





Foreign relations



The role of the Department of Foreign Affairs is to realise South Africa's foreign policy objectives. These are guided by a commitment to promoting:

- human rights and democracy
- justice and international law
- international peace and internationally agreed mechanisms for resolving conflicts
- Africa in world affairs
- economic development through regional and international co-operation.

The department continues to implement its strategic priorities in line with government's foreign policy objectives, outlined in the programme of the International Relations, Peace and Security Cluster. The department's priorities are:

- consolidating the African agenda
- global governance
- South-South co-operation
- strengthening bilateral relations.

South Africa's diplomatic and consular missions help to enhance the country's international profile, and serve as strategic mechanisms for the achievement of South Africa's international interests.

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 developing its institutions to combat the marginalisation of the continent, engaging global role-players on socio-economic development, and facilitating a fair and just global order.

African Union (AU)

The AU is the most important institution on the continent. Through the Department of Foreign Affairs, South Africa has played an active role in setting up the AU and making it work. Key AU structures include the:

- AU Commission, which is responsible for the day-to-day running of the AU
- Pan-African Parliament (PAP), which was inaugurated in 2004 and is hosted by South Africa
- Peace and Security Council (PSC), which is operational and tasked with preventing, managing and resolving conflicts.

The establishment of the AU was declared on 2 March 2001 at the second Extraordinary Summit in Sirte. The 53-member AU was officially launched in Durban on 9 July 2002, following its inaugural summit. It replaced the Organisation of African Unity, which was established on 25 May 1963 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The AU's objectives include:

- achieving greater unity and solidarity between African countries and the peoples of Africa
- defending the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its member states
- accelerating the political and socio-economic integration of the continent
- encouraging international co-operation, taking due account of the Charter of the United Nations (UN) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- promoting peace, security and stability on the continent
- promoting democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance
- promoting and protecting people's rights
- establishing the necessary conditions to enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations
- promoting sustainable development at economic, social and cultural level, as well as the integration of African economies
- promoting co-operation in all fields of human activity to raise the living standards of African peoples
- advancing the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields
- working with relevant international partners in

eradicating preventable diseases and promoting good health on the continent.

One of the challenges for the AU is the need to involve civil society in continental processes. In this regard, the Constitutive Act makes provision for the establishment of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC). The interim ECOSOCC was launched on 29 March 2005 in Addis Ababa.

The South African Chapter was launched with nine civil-society organisations elected as secretariat from the following sectors: women, youth, religious groups, organised labour, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), lawyers, cultural groups and people with disabilities.

The inaugural session of the PAP was held in Addis Ababa from 15 to 20 March 2004. Delegates from 41 member states of the AU witnessed the launch of the continental Parliament on 18 March 2004.

On 16 September 2004, the PAP was inaugurated at Gallagher Estate, near Midrand, in South Africa.

The third session of the PAP took place in Johannesburg from 29 March to 11 April 2005. It adopted, among other things, recommendations on the Africa Land Title System and the World Summit on Information Society.

South Africa has ratified the Protocol on the African Court of Human and People's Rights.

The financial institutions – the African Central Bank, the African Monetary Fund and the African Investment Bank – are expected to take longer to operationalise.

While South Africa hosts the PAP, the Western Region will host the African Central Bank; the

South African representation abroad	Total	Foreign representation in South Africa	Total
Embassies/high commissions	83	Embassies/high commissions	113
Consulates/consulates general	16	Consulates/consulates general	53
Honorary consulates	46	Honorary consulates	73
Other (e.g. liaison offices)	4	Other (e.g. liaison offices)	1
Non-resident accreditations	106	Non-resident accreditations	16
International organisations	7	International organisations	22

Source: Department of Foreign Affairs (www.dfa.gov.za), July 2005

Northern Region will host the African Investment Bank; the Central Region will host the African Monetary Fund; and the Eastern Region will host the Court of Justice.

Promotion of peace, security and stability on the continent

The AU is responsible for the peaceful resolution of conflict among member states, through such appropriate means as may be decided upon by the AU Assembly. The assembly may give directives to the Executive Council on the management of conflict, war, acts of terrorism, emergency situations and the restoration of peace.

The PSC Protocol entered into force in December 2003 and comprises 15 member states, five of which will serve a three-year period, and 10 which will serve for a two-year period each.

