with a focus on targeted sectors, such as tourism and mining to support the sustainable development of the country.

The intention is to manage the investment through a Joint investment Fund which will coordinate the interest of both South Africa and the UAE in ensuring the investment meets its intended objectives.

Iran

The primary mechanism for engagement with Iran is the Joint Commission (JC), established in 1995 and allows for a high-level review of bilateral relations and considers areas to further strengthen relations.

This JC is supported by an inter-sessional mechanism, the Deputy Ministerial Working Group (DMWG) which further monitors the implementation of decisions and undertakings made during the JC.

On 23 October 2017, the former Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane hosted her counterpart, Dr Javad Zarif for the 13th JC between the Republic of South Africa and the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pretoria.

South Africa supports Iran's right to develop and use nuclear

technology for peaceful purposes, whilst also encouraging it to increase its commitment to international verification and similar confidence building measures.

South Africa welcomed and will continue to support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear programme.

Saudi Arabia

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Saudi Arabia were formalised in November 1994. Economic Relations are managed through the Joint Economic Commission and will be invaluable in implementing the high-level decisions made during the State Visits of President Ramaphosa in 2018 and then President Zuma in 2016.

Saudi Arabia is a key economic partner for South Africa as a fellow G20 member state and South Africa's largest supplier of crude oil and related products since 2012.

Saudi Arabia is South Africa's largest trading partner in the Middle East with total trade in 2017 valued at R 55,5 billion rand – demonstrating a decrease in imports but an increase in exports due to diversification in South Africa's oil supply.

Saudi Arabia committed to invest US\$ 10 billion into South Africa during the State Visit of President Ramaphosa during July 2018.

South Africa and Saudi Arabia are also increasing the people-to-people interaction through tourism initiatives and supporting pilgrims when performing their holy duties of Hajj and Umrah.

In addition, Saudi Arabia supports South Africa's application for observer status at the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation.

Qatar

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and the State of Qatar were established in 1994. South Africa's political and economic relations with Qatar have diversified and grown significantly over recent years and have become more diverse.

The Emir of Qatar, His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani undertook a State Visit to Pretoria in April 2017, followed by a visit to Qatar by the former Minister, Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane in July 2017.

Trade between South Africa and Qatar amounted to R 4, 6 billion in 2017. Qatar has traditionally enjoyed a healthy trade

surplus owing to the high proportion of oil and petrochemical trade to South Africa.

Kuwait

Kuwait remains an important partner for South Africa in the Middle East, particularly in terms of economic relations.

Kuwait has become an increasingly important market for South African exports and several Kuwaiti companies have made 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.

Kuwait is South Africa's largest source of FDI from the Middle East, especially in the hospitality industry, through the Zimbali Resort investment and the automotive component investment by KAPICO.

Oman

Diplomatic relations were established in 1995 and are managed through the South Africa-Oman Partnership Forum. Both countries are keen to attract further investment.

A primary project by Oman is the Port of Sohar Projects, which will facilitate the trade of agro-processed products from South Africa.

Yemen

Relations between South Africa and Yemen are cordial. Both two countries are members of UN, IORA and the NAM.

The continued civil war in Yemen has hindered the development and strengthening of bilateral relations.

North America

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 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 cooperation with South Africa focuses on strengthening service delivery, support for HIV and AIDS

programmes and rural development.

In June 2018, at the invitation of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, President Ramaphosa paid a Working Visit to Canada where he participated in the G7 Leaders' Outreach Summit, held in Quebec City, under the theme "Healthy, Productive and Resilient Oceans and Seas, Coasts and Communities"

In line with the President's stated drive to attract investment to grow the economy and create jobs, as well as reduce poverty and inequality, the President had an opportunity to engage with representatives of the business community in Toronto.

On the side-lines of the G7 Summit, President Ramaphosa held a number of bilateral engagements with Heads of State and Government from various States including Norway, France, Germany, Vietnam, Rwanda, Kenya and the host country, Canada.

A successful meeting of the structured Annual Consultations took place on 8 and 9 May 2018 in Ottawa, Canada. Bilateral trade between the two countries is largely balanced.

United States of America

Formal relations between South Africa and the United States (US) are historic, dating back to 1789.

The bilateral relationship is broad and deep, covering political, diplomatic, economic, social, scientific, educational, cultural, as well as regional and global cooperation on issues of mutual interest.

Bilateral relations between South Africa and the US are cordial. The US supports South Africa's domestic priorities and continues to align its assistance programmes to the NDP. The US contributes approximately US\$541,681 million in ODA per year and is the biggest international donor to South Africa's HIV and AIDS efforts, via the President's Emergency Programme For Aids Relief (PEPFAR).

