



Foreign affairs

The Department of Foreign Affairs formulates, co-ordinates, implements and manages South Africa's foreign-policy and international-relations programmes throughout the world. These are guided by a commitment to promoting human rights, democracy, justice and international law; international peace and internationally agreed mechanisms for resolving conflicts; Africa in world affairs; and economic development through regional and international co-operation.

South Africa and Africa

South Africa's development is inextricably linked to the development of Africa and the southern African region. Africa faces the challenge of positioning itself to address the marginalisation of the continent by engaging global role-players on socio-economic development, and facilitating a fair and just global order.

African Union (AU)

The AU is Africa's premier institution and principal organisation for promoting the continent's accelerated socio-economic integration, which will lead to greater unity and solidarity between African countries and peoples. South Africa was instrumental in establishing the AU and its organs, namely the:

- Assembly
- Executive Council
- specialised technical committees
- financial institutions
- Permanent Representative Council
- Peace and Security Council
- Pan-African Parliament (PAP)

- Economic, Social and Cultural Council
- Court of Justice
- African Court on Human and People's Rights
- African Commission on Human and People's Rights.

The financial institutions, African Central Bank and African Monetary Fund, and African Court of Justice, still have to be operationalised.

Through active interventions in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Ethiopia/Eritrea, Côte d'Ivoire and Sudan, South Africa supports peace and security efforts in Africa.

The fifth session of the PAP took place in Johannesburg in May 2006. The PAP will occupy its current temporary premises in Midrand, Johannesburg, until 2010. Preparations are under way to identify a suitable site and construct the permanent headquarters of the PAP in South Africa

New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad)

South Africa is a key driver of Nepad, a socio-economic initiative to promote good governance, eradicate poverty and create sustainable economic growth.

The Department of Foreign Affairs will continue to facilitate implementing Nepad's priority sectors, namely infrastructure, agriculture, environment, tourism, information and communications technology, health, human resources, and science and technology. Attention will increasingly be paid to establishing structures in South Africa to enable the country to maximise the increased trade and investment benefits arising from Nepad.

By the end of 2005/06, South Africa was preparing for its review by Nepad's African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), an instrument voluntarily agreed to by AU member states for African self-monitoring.

The APRM's purpose is to foster the adaptation of policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability, high economic

growth, sustainable development and accelerated subregional and continental economic integration by sharing experience and reinforcing successful and best practice, including identifying deficiencies and assessing the needs for capacity-building.

In July 2006, the Minister of Public Service and Administration, Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, presented the APRM Country Self-Assessment Report to the APRM Country Review Team. This saw the official launch of the Country Review Mission.

The country's representatives sit on the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee and its Steering Committee. The Nepad Secretariat's full-time core staff are located in Midrand, Johannesburg.

South Africa and the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

The SADC is a critical vehicle for southern African regional development.

It provides for regional peace and security, sectoral co-operation and an integrated regional economy. The SADC member states are Angola, Botswana, the DRC, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, the Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

South Africa has been engaged in restructuring the SADC to enable it to execute evolving AU mandates and respond to changing development challenges. Considerable work has gone into setting up new institutions, as well as reviewing existing ones. One of the organ's main functions is to ensure that the regional peace and security arrangements are linked to continental arrangements. Another challenge is finalising the Memorandum of Understanding between the AU Commission and Africa's regional economic communities to ensure a co-ordinated interface for addressing AU themes and activities.

Asia and Australasia

South Africa continues to strengthen its relations with the region through increased two-way trade; personal exchanges between high-level dignitaries; and the finalisation of new instruments of co-operation in the scientific and technological fields, through technology transfer, investments and overseas development assistance in capacity-building.

While Japan, Malaysia and Taiwan already rank among the foremost sources of foreign direct investment (FDI) in South Africa, the significance of China and India, as sources of investment, is growing. South Africa's multinational companies are finding attractive investment opportunities in Australia, China, Indonesia and Thailand in diverse fields such as mining, minerals processing, electronic media and the petrochemical industry.

South Africa also plays a leading role in the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation, which creates an opportunity for countries of the South to serve their economic interests.

As a result of South Africa's participation in the Association of South East Asian Nations Summit in November 2002, a decision was taken to launch the Asia-Africa Sub-Regional Organisations Conference (AASROC I) in Bandung, Indonesia, in April 2003. South Africa and Indonesia co-host AASROC.