The PSC was launched in Addis Ababa in May 2004. Current members are South Africa, Nigeria, Algeria, Ethiopia and Gabon, who will serve three-year terms; and Lesotho, Mozambique, Cameroon, Congo, Kenya, Sudan, Libya, Ghana, Senegal and Togo, who will each serve two-year terms.

As a collective security and early warning arrangement, the PSC will allow for a timely and effective response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa.

In terms of PSC statutes, all African countries should establish their own early warning centres and there should be a continental early warning centre by 2008.

The AU PSC Protocol provides for the creation of the African Standby Force, to be operationalised over a period of 10 years.

The second extraordinary session of the AU Assembly held in Libya in February 2004, adopted the Common African Defence and Security Policy.

Socio-economic development and integration of the continent

The AU is the principal institution responsible for promoting sustainable development at economic, social and cultural level, as well as the integration of African economies. Regional economic communities (RECs) are recognised as the building-blocks of

the AU, necessitating the need for their close involvement in the formulation and implementation of all AU programmes.

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

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

New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

The adoption of NEPAD is considered to be one of the most important developments of recent times, for its conception of a development programme, placing Africa at the apex of the global agenda, by:

- creating an instrument for advancing people-centered and sustainable development in Africa based on democratic values
- being premised on the recognition that Africa has an abundance of natural resources and people who have the capacity to be agents for change, and so holds the key to its own development
- providing the common African platform from which to engage the rest of the international community in a dynamic partnership that holds real prospects for creating a better life for all.

The expected outcomes are:

- economic growth and development and increased employment
- a reduction in poverty and inequality
- diversification of productive activities
- enhanced international competitiveness and increased exports
- increased African integration.

A major effort of the AU-mandated NEPAD is to continuously factor NEPAD imperatives into the outcomes of international conferences, such as the Conference on Financing for Development, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), to ensure the integration of

NEPAD into the multilateral system. In a wider context, countries of the South subscribe to the priorities outlined in NEPAD and have pledged their solidarity and moral support, as well as an appreciation for South Africa's positive role in NEPAD. However, NEPAD does not have a mechanism for South-South co-operation. To this end, improved co-ordination with partners in the South should be pursued.

Structures

Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSIC)

The NEPAD HSIC is required to report annually to the summit of the AU. The chairperson of the AU, as well as the chairperson of the AU Commission, are ex-officio members of the Implementation Committee. The AU Commission is expected to participate in steering committee meetings.

The Implementation Committee comprises 15 states (three per AU geographic region), including the five initiating states: South Africa, Nigeria, Algeria, Senegal and Egypt.

The main function of the Implementation Committee is to set policies, priorities and NEPAD's programme of action.

The 13th NEPAD HSIC meeting held on 19 April 2005 in Sharm-El-Shaik, Egypt, received a NEPAD progress report that reviewed progress since the last HSIC hosted by Algeria in November 2004. The report focused on:

- the NEPAD/AU integration process
- co-operation with international partners, including the G8, the Commission for Africa and the Africa Partnership Forum
- national and subregional integration of NEPAD priorities for the attainment of the millennium development goals (MDGs)
- the enhancement of capacity of RECs.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee comprises the personal representatives of the five initiating presidents, and is tasked with the development of the Terms of Reference for identified programmes and projects, as well as overseeing the secretariat.

Secretariat

The NEPAD Secretariat co-ordinates implementation of projects and programmes approved by the HSIC. The full-time core staff of the secretariat, located at the Development Bank of Southern Africa in Midrand, provides liaison, co-ordination, administrative and logistical functions for NEPAD.

The AU's mechanisms for peer review and conflict resolution reflect commitment to human rights, democratisation, good governance, and peace and security as being in the interest of Africans.

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is a process voluntarily acceded to by the member states of the AU as an African self-monitoring mechanism.

The APRM requires that each country develop a programme of action within the framework of specific time-bound objectives.

It enables participating member states to adopt policies and practices that conform to the agreed political, economic and corporate governance values, codes and standards. It also serves as a critical instrument for advancing reforms in governance and socio-economic development, and in building capacity to implement these reforms.

One of the key objectives of the APRM is to identify deficiencies in implementation, with a view to improving its compliance with the Constitutive Act of the AU by member states.