The US is a major economic partner for South Africa, an important export market for value-added goods, a source of FDI, technology and of tourists.

Trade and investment relations take place under the auspices of the African Growth and Opportunity Act, under which South Africa gains duty-free and quota-free access to the US market for value-added products.

The US is currently South Africa's 3rd largest trading partner, absorbing a substantial amount of manufactured exports from South Africa.

The trade relationship is mutually beneficial and the total two-way trade was valued at R153, 49 billion in 2016. US exports to South Africa grew to R72, 9 billion in 2017.

Similarly, South Africa's exports to the US grew to R88, 7 billion in 2017. Some of South Africa's largest corporations have also undertaken major investments in the US.

These investments, led by companies such as Sasol, Sappi and Naspers, are approaching US\$7 billion.

South Africa continues to place a high premium on high-level political exchanges. In this regard, an invitation has been extended to the US Secretary of State to visit South Africa for the 4th meeting of the Ministerial-level South Africa – US Strategic Dialogue, which is a structured mechanism to strengthen bilateral relations and deepen cooperation on regional and global issues.

Regional Organisations

European Union (EU)

The EU remains a key strategic region for South Africa and a prominent dialogue partner from the global North.

Relations with the EU are structured in accordance with the Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement (TDCA), whereas trade relations are governed by the Southern African Development Community (SADC)-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (SADC-EU EPA). The South Africa-EU Strategic Partnership is the only strategic partnership the EU has with an African country, and one of only 10 globally.

The Strategic Partnership expanded the scope of the interaction beyond trade issues, to incorporate a much wider scope of cooperation with structured bilateral mechanisms and High-Level meetings (Summit, Ministerial Political Dialogue (MPD), Senior-Official meetings and Inter-Parliamentary meetings) to support South Africa's national, regional, continental, and global priorities and programmes.

The Joint Cooperation Council (JCC), Co-Chaired by the Director-General of the DIRCO and the EU counterpart, covers over twenty sectoral policy dialogues, including

diverse issues such as development cooperation, science and technology, space, migration, health, trade, education and skills development, peace and security, and human rights.

The EU is South Africa's largest trading partner, as a block of 28 Member States, and largest foreign investor representing 77% of total FDI stocks in the country.

South Africa enjoys strong economic ties with the EU, developed under the TDCA. Since the TDCA came into force, total trade has increased from R150 billion in 2000 to R599.86 billion in 2017, a growth of nearly 300%.

Despite the fact that South Africa is experiencing a negative trade balance, exports to the EU have been increasing steadily over the years.

South African exports to the EU increased from R64 billion in 2000 to R262 billion in 2017, a 309% increase. Over 2 000 EU companies operate in South Africa, creating more than 500,000 direct and indirect jobs.

Regarding ODA from the EU, the South Africa-EU Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (MIP) for South Africa, for the funding cycle 2014-2020, is €241 million, and outlines three priority areas aligned with objectives of the NDP 2030, namely, (i) employment creation; (ii) education, training and innovation; and (iii) building a capable and developmental state.

South Africa-EU Development Cooperation, a pillar of the Strategic Partnership, remains centred on the concepts of value addition fostering innovation, piloting, capacity development and catalytic initiatives aimed at addressing the reduction of poverty and inequality in South Africa.

The EU's development cooperation with South Africa is informed by the NDP, and contributes substantially to the country's national priorities.

In addition, the Infrastructure Investment Programme for South Africa (IIPSA), of which DIRCO is a Committee Member, is a €100 million (R1.8 billion) infrastructure investment programme developed jointly by the South African Government and the EU, and when fully implemented will go a long way in unlocking infrastructure backlogs, not only in South Africa but also in the SADC region.

Western Europe

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 serves as port of entry for the largest portion of South African exports to the European Union and beyond.

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.

South African exports to Belgium include, amongst others, manufactured goods such as vehicles, precious stones, organic chemical, iron ore and steel.

Belgian FDI into South Africa totalled R10.11 billion in 2017, creating about 1,380 jobs within the Software & IT, Business, Hotel & Tourism and Alternative/Renewable Energy sectors.

Belgium is also one of the leading sources of inbound tourism, with 54 048 Belgian tourists visited South Africa during 2017.

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.

For the period 2011-2016, assistance amounted to R327.3 million. However, in 2015 the Belgian Federal Council of Ministers adopted a new list of partner countries.

Belgium's development cooperation shifted to fragile states and post-conflict zones as well as LDCs.

Consequently development cooperation programmes in South Africa will be gradually phased out and terminated in 2019.

This will give way to other forms of cooperation, among others with stakeholders of the non-governmental cooperation, including non-governmental organisations and universities.

