

International Relations and Cooperation



According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, the President is ultimately responsible for the foreign policy and international relations. It is the President's prerogative to appoint heads of mission, receive foreign heads of mission, conduct State to State relations, and negotiate and sign all international agreements. International agreements that are not of a technical, administrative or executive nature will only bind the country after being approved by Parliament. Parliament also approves the country's ratification of or accession to multilateral agreements. All international agreements must be tabled in Parliament for information purposes.

The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation is entrusted with the formulation, promotion, execution and daily conduct of South Africa's foreign policy. The Department of International Relations and Cooperation's (DIRCO) overall mandate is to work for the realisation of South Africa's foreign policy objectives. This is done by:

- coordinating and aligning South Africa's international relations abroad
- monitoring developments in the international environment
- communicating government's policy positions
- developing and advising government on policy options, creating mechanisms and avenues for achieving objectives
- protecting South Africa's sovereignty and territorial integrity
- contributing to the creation of an enabling international environment for South African business
- sourcing developmental assistance
- assisting South African citizens abroad.

The department's strategic objectives are to:

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

African Union (AU)

Africa will never again tolerate change of governments through undemocratic and unconstitutional means. Africa is

on a growth trajectory, which must be maintained to ensure that the people of African are truly emancipated from the wrath of underdevelopment, poverty and hunger.

The strengthened AU Commission (AUC) is central in driving the African Agenda. South Africa contributed towards the goal of having a strong AUC and its structure. Resources were also contributed to hosting the Pan African Parliament, which celebrated its 10th anniversary in March 2014.



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

Each AU Member State, including South Africa, is expected to contribute to this vision through inclusive national consultations by October 2015. When the vision is adopted, Member States will have to align their national policies with it through a process of domestication, which, in South Africa’s case, entails harmonising Agenda 2063 with the National Development Plan. DIRCO has already begun national consultations with different sectors. Agenda 2063 will affect the SADC, especially the pace and direction of the integration of the region. The approach to the SADC region

in the next five years was to consolidate bilateral relations with South Africa's neighbours, and strengthening SADC as an institution. In particular, DIRCO will:

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

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

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

New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

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

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

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

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

South Africa and the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

The SADC developed from the Southern African Development Coordination Conference, which was established in 1980. It adopted its current name during a summit meeting in Windhoek, Namibia in August 1992. The initial member states are Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. South Africa became a member after 1994.

South Africa has championed a “developmental regionalism” approach that combines market integration, cross-border infrastructure development, and policy coordination to diversify production and boost intra-African trade.

South Africa and Africa

South Africa regards Africa as the centrepiece of its foreign policy and remains committed to promoting the African Agenda, particularly regional peace, security and stability, as the key determinants for socio-economic development on the continent.

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

Asia and Australasia

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

South Africa has taken over co-chairmanship of the FOCAC from Egypt, on behalf of Africa, for the next six years. The forum is one of the most strategic partnerships between Africa and its development partners. The sixth Ministerial Conference of the FOCAC was scheduled to be held in Johannesburg in December 2015. China regards South Africa as a key partner in advancing its relations with Africa. While the two countries are strikingly different in their cultural, political and socio-economic orientation, they are very close in the positions they take on key issues affecting mankind.

Both appreciate the importance of strengthening cooperation based on respect for each other's core values and interests.

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

The Tokyo International Conference on African Developments 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.

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

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

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.

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

The Americas

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

These companies contribute about 30% of all corporate social investment for corporate social projects. The USA is South Africa's third-largest trading partner and 98% of South Africa's exports enter the USA market duty-free and quota-free under the current dispensation of Agoa and the Generalised System of Preferences.

While the USA is a significant market for South Africa, South Africa is the USA's biggest market in Africa.

The USA is an important supporter of South Africa's domestic priorities and has made an effort to align its assistance programmes and projects with these. The USA is a major source of official development assistance (ODA) to South Africa, contributing approximately US\$541 million in ODA per year.

The 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.

Europe

Since 1994, building on shared values and mutual interests, South Africa and the EU have developed a comprehensive partnership based on the Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement.

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

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

Benelux countries

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

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

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

German-speaking countries

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

Nordic countries

South Africa enjoys good relations with all the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Flowing from the strong grassroots support in these countries for democratisation in South Africa, relations have been established in virtually every field at both public and official levels. The scope of Nordic development cooperation is broad and has benefited civil society and government.

Relations in the international arena have seen close cooperation on multilateral issues. The Nordic countries are strong supporters of NEPAD and are directly involved in conflict resolution and reconstruction projects in Africa.

International bodies

Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa

BRICS is the acronym for a grouping of five major emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA)

IBSA is a coalition of the south that has facilitated dialogue at a level previously unimaginable. Development cooperation, along with the views on tackling socio-economic distress and trading among the three nations distinguishes IBSA

from BRICS. All the IBSA members are democracies and can discuss issues which cannot be discussed in BRICS summits.

The forum provides the three countries with a platform to engage in discussions for cooperation in fields such as agriculture, trade, culture and defence.



United Nations

The UN occupies the central and indispensable role within the global system of governance. South Africa looks to the UN to advance the global development agenda and address under-development, social integration, full employment and decent work for all and the eradication of poverty globally.

Through participation in multilateral forums, South Africa also upholds the belief that the resolution of international conflicts should be peaceful and in accordance with the centrality of the UN Charter and the principles of international law. South Africa was one of the 51 founding member of the UN in 1945. Since then, UN membership has grown to 193 states.

After being suspended in 1974, owing to international opposition to the policy of apartheid, South Africa was readmitted to the UN in 1994 following its transition to democracy.

Commonwealth

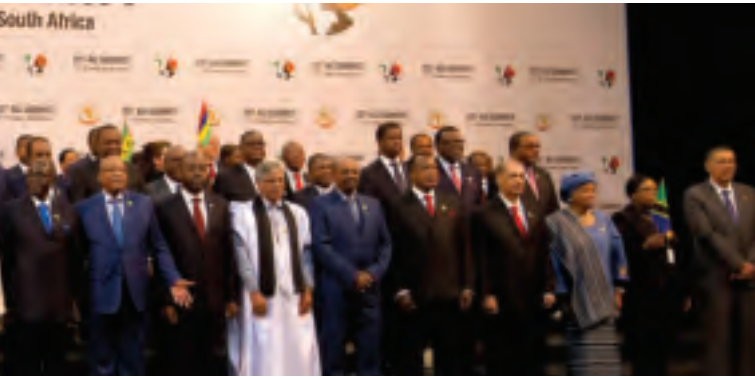
The modern Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 54 independent member countries. Membership is diverse and includes both developed and developing countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas, the Caribbean, Europe and the South Pacific.

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.

Non-Aligned Movement

The NAM, with its 120 member states, is the largest political



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

The NAM consists of 120 member states. South Africa formally joined the movement in 1994 and has played a leading role in NAM deliberation and meetings ever since.

World Health Organisation (WHO)

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

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

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