The inaugural meeting of the APRM Forum of participating states was held in Kigali, Rwanda, in February 2004. The second meeting of the forum took place in Algeria in November 2004.

Cabinet has established the focal point (the Minister for Public Service and Administration) and a ministerial committee to lead the APRM in South Africa.

President Thabo Mbeki led a South African delegation to the third summit of the African Peer Review Forum (APRF) held in Abuja, Nigeria, on 19 June 2005.

Ahead of the July 2005 AU Summit, the APRF considered the base country review reports on Ghana and Rwanda.

These two reports constituted the first to emerge from the APRM process and provided useful lessons for country reviews to follow.

South Africa held its first consultative conference on 28 and 29 September 2005. All sectors of society were expected to make submissions in line with the APRM guidelines. The second consultative conference was planned for November 2005. After that conference, a report was expected to be submitted to Cabinet for approval, and the APRM country review team was expected to visit South Africa to review the self-assessment report and programme of action.

Southern Africa

Angola

Following the signing of a ceasefire agreement in April 2002, the Angolan Government started normalising the political situation in that country.

South Africa committed itself to assist with Angola's post-war reconstruction. Consequently, the Joint Commission of Co-operation (JCC) was established in November 2000. The JCC first met at ministerial level on 28 February 2003. Since then, various bilateral agreements have been concluded.

Angolan Prime Minister, Mr Fernando de Piedade Dias Dos Santos, visited South Africa in February 2005 to ratify agreements on bilateral investment protection and promotion, as well as co-operation agreements in the areas of defence, electricity and power supplies, and social reintegration.

Lesotho

The most significant and visible beacon reflecting South Africa's bilateral relations with Lesotho is the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, which, in today's terms, qualifies as a NEPAD project. It was started in 1986 as a joint venture to supply water to South Africa, especially the rapidly growing urban population in Gauteng, and to meet Lesotho's electricity needs. The project delivers about 780 million cubic metres of water to South Africa a year.

South Africa and Lesotho have agreed to engage in a strategic partnership to assist Lesotho in accelerating economic development to raise its status from that of a least developed country.

In June 2005, South Africa and Lesotho signed the Agreement on Scientific Co-operation aimed at

sharing South Africa's successes in technologies related to poverty reduction and wealth creation at community level. The agreement provides for the following areas of further engagement:

- public understanding of science, engineering and technology
- biotechnology
- indigenous knowledge
- technology incubation.

Lesotho has requested that South Africa provide training in the areas of food, biotechnology and recycling technology and the development of a database of indigenous knowledge.

Botswana

During President Mbeki's state visit to Botswana in March 2003, the two countries agreed on the establishment of the Joint Permanent Commission for Co-operation (JPCC).

The JPCC covers areas such as agriculture and livestock, water affairs, mining and tourism, environmental co-operation, monetary and financial arrangements, transportation, roads and infrastructure development.

The two countries signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the development and management of the Trans-Kalahari Corridor (TKC) in September 2003. The TKC was formally established in 1998 following the completion of the Trans-Kgalagadi Highway in Botswana, which links Botswana, Namibia and South Africa by road.

Malawi

Malawi is one of South Africa's main trading partners in the southern African region. Like other African trading partners, the trade imbalance with Malawi is in favour of South Africa.

South African-based companies, increasingly interested in linking up with and establishing a presence in Malawi, range from the finance, telecommunications and retail sectors to those involved in the construction industry.

By June 2005, negotiations were underway to establish a commission for co-operation in various fields between the two countries.

Indian Ocean islands

South Africa's political, economic and diplomatic relations with countries in the Indian Ocean islands remain strong.

South Africa, chair of the AU at the time, played a pivotal role in ensuring that peace prevailed in Madagascar, following political instability as a result of election results being disputed in 2000.

South Africa also played a meaningful role in accepting Madagascar's candidature to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in August 2004.

South Africa, as the co-ordinator of the countries of the region under the aegis of the AU, assisted in diffusing constitutional and political tension that led to the Fomboni Peace Agreement in 2000.

South Africa spearheaded the process of peace-building and reconciliation, as well as the return to constitutionalism, with the result that successful elections were held in 2002. South Africa continues to play an important role in the post-conflict reconstruction and development processes. These include assistance in building institutions of governance, macro-economic planning and development and capacity-building in the area of police training and public-service sectors.