The Netherlands

Since 1994, South Africa and the Netherlands have forged a solid partnership that covers many fields including Economic, Trade, Science and Technology, Education, Judicial, Multilateral and Culture. The Dutch Government has consistently supported

South Africa in terms of bilateral and multilateral relations

There are approximately in existence 42 Agreements, Memoranda of Understanding and Letters of Intent in various areas, mainly in terms of Water Resource Planning, Science and Technology, Military Cooperation, Development Cooperation and Infrastructure Development. In 2017 exports to the Netherlands were R37.083 billion while imports from the Netherlands amounted to R16.393 billion.

The balance of trade is thus in South Africa's favour but these are not necessarily exports from South Africa heading into the Netherlands, but possibly goods heading to the Port of Rotterdam and then being distributed across Europe from there.

According to FDI Markets, a total of 50 FDI projects from the Netherlands into South Africa were recorded between January 2003 and December 2017.

These projects represented a total capital investment of R5.49 billion, an average investment of R915.19 million per project.

A total of 2 828 jobs were created in the sectors of Chemicals, IT services, Business services, Aerospace, Communications, Financial services, Food and Tobacco, Industrial machinery and Electronic components.

Luxembourg

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

Germany

South Africa and Germany have a strategic relationship, with regular structured dialogue and cooperation engagements covering a broad range of areas, including political dialogue, trade and investment, science and technology, the environment, vocational education and training, development cooperation, energy, defence, labour and social affairs, as well as arts and culture.

Germany and South Africa continue to have a dynamic and robust growing trade relationship. In 2017, Germany became South Africa's 2nd largest trading partner with total trade growing by 11% over 2015 to R211.6 billion.

Germany also remained one of the largest foreign investors

in South Africa, with more than 600 German companies having subsidiaries or production in the country, sustaining approximately 100 000 jobs.

The BNC remains the only and most important structures mechanism steering relations between South Africa and Germany.

South Africa is scheduled to host the 10th South Africa-Germany BNC on 18 and 19 October 2018, which rotates between the capitals of the two countries on a biennial basis and co-chaired at Foreign Minister Level.

This year marked the centenary of former President Nelson Mandela and this led a Joint Commemorative Nelson Mandela Stamp, which was launched on 31 July 2018 in South Africa.

South Africa and Germany will both serve as Non-Permanent Members of the UNSC for the period of 2019 – 2020.

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.

Then Deputy President Ramaphosa led a South African delegation of Cabinet ministers and business leaders to the WEF in Davos, Switzerland, in January 2018. The four-day meeting was held under the theme “Creating a Shared Future in a Fractured World”.

On 3 October 2017, Deputy Minister Luwellyn Landers co-chaired the 8th South Africa-Switzerland High-Level Consultation (HLC) with State Secretary, Ms Pascale Baeriswyl in Pretoria.

The HLC is the main structured mechanism steering bilateral relations between the two countries.

The purpose of the HLC is to take stock of relations and progresses made since the last sitting, as well as identify new areas of cooperation to continue strengthening relations.

Consultations take place at the level of Deputy Minister Level. The 9th South Africa-Switzerland HLC is scheduled to be hosted by Switzerland in Bern in October 2018.

South Africa hosted the 8th Session of South Africa – Switzerland Joint Economic Committee (JEC) on the 15th of June 2018.

Switzerland has transitioned from a purely Development Assistance Programme in South Africa to focussing on an Economic Cooperation.

The Swiss Strategy for Economic Cooperation with South Africa is implemented by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and financed through the Swiss Framework Credit 2017-2020 for economic and trade policy measures.

The planned commitment for South Africa for the 2017-2020 period is 55 million Swiss Francs (approximately ZAR 740 million), which is allocated in close coordination with South Africa’s National Treasury.

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

South Africa is Switzerland’s second largest trading partner in Africa after Ghana. In 2017 imports from Switzerland amounted to R10,234bn and exports to Switzerland were R11,705. The balance of trade is therefore in South Africa’s favour.

Switzerland is the 7th largest foreign investor in South Africa, with more than 100 Swiss companies having subsidiaries of production in South Africa, sustaining approximately 33 000 jobs.

Austria

Apart from the political dialogue, the two Foreign Ministries have signed a MoU on the Establishment of Bilateral Consultation Mechanism between the Austrian Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs and DIRCO, which was signed during the second South Africa-Austria Senior Officials Dialogue meeting which was held on 3 June 2016 in Vienna, Austria.

The proposal of the MoU is based on the substantive trade and investment relationship between the two countries, growing tourism figures, as well as both countries respective regional and global roles.

The MoU allows for regular bilateral consultations at Senior Officials Level to review all aspects of bilateral relations, exchange views on regional and international issues of mutual interest as well as on developments taking place in regional and international fora.