The India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum remains of strategic importance to all three countries as a powerful global forum to drive South-South co-operation and the agenda of the South, and to champion the needs of the developing world.

In September 2006, President Thabo Mbeki attended the IBSA Summit in Brazil.

South Africa hosted the first New Asia-Africa Strategic Partnership (NAASP) Senior Officials Meeting in September 2006 in Durban. The NAASP is expected to reinvigorate co-operation between these two continents.

The Middle East

The Department of Foreign Affairs distinguishes between two clearly identifiable subregions in the Middle East. There is the Levant, which comprises Israel, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria, and on the other hand, the Arabian/Persian Gulf Region, consisting of the member states of the Gulf Co-operation Council, namely Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Iran and Yemen.

The Middle East is an important economic region as it occupies a unique geopolitical position in the tricontinental hub of Europe, Asia and Africa.

South Africa's leading trade partners in the region are Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait, Qatar, Israel and the UAE.

South Africa supports a just, equitable and comprehensive peace process in the Middle East and an end to the illegal occupation of land that has led to conflict and violence between the peoples of the region.

The Americas

The bilateral relationship with the United States of America (USA) remains strong. Since 1994, business, civilian and governmental links with the USA have expanded exponentially, and a strong and long-term South Africa-USA working partnership has been established.

The USA is one of the largest single foreign investors in the South African economy and the largest trading partner taken as an individual country, as well as the largest donor of official development assistance.

The US Administration has identified Africa as a foreign-policy priority, and among other things, has further identified South Africa as an anchor state in the region in terms of the US National Security Strategy.

Support for Nepad within the US Administration, US Congress and business sector, with particular focus on the implementation of infrastructure-development projects, is a high priority. Building local capacity for research and effective delivery is another area of co-operation with the USA in the continuing battle against communicable diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, HIV and AIDS.

The USA Presidential Emergency Programme for AIDS committed US\$2,8 billion in 2005. US support for South Africa, the region and Africa's social and economic objectives is an important long-term priority.

Consultation between the South African Government, through National Treasury and the US Agency for International Development (USAid), on the alignment of the USAid programmes with the domestic developmental priorities of South Africa, remains ongoing, and is reviewed yearly.

Under the current co-operation agreement, R234 million will be directly geared towards South African government initiatives. This amount represents 56% of USAid's total annual budget of R546 million to South Africa, which, in the past two years, has been the top recipient of development assistance from among the 27 African countries supported by USAid.

In the multilateral sphere, South Africa and Canada share a like-minded approach to a number of issues such as human rights and the need for United Nations (UN) reform. Canada remains a strong supporter of the African Agenda and Nepad, particularly in the G8 context. Canada is actively seeking closer co-operation with South Africa in peacekeeping on the continent.

Intensive interaction takes place between a number of South African government departments and their Canadian counterparts. Closer co-operation has been developing in the fields of minerals and energy, health, science and technology, agriculture as well as arts and culture, with the emphasis on research, skills transfer and capacity-building.

South Africa maintains formal diplomatic relations with all the Latin American countries.

South Africa's relations with the independent member states of the Caribbean community have been strengthened and expanded.

Europe

The advent of a new democratic political dispensation more than 10 years ago marked the dawn of a new era in South Africa-European Union (EU) relations. The legal framework that governs South Africa's relationship with the EU is the Trade, Development and Co-operation Agreement (TDCA), which is premised on three main areas of co-operation, namely, political dialogue, trade and economic co-operation, and development co-operation.

The TDCA provides for a free trade agreement by 2012. The Trade Chapter of the agreement provisionally entered into force in January 2000. The reciprocal elimination of trade tariffs and the resultant access to the EU market improved two-way trade by close to 50% up to a total value of R200 billion. Since January 2002, South Africa has exported to the EU an annual average of R80,6 billion worth of goods and imported R120,2 billion worth of goods from the EU.

The EU is the largest source of FDI to South Africa. It accounts for 44% of the total FDI flows to South Africa and six out of the top 10 foreign investors in South Africa are member states of the EU.

The TDCA also provides the legal basis for continued EU support for development co-operation activities in South Africa. This support is channelled through the European Programme for Reconstruction and Development (EPRD), which was funded directly from the EU Commission's budget at a cost of €127,5 million for the period 2003 to 2006. The EPRD is the largest single development programme in South Africa financed by foreign donors. Further assistance from the EU comes in the form of soft loans from the European Investment Bank.