South Africa is also involved in strengthening political and economic bilateral relations with Mauritius and Seychelles. Sectoral relations with these countries include arts and culture, tourism and environmental management, and poverty-alleviation programmes.

On 14 January 2005, South Africa co-chaired the UN High-Level Segment of the International Meeting on the Comprehensive Review of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), held in Port Louis, Mauritius.

As custodian of the WSSD, South Africa closely follows the plight of the SIDS and their sustainable development.

In July 2005, President Mbeki congratulated Mr Navim Ramgoolam on his election as Prime Minister of Mauritius following the National Assembly general elections held in that country on 3 July 2005.

An SADC observer mission to Mauritius declared the elections to be free, fair, professionally managed and transparent, and conducted within the SADC guidelines on elections.

Mozambique

The South African Government supports the democratically elected Government of Mozambique and continues with initiatives to strengthen bilateral relations and the democratic reconstruction and development processes underway in that country.

Both the South African and the Mozambican governments view the expansion of the infrastructural links between the two countries as one of the priority bilateral co-operation areas. The rail and road connections between the two countries serve as the main arteries linking the respective economies.

The Maputo Development Corridor Project has already attracted substantial new investments in Mpumalanga, and is expected to boost the Mozambican economy equally.

The Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative, launched on 18 February 2004, has resulted in the corridor being a more effective transportation route.

South Africa and Mozambique have made substantial progress in the implementation of so-called borderlands and transfrontier conservation initiatives. (See chapter 9: *Environmental management*.) These are the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative (SDI), the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, as well as the Beira and Nacala corridors, which are in various stages of development.

The fourth JPCC between South Africa and Mozambique was scheduled to take place in South Africa in November 2005. The South Africa-Mozambique Heads of State Economic Bilateral Forum, chaired by the two presidents, met on 15 April 2005, and focused on co-operation in macro-economic projects in Mozambique.

The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) rendered logistical support to Mozambique during the country's third democratic presidential and parliamentary elections in December 2004.

On 2 February 2005, President Mbeki, accompanied by the Minister of Foreign Affairs,

Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, attended the inauguration of the new President of Mozambique, Mr Armando Guebuza, in Maputo.

On 15 April 2005, South Africa and Mozambique signed a visa waiver agreement to further South Africa's cordial diplomatic relations with its neighbours and to promote tourism and foreign direct investment (FDI). In terms of the agreement, citizens of the two countries are no longer required to apply for visas if their stay in each other's country does not exceed 30 days.

The signing of the agreement coincided with the visit of President Guebuza to South Africa. Mozambique is South Africa's second-largest export market in Africa, with trade having increased dramatically over the last few years. South Africa is Mozambique's largest investor, with FDI amounting to R8 billion and representing 247 projects.

The South African Government uses the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) as the primary catalyst for its investment in Mozambique. By mid-2005, the IDC had approved funding for 10 projects geographically spread throughout Mozambique, and was considering six additional projects in the country. Investment ranges from mining and mineral beneficiation, agriculture, tourism, chemicals, forestry and transport infrastructure to energy.

The Mozal Aluminium Smelter remains the IDC's largest investment outside the borders of South Africa.

On 25 June 2005, Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka represented South Africa at Mozambique's 30th anniversary of independence celebrations.

Namibia

Co-operation in various areas marks the relationship between South Africa and Namibia.

South Africa is the source of between 80% and 90% of Namibia's imports by value, including virtually all commodities. Bilateral trade between the two countries accounts for two-thirds of Namibia's total foreign trade.

The 7 000-km² Ai-Ais/Richtersveld Transfrontier Park between South Africa and Namibia features the world's second-largest canyon in the Fish River, a

hot-spring game park on the Namibian side, and spectacular arid and desert mountainous scenery on the South African side.

On 21 March 2005, President Mbeki, accompanied by Dr Dlamini-Zuma, attended the inauguration of the President of Namibia, Mr Hifikepunye Pohamba. He was elected following the fourth democratic elections held in November 2004.