Current bilateral programmes supported by the Austrian

Embassy in South Africa are as follows:

- Supporting tourism schools and curricular developments in hospitality industry;
- Supporting renewable energy training, particular solar through the Soltrain II project;
- Providing vocational welding training through the Austrian Welding Academy and with the support of the Austrian Development Agency
- Supporting vocational training through the Ithuba College south of Johannesburg;
- Promoting Higher Education through university to university cooperation.
- Current partnerships include the Universities i.e. Western Cape – Linz, Wits – Vienna, Stellenbosch – Graze etc.

South Africa enjoys cordial bilateral relations with the Republic of Austria, focused primarily on economic exchanges.

The bilateral exchanges focus on trade and investment, tourism and technological co-operation as well as vocational training.

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.

South Africa is Austria’s main trading partner in Africa and ranks 6th among Austria’s overseas trading partners.

In 2017, total trade between South Africa and Austria amounted to Euro 403.4 million. South African exports to Austria amounted to Euro 186.1 million and Austria’s exports to South Africa were Euro 217.3 million.

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, 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.

The United Kingdom was South Africa's 6th largest global trading partner in 2017, with total trade at R79,5 billion. The United Kingdom was South Africa's 8th largest global export market for SA goods in 2017 at R46,3 billion.

South Africa and the UK have important trade and economic relations, which continue to strengthen.

The United Kingdom remains a critical market for especially agriculture exports, accounting for over 20% of South Africa's exports of wine and 30% of fruit exports globally.

The United Kingdom remains a critical global investment partner for South Africa. The United Kingdom 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 with nearly 448 000 visitors in 2017.

In April 2018, President Ramaphosa led a South African delegation to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM 2018) in London and also paid a Working Visit to the UK, holding bilateral talks with Prime Minister Theresa May.

He addressed, among others, the African Leaders' Roundtable of the Commonwealth Business Forum.

President Ramaphosa also engaged with senior international investors and business leaders hosted by Bloomberg and attended the Commonwealth Business Forum Heads of Government Roundtable with senior business leaders hosted by Prime Minister Theresa May.

Brexit is the key political topic in the United Kingdom and will overwhelmingly dominate political debate in the United Kingdom until well after the United Kingdom leaves the EU.

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 information technology services, and plastics.

Deputy Minister Landers hosted the Minister of State for the Diaspora and International Development of Ireland, Ciarán Cannon, for the Fifth Session of the South Africa-Ireland

Partnership Forum in Pretoria on 31 October 2017.

The meeting reaffirmed the historical ties, close friendship and common interests and values that are the foundation of the strong relationship between South Africa and Ireland.

During the Forum the parties had wide ranging discussions on political, economic and social developments in both countries, as well as current affairs in Africa and Europe.

They reviewed bilateral political and economic relations expressing satisfaction on the progress achieved in various areas of cooperation since the last Partnership Forum of 2015 and further agreeing to explore other areas of cooperation over the coming years including in agriculture, and education.

The Irish Government also provides assistance to South African students through the Kader Asmal Fellowship which has awarded scholarships to 53 students since 2013.

France

France is a significant technological, trade, investment, tourism and development cooperation partner for South Africa.

Bilateral technical cooperation between South Africa and France exist in various sectors, including energy, agriculture, manufacturing, transport, education and science and technology. About 250 French companies have invested in South Africa and employ around 300 000 people.

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.

South Africa-Greece relations are, furthermore, underpinned by the presence of a substantial and influential Greek professional and business community in South Africa.

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 that country, partly because of a substantial and influential Cypriot community

in South Africa.

Italy

South Africa enjoys constructive bilateral relations with Italy, based on a shared commitment to the values of freedom, democracy and a similar approach to a broad range of international issues.

This is due, in part, to the strong cultural links and long-standing diplomatic relations between the two countries underpinned by a dynamic, well-integrated and respected Italian community here which also contributes to the economy of the country.

A MoU establishing bilateral Consultation was signed and entered into force in 2003; with Senior Officials Meeting being a platform set to coordinate political relations at the Deputy Director-General level.

Spain

The Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Luwellyn Landers, hosted the Spanish Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Ildefonso Castro, on the occasion of the 11th South Africa-Spain Annual Consultations on 29 September 2017 in Pretoria.

Bilateral relations between South Africa and Spain are strong and are anchored through the Annual Consultations held at Deputy Minister level.

The Annual Consultations take place under the auspices of the MoU signed in December 2000, which serves as the main forum for coordinating bilateral relations between the two countries on a wide spectrum of bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual concern.

Spin is active with regard to solar and wind renewable energy projects in South Africa.

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.