South Africa is Germany's largest trading partner on the African continent. Germany ranks with the United Kingdom (UK) and USA among the three largest economic role-players in South Africa regarding trade, investment, finance and tourism. More than 370 German companies have invested in South Africa and collectively employ more than 65 000 people here.

Prime Minister Tony Blair visited South Africa in 2006 to attend the Progressive Governance Summit.

In May 2006, President Mbeki met with Prime Minister Blair for bilateral discussions.

Minister Dlamini Zuma led the South African delegation to the seventh session of the UK-South Africa Bilateral Forum held in London in May 2006.

President Mbeki paid a state visit to Italy in March 2006.

On 12 January 2006, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, visited the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York, United States of America, to assume chairpersonship of the Group of 77 (G77) on behalf of South Africa.

The G77 is the largest coalition of developing countries in the UN, which provides the means for the countries of the South to articulate and promote their collective economic interests and enhance their joint negotiating capacity on all major international economic and development issues in the UN system, promote South-South co-operation and strengthen economic and technical co-operation among developing countries themselves.

During its tenure as chair of the G77, South Africa will be committed to enhancing the position of the group as a constructive and responsible partner in promoting North-South relations in support of the development agenda of the South.

Additionally, the importance of the developing countries need to co-ordinate common positions among themselves on global issues is increasingly being recognised.

President Thabo Mbeki met his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in South Africa in September 2006 to discuss strengthening relations between South Africa and the Russian Federation.

It was the first-ever visit by a Russian Head of State to South Africa.

United Nations

South Africa remains an active participant in ongoing discussions on the reform of the UN and believes that the multilateral system should be fully engaged in the endeavour for human development and poverty eradication, starting with the achievement of the millennium development goals (MDGs); the common struggle to address environmental degradation; the pursuit of an overarching human-rights agenda; the promotion of democracy and good governance; and all efforts to combat terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and small arms.

President Mbeki used the General Debate of the UN General Assembly in September 2005 as a platform to expand on the above-mentioned national priorities. He also reviewed progress made in the implementation of the MDGs and deliberated on the reform of the UN, including the Security Council.

As a party to the UN conventions on climate change, desertification and biodiversity, South Africa is committed to reducing poverty and the loss of biodiversity. South Africa is also firmly committed to the protection of the oceans and the sustainable management of its marine resources.

South Africa continues to reinforce its role as an active and substantive role-player on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control issues at national, regional and international levels.

It actively participated in the various nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation fora, including the 2005 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

In March 2006, the former Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr Kofi Annan, and his wife, Nane, visited South Africa for three days.

This was Annan's first visit to South Africa since he took over the leadership of the UN in 1997.

He met with President Thabo Mbeki and visited former President Nelson Mandela.

He also visited the Hector Peterson Memorial in Soweto and delivered a speech to the National Assembly in Cape Town.

From 2007, South Africa is serving on the UN Security Council in a non-permanent capacity.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

South Africa's voluntary contribution to the UNDP for 2005/06 was R950 000, which went towards the operational costs of development programmes in South Africa.

The previous UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) ended in December 2006. The Department worked with the UN Country Team in South Africa and numerous other departments to prepare the new UNDAF, which will guide UN support in South Africa from 2007 to 2010. In this process, the Common Country Assessment was drafted by government and accepted by the UN and the new UNDAF.

The UNDP has a country office in Pretoria, which is headed by the resident representative, who is also the UN resident co-ordinator for all UN operational activities for development in South Africa.

Commonwealth

The Commonwealth comprises 53 member countries on every continent and major ocean, making up a quarter of the world's population and generating 20% of global trade.

Members range from micro-states in Polynesia to members of the G8, the smallest and poorest to the richest and most populous, with cross-cutting affiliations straddling the North-South divide.

The Commonwealth is united by its shared ideals and common traditions manifested in similar structures of governance; public administration and law; and a common working language, commercial and business practices, and understanding. It is an important multilateral institution, both uniting and serving its member countries and providing a lobby on global issues.

Its programmes of action, such as the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation, the Commonwealth Youth Programme and the Commonwealth Foundation, are focused on capacity-building, economic and social development, the removal of disparities in living standards across the world and the alleviation of poverty and illiteracy.