Swaziland

Dr Dlamini-Zuma and her Swaziland counterpart, Senator Mabili Dlamini, signed an agreement establishing the Joint Bilateral Commission for Co-operation (JBCC) on 20 December 2004 in Swaziland. This agreement formalised bilateral relations between the two countries.

Swaziland had made considerable progress towards the creation of a new constitution, which was expected to be instituted during 2005.

Tanzania

Trade and investment between South Africa and Tanzania continues to grow at a steady pace. More than 150 South African companies are economically active in Tanzania, which is rated as a premier South African investment destination in Africa.

The proposed Presidential Economic Commission is expected to provide the necessary co-operative framework to manage the development and implementation of bilateral projects as well as the SDI programme, in particular the Mtwara and Central development corridors, which are regional NEPAD priority programmes.

Tanzania's President, Mr Benjamin Mkapa, visited South Africa in September 2005.

Zambia

South Africa enjoys warm relations with Zambia, as evidenced by an increase in trade and investment flow between the two countries.

For many years, South Africa has competed with Britain as the leading source of foreign investment in Zambia. South Africa's investors continue to play an active role in the Zambian economy, which led to the formation of the South African Business Association in Zambia.

By mid-2005, negotiations were underway to establish a formal and structured bilateral forum with Zambia through which a number of issues of mutual interest could be addressed.

A high-level South African delegation paid an official visit to Zambia in June 2005.

Issues discussed included the:

- consolidation of the African Agenda
- implementation of NEPAD
- resolution and prevention of conflict in the region
- reform of global governance, including the reform of the UN and its institutions.

Uganda

Official diplomatic relations between South Africa and Uganda were established on 24 June 1994.

On 17 January 2005, the then Deputy President, Mr Jacob Zuma, met with President Yoweru Museveni and Tanzania's President Benjamin Mkapa in Entebbe, Uganda, for consultations on the Burundi peace process.

Kenya

South Africa and Kenya were expected to sign a JCC agreement in 2005.

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe celebrated 25 years of independence on 18 April 2005.

South Africa and Zimbabwe, besides their geographic proximity, have a common and long history of regional affiliation and cultural ties. The people of Zimbabwe played an important role in support of the liberation struggle against apartheid in South Africa.

South Africa continues to engage all the stakeholders in Zimbabwe to find ways and means to assist Zimbabweans in their endeavours to find a homegrown solution to their political challenges. South Africa is doing this within the context of the AU and SADC initiatives to the Zimbabwean solution.

South Africa sent the National Observer Mission to observe Zimbabwe's sixth parliamentary elections, held on 31 March 2005. South African observers also participated in the SADC observer

elections mission. Both election observer teams declared the Zimbabwean parliamentary elections credible and reflective of the will of the people of Zimbabwe.

On 12 July 2005, Deputy President Mlambo-Ngcuka met with President Robert Mugabe and his Deputy, Ms Joyce Mujuru, as part of ongoing talks between the two countries.

Ethiopia

Bilateral political and economic relations between Ethiopia and South Africa have improved greatly in recent years. The two countries signed the General Co-operation Agreement during Minister Dlamini-Zuma's official visit to Ethiopia in March 2004. This has significantly strengthened bilateral relations between the two countries.

The South Africa-Ethiopia Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) agreement was also signed in March 2004. This was followed by a series of meetings between senior officials from both sides to expand and strengthen bilateral co-operation in the areas of capacity-building, trade and investment, science and technology, and arts and culture, among others.

Development co-operation

South Africa is not a donor country, but development co-operation with countries in Africa is integral to the country's foreign policy. Assistance is wide-ranging and includes educational visits by agriculturists, the establishment of viable training centres, conservation of the environment, the rendering of medical assistance, and technology-exchange programmes. Technical and financial assistance, with a view to capacity-building, especially to SADC countries, is a major instrument for promoting economic development, peace and stability, democracy, and the African Renaissance, on a regional basis.

South Africa and the Southern African Development Community

South Africa's vision for the southern African region involves the highest possible degree of economic co-operation, mutual assistance, and joint planning

consistent with socio-economic, environmental and political realities. Within the region, the SADC is the primary vehicle for South African policy and action to achieve regional economic development.

Originally known as the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference, the SADC was formed in Lusaka, Zambia, on 1 April 1980, following the adoption of the Lusaka Declaration. The declaration and treaty establishing the SADC was signed at the Summit of Heads of State and Government on 17 August 1992 in Windhoek, Namibia.