A bilateral at Senior Official's level (SOM at DG level) was held on 22 and 23 October 2017 in Portugal. This is held on a biannual basis. A bilateral agreement was signed between the Department of Science and Technology and their Portuguese counterpart in 2015 and entered into force during the second half of 2017. At the SOM, it was agreed that an executive framework on implementation is in process.

By mid-2018, approximately 200 South African students were pursuing tertiary education in various fields in Portugal.

Holy See

South Africa opened a Mission at the Holy See during 2017. The Holy SEE is of strategic importance politically and in respect of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law.

Central, Eastern Europe, Nordic And Baltic Countries

Nordic countries

South Africa enjoys good relations with all the Nordic and Baltic countries flowing from the strong grassroots support of these countries for democratisation in South Africa.

Relations have been established in various fields at both public and official levels. The scope of Nordic development cooperation is broad and has benefited civil society and government. Although Nordic countries stopped providing development assistance to South Africa in 2009, these countries continue to provide technical support and also partner with the South African Government and civil society in addressing development needs in various fields.

Relations in the international arena have seen close cooperation on multilateral issues. The Nordic countries are strong supporters of NEPAD 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

The bilateral relations between South Africa and Denmark are

predicated on the historic Danish support and solidarity with the liberation struggle against apartheid in the early 1960's, leading to the eventual establishment of formal diplomatic relations at the advent of South Africa's democracy.

South Africa has close relations with Denmark dating back to the constant and strong support for democracy in South Africa. Bilateral political relations are warm and sound.

Denmark is also an important partner with regard to overseas development. South Africa's relations with Denmark are coordinated through the South Africa-Denmark Senior Officials Consultations and the main areas of cooperation include water-resource management, science and technology, maritime affairs, and environmental affairs.

Denmark supports South Africa in achieving the objectives of the NDP and National Water & Sanitation Master Plan (NW&SMP).

The Strategic Water Sector Programme addresses issues of financing and research and innovation. Other areas of support include exchange of expertise on affordable and clean energy and sustainable cities and communities.

Estonia

There is no resident Estonian Mission in South Africa, and the South African Embassy in Finland is also accredited to Estonia on a non-residential basis.

The ICT sector, Science and Technology and Tourism have been identified as potential areas for strategic bilateral cooperation between South Africa and Estonia.

Finland

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Finland were re-established in 1994. The bilateral relationship was given more definite structure with the signing of the Declaration of Intent at the Skagen Nordic Summit in 2000. Regular bilateral consultations are co-ordinated at Senior Officials' level.

The main areas of co-operation include education and skills development with special emphasis on the maritime sector and cooperation in the field of science, technology and innovation.

The blue economy is central to both countries and is also emphasised as an area with potential for future partnerships.

Finland supports Africa's infrastructure development through its funding of the EU-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund.

It also supports the implementation of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy by promoting four of the eight thematic partnerships of the joint strategy in Africa; namely, peace and security, democratic governance and human rights, climate change and science, information society and space.

Iceland

Formal diplomatic relations were established in 1995 at an Ambassadorial level on a non-residential basis. The South African Embassy in Norway is accredited to Iceland on a non-resident basis.

In terms of trade cooperation, South Africa's exports to Iceland amount to R78 million and the Iceland's exports to South Africa amount to R70 million.

Latvia

Full diplomatic relations were established later in 1991. The South African Embassy in Sweden is accredited to Latvia on a non-residential basis. In terms of trade cooperation, South African exports to Latvia in 2017 were R 584 million and imports from Latvia amounted to R 638 million.

Lithuania

South Africa and Lithuania entered into diplomatic relations in 2008 and the first Lithuanian Ambassador to South Africa was appointed in 2015. The South African Embassy in Sweden is accredited to Lithuania.

Relations between South Africa and Lithuania are coordinated at Senior Officials level. The main areas of cooperation between South Africa and Lithuania include Trade and Investment, Energy, Transport, Science and Technology and Academic and Cultural cooperation.

Norway

South Africa opened a Consulate General in Oslo in September 1988 while Norway already had a Consulate General in Cape Town. On 1 January 1992, diplomatic relations were upgraded to ambassadorial level.

South Africa and Norway have a history of working together in the promotion of democracy; good governance and human rights. Both countries cooperate and support each other in bilateral and multilateral relations.

South Africa's relations with Norway are coordinated through the South Africa-Norway High Level Consultations.

South Africa and Norway cooperate in the field of Peace Building and Mediation. The Programme focusses on building capacities for female mediators in conflict situations.

Training provided includes women in Government and non-government organisations. In the area of the Blue Economy, South Africa and Norway have established a Fisheries Law Enforcement Academy at Nelson Mandela University (NMU) called FishFORCE.

The Norwegian Government has committed an amount of approximately R50 million (over the next five years) to the Academy. In the area of Science and Technology, South Africa and Norway have signed a new framework programme for joint research cooperation, referred to as "South Africa-Norway research co-operation, focusing on blue economy, climate change, the environment and sustainable energy (SANOCEAN). (The programme will run over a period of five years, starting from 2018 to 2023.

Sweden

Formal relations between Sweden and South Africa date back to the 1930s when a South African legation was opened in Stockholm. Relations were upgraded to Ambassadorial level in 1994. Bilateral Relations are coordinated through the South Africa – Swedish BNC, which was inaugurated in September 2000 by then President Thabo Mbeki and Prime Minister Göran Persson.

Areas of cooperation include science and technology, maritime affairs, and environmental affairs.

South Africa's relations with Sweden are coordinated through the South Africa-Sweden BNC at Deputy President's level and the main areas of cooperation.

The Swedish government has extended the 30 fully funded scholarships for South Africans to pursue post-graduate studies in Sweden until 2021. The programme offers 10 scholarships

per annum over a period of three academic years.

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 energy can go a long way towards alleviating South Africa's energy needs.

Azerbaijan

South Africa and Azerbaijan established diplomatic relations in 1991. The South African Embassy in Ankara is also accredited to the Republic of Azerbaijan on a non-residential basis.

Structured bilateral relations were established by means of an MoU on Regular Diplomatic Consultations that was concluded between South Africa and Azerbaijan on 21 February 2014. The MoU on Regular Diplomatic Consultations provides for the strengthening and broadening of the scope of bilateral co-operation in the political, economic, scientific, technological, cultural and humanitarian areas. Other areas of potential interests are energy, defence and air services.

Belarus

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Belarus were established in March 1993. Currently the South African Ambassador to the Russian Federation is the non-residential Ambassador to the Republic of Belarus. Belarus opened its Embassy in South Africa in January 2000 and the first South African Ambassador presented credentials in February 2000.

South Africa and Belarus mainly engage through the Inter-Governmental Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) led by the Department of Trade and Industry.

ITEC is co-chaired at the level of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs on the Belarusian side and at the Deputy Minister of the dti on the South African side.

The primary objective of ITEC is to strengthen and develop trade and economic cooperation on a long term and stable basis and on the principles of equality and mutual benefit.

Georgia

Full diplomatic relations between South Africa and Georgia were established in 1992. The South African Embassy in Kyiv, Ukraine, is non-residentially accredited to Georgia. The Government of Georgia opened an Embassy in August 2011 in Pretoria.

The two countries have good bilateral relations and have been cooperating mainly through sport, culture and in the agricultural sector especially through wine making exchange programmes.

Through joint efforts, Georgian and South African links are deepening through increased interactions in culture and sports, such as rugby.

The two countries have established a Wine Makers exchange programme which has seen student and expert exchanges between Telavi State University (Faculty of Agra-Sciences) and the University of Stellenbosch (Faculty of Wine Sciences) During 2017 South African wine makers participated in the Georgia harvest season.

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 Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, 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.

Since the re-establishment of bilateral relations, South Africa's relations with Russia have evolved into a strategic relationship over the past few years through continued high level political engagements.

One of the primary mechanisms for improving the bilateral relationship and advancing the Government's development objectives is the Inter-Governmental Committee on Trade and Economic Co-operation (ITEC) which was established in 1999 The ITEC is the most important mechanism underpinning mutually beneficial trade and economic ties between the two countries.

ITEC has proven to be an effective instrument for effective engagement on trade and investment issues, as well as critical skills and technology transfers amongst others. ITEC has given practical substance to the political commitment on the part of the two countries to work together, as expressed in the Treaty of Friendship and Partnership signed by both countries.

Sectors covered within ITEC include Agriculture; Forestry and Fisheries; Energy; Education; Mineral Resources; Science and Technology; Transport; Water and Sanitation; Trade and Industry and the South Africa –Russia Business Council.

Further substance has been added to the growing relationship through the South Africa – Russia Friendship and Cooperation Agreement which was signed in 2006 and a Declaration on Strategic Partnership between the Republic of South Africa and the Russian Federation was signed in March 2013.

Serbia

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Serbia were established in April 2002 when Serbia was still referred to as the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Serbia regards South Africa as a strategic partner on the African Continent, a regional power and a leading economy that is playing a positive role in promoting peace, security and sustainable development in Africa.

South Africa's contribution to the advancement of multilateralism, the rule of law, human rights and an equitable global governance system is similarly appreciated.

Serbia opened its Embassy in Pretoria in June 1996. The South African Ambassador in Athens, Greece, is accredited to the Republic of Serbia on a non-resident basis.

Areas of cooperation are based on shared interests between the two countries, including consolidation of peace and security, the establishment of democratic values and observance of human rights as embodied in the UN Charter.

Turkey

The South Africa-Turkey strategic partnership is informed by the two countries' growing political and economic profile and their geostrategic location in Africa and Euro – Asia; Turkey's rapidly growing political and economic footprint in Africa, including the

Africa-Turkey strategic partnership; the two countries' capacity to project their foreign policies regionally and globally; active participation and membership in various organisations such as the G20 and the UN.

Relations between South Africa and Turkey had since 2005 been co-ordinated through the South Africa-Turkey Joint Economic Commission (JEC).

An Agreement to elevate the relations to a BNC at Deputy President and Prime Minister levels respectively, was signed in Turkey on 7 June 2012 and ratified by the Turkish Parliament in July 2015.

On the economic front, Economic Relations between South Africa and Turkey are coordinated through the SA-Turkey JEC, led by the South African Minister of Trade and Industry on the South African side.

The primary objective of the JEC, which was established in 2005, is to promote and deepen bilateral trade relations and economic between the two countries.

The priority sectors for the JEC include Agriculture and Agribusiness; automotives; infrastructure, energy and construction services; minerals resources; textile and clothing; as well as tourism.

Ukraine

Diplomatic relations between Ukraine and South Africa were established in March 1992. South Africa opened its Embassy in Kiev during October 1992 whilst Ukraine opened its Embassy in Pretoria during 1995.

The 16th of March 2017 marked the 25 years of the existence of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Both countries enjoy good bilateral relations.

Cooperation between the two countries is guided through regular Senior Officials' Political Consultations. Areas of cooperation between South Africa and Ukraine include Military Cooperation, Education and Science and Technology.

Central Europe

Central Europe has seen substantial improvement in relations with South Africa. A number of bilateral mechanisms with these countries were established at various levels.

The areas of cooperation have been considerable in, inter alia, the fields of Education, Arts and Culture, Science and Technology, Agriculture, Water Affairs, Trade, Tourism. South Africa works very closely with Central European countries on multilateral forums.

Bulgaria

South Africa and Bulgaria have maintained cordial and warm relations dating back to the liberation struggle as Bulgaria hosted a number of anti-apartheid activists.

Diplomatic relations at the level of Ambassador were established through the exchange of Notes in February 1992 and the South African Embassy in Sofia started functioning in 1992, while the Bulgarian Embassy in Pretoria was opened in February 1993.

During the history of formal relations, a number of official delegations were exchanged including the visit of the former Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, in 2011 and that of the Premier of the Free State in 2015. Key areas of cooperation between South Africa and Bulgaria are in the fields of Education and Agriculture.

Croatia

Bilateral relations between South Africa and Croatia have developed steadily since diplomatic relations were established in 1992. The South African Embassy in Hungary is accredited to Croatia whilst Croatia opened its Embassy in Pretoria in November 1995.

Bilateral relations between the two countries are co-ordinated at the level of Senior Officials with emphasis in various areas such as marine technology, higher education and training, science and technology, and tourism.

Czech Republic

Full diplomatic relations between South Africa and the Czech Republic were established in 1991 and resident Embassies in each other's capitals were established soon after.

Bilateral relations have evolved to a level of maturity, underpinned by increasing commercial and business-to-business activities, as well as people-to-people exchanges.

Political consultations are coordinated at Deputy Ministerial level. Areas of cooperation between the two countries include tourism, defence, medical equipment, pharmaceuticals and agro-processing.

Hungary

Hungary was the first, among the Central European countries, to establish diplomatic ties with South Africa. Full diplomatic relations between South Africa and Hungary were established in July 1991.

Both countries enjoy cordial bilateral relations. Hungary and South Africa cooperate in the fields of Education, Science and Technology. The co-operation on Higher Education and Training came into effect in 2016.

The first 85 students travelled to Hungary in August 2017 to study in various fields and at various levels of Bachelors, Masters and PhD.

The two countries also signed a bilateral agreement in the field of Water Resource Management in May 2017.

Poland

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and the Czech Republic were concluded on 18 December 1991 and Embassies were opened in each capital.

Political Consultations between the two countries were established thereafter and are co-ordinated at the Deputy Minister's level. Poland, with a population of 38 million people, is the 6th largest economy in the EU.

South Africa is Poland's top trade partner in Africa. Areas of co-operation between Poland and South Africa include aeronautics, automotives, defence and agriculture.

Tourism from Poland to South Africa has increased by 8.2% in 2016 and Poland now is the most important source of tourists to South Africa from Central and Eastern Europe.

Romania

South Africa and Romania established diplomatic relations in November 1991. The formal mechanism, legalising bilateral political consultations on an institutionalised basis between South Africa and Romania, was signed in September 2016. The

protocol is crucial in strengthening bilateral relations as well as providing a political framework for other agreements and commitments.

South Africa and Romania signed an Agreement in the field of Science and Technology in September 2004. The partnership has successfully contributed to scientific advancement in both countries .

Other areas of cooperation between South Africa and Romania include energy, mining, agriculture, and marine technology.

Slovakia

Full diplomatic relations between the former Federal Republic of Czechoslovakia and South Africa were established in October 1991.

The dissolution of the Federal Republic of Czechoslovakia brought about the Slovak Republic as a separate sovereign state in 1993.

The bilateral diplomatic relations entered into with the Federal Republic of Czechoslovakia continued uninterrupted with the Slovak Republic. South Africa's bilateral relations with Slovakia are sound.

Whilst South Africa does not have an Embassy in Bratislava, South Africa's relations with Slovakia are managed on a non-resident basis by the South African Embassy in Vienna.

Areas of co-operation between South Africa and Slovakia are in the fields of automotives (including automotive components), agro-processing, medical equipment and pharmaceuticals.

Slovenia

Full diplomatic relations between South Africa and Slovenia were established in 1992. However, both countries do not have resident diplomatic representation in each other's country.

Both countries enjoy cordial bilateral relations. Bilateral relations between the two countries exist at the level of Senior Officials with meeting taking place alternatively every two years.

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.

Latin America and the Caribbean

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 the Caribbean Community and Common Market (Caricom) and acts as the region's voice in the G20.

In June 2015, Deputy Minister Landers engaged with the heads of mission (ambassadors, high commissioners and/or their representatives) of the Latin America and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) accredited to South Africa in a discussion forum.

The discussions focused on opportunities for South Africa in Latin America and explored ways to expand relations between South Africa and GRULAC.

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 that 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.

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.

Uruguay, Chile and Colombia

South Africa and Chile enjoy sound bilateral relations, which are conducted through the JCM at deputy ministerial level.

The JCM continues to serve a constructive purpose in the ongoing political dialogue between the two countries at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels.

South Africa is Chile's largest trading partner in Africa and South Africa is the biggest investor in Chile's mining sector. The biggest area of trade between South Africa and Chile is capital goods for mining.

Bilateral relations between South Africa and Colombia are cordial and growing.

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.

A group comprising of 18 South African exporters of mining equipment and related services showcased their products at the 2017 Perumin Mining Convention from 18 to 25 September 2017 in Arequipa, Peru.

The convention takes place bi-annually and brings together the world's leading technology and services in the mining and metals sector. South Africa's participation will focus on machinery, equipment, technologies, services and supplies for the mining sector.

Venezuela

Minister Sisulu, on 6 July 2018, hosted the Venezuelan Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jorge Arreaza.

The visit took place after the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela held its Presidential elections on 20 May 2018, which saw the re-election of President Nicolas Maduro as the Head of State and the re-appointment of Minister Arreaza to the portfolio of Foreign Affairs.

The visit was an opportunity to continue to strengthen the existing bilateral relations between South Africa and Venezuela, specifically in the areas of trade and investment; agriculture; energy; transport; mining, tourism and consular matters as the identified areas of focus for the relationship.

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela were established in 1993 and in 1995. The two countries share cordial relations premised on mainly political relations.

Cuba

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

In October 2017, Deputy Minister Landers travelled to Cuba to co-chair the 14th South Africa-Cuba Joint Consultative Mechanism (JCM). Deputy Minister Landers also met the Cuban Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade and Cooperation.

The JCM convenes annually, alternately in South Africa and Cuba. The JCM was established in 2001 to strengthen relations and further increase cooperation between the two countries.

This meeting serves to affirm the importance of bilateral relations between South Africa and Cuba and emphasise a desire to build on existing cooperation at various levels.

Relations between South Africa and Cuba are characterised by high-level political dialogues.

There are over 30 signed bilateral agreements in place between the two countries covering vast areas of cooperation. The most active of these agreements are in the areas of health cooperation, human settlements technical exchange, public works technical assistance, cooperation on water resource management and water supply and most recently, the agreement on professional services in the field of basic education.

In April 2018, President Ramaphosa congratulated the new President of the Republic of Cuba, His Excellency Miguel Diaz-Canel, after the Cuban National Assembly of People's Power announced on 19 April 2018 that First Vice President Miguel Diaz-Canel will replace President Raul Castro as the President of the Council of State and of the country.

In July 2018, Minister Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma attended the graduation ceremony of 700 medical students from the Nelson Mandela-Fidel Castro (NMFC) Programme in Cuba

The programme was forged by President Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro in 1996 as part of the various bilateral agreements between South Africa and Cuba.