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

The SADC is a critical vehicle for the development of the southern African region. 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, and reviewing existing ones. From August 2004, the focus has been on chairing the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security.

One of the organ's main functions is to ensure that regional peace and security arrangements are linked to continental arrangements. Another challenge is finalising the MoU between the AU Commission and Africa's RECs to ensure a co-ordinated interface for addressing AU themes and activities.

Implementation of the Southern African Development Community Trade Protocol

The SADC Protocol on Trade entered into force on 25 January 2000. The objectives of the trade protocol are to further liberalise intra-regional trade in goods and services, on the basis of fair, mutually equitable and beneficial trade arrangements; ensure efficient production within the SADC, reflecting the current and dynamic comparative advan-

tages of its members; contribute towards the improvement of a climate for domestic, cross-border and foreign investment; enhance the economic development, diversification and industrialisation of the region; and establish a free trade area (FTA) in the SADC region.

At the core of this agreement is the reduction and ultimate elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers and the setting up of rules of origin by 2008.

By September 2004, South Africa had signed 21 protocols and was in the process of acceding to the Protocol on Immunities and Privileges. South Africa had also ratified the protocols on shared water-course systems, combating illicit drug trafficking, energy, mining, transport, communications and meteorology, health, and education and training. The Revised Protocol on Shared Water-Course Systems was also ratified.

South Africa is a signatory to the:

- Declaration Towards a Southern Africa Free of Anti-Personnel Landmines
- Declaration on Gender and Development
- Declaration on Productivity
- Declaration Concerning Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Material.



In June 2005, South Africa and other Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries participated in Exercise Thokgamo at the invitation of the Botswana Defence Force.

More than 300 South African National Defence Force (SANDF) members participated in this peacekeeping exercise near Maun, Botswana.

The objectives were to:

- develop a common understanding of military interoperability and foster mutual trust, respect and co-operation between the SANDF and other participating SADC countries
- give all participating forces practical experience in peace-support operations
- upgrade operational means and methods of multinational peacekeeping
- give SANDF personnel the opportunity to train and function with the necessary confidence in a multinational peacekeeping exercise.

Relations with central Africa

South Africa's diplomatic relations with central Africa have been dominated by attempts to bring peace to the DRC and Burundi, thereby ensuring greater stability in the whole of the central African region.

Gabon

In November 2003, South Africa signed co-operation and tourism agreements with Gabon.

In January 2005, President Mbeki, accompanied by the Minister of Defence, Mr Mosiuoa Lekota, and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Aziz Pahad, attended the Summit of the AU PSC in Libreville, Gabon.

Issues on the agenda included the situation in the Great Lakes Region and Sudan.

On 22 March 2005, Minister Dlamini-Zuma held bilateral political and economic discussions with the acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, Co-operation and Francophone of Gabon, Mr Jean-Francois Ndongou.

During the visit, the Protocol for Regular Diplomatic Consultations, a trade agreement and the Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income were signed.

President Mbeki and a ministerial delegation paid a state visit to Gabon on 2 and 3 August 2005. The visit focused on bilateral co-operation between the two countries.

The following agreements were signed:

- Merchant Shipping Agreement
- Agreement in the Field of Education, Training and Higher Education
- Agreement in the Field of Arts and Culture.



During 2005/06, the Department of Foreign Affairs commenced the design and construction of two embassies, one in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and another in Maseru, Lesotho. The total cost of the embassies is estimated at R60 million. Plans were also underway to build an embassy in Abuja, Nigeria.

Equatorial Guinea

South Africa has enjoyed full diplomatic relations with the Republic of Equatorial Guinea since 5 May 1993.

The two countries signed a general co-operation agreement in December 2003.

Chad

Official relations between South Africa and the Republic of Chad were established on 21 October 1994.

Minister Dlamini-Zuma led a ministerial delegation to Chad in November 2004, and a general co-operation agreement was signed with that country in December 2004. Once implemented, this agreement will open the doors to a number of joint projects in Chad, related to transport, communications and the energy sector.

Rwanda

South Africa and Rwanda maintain good political relations. Co-operation between the two countries focuses on the post-conflict reconstruction of Rwanda and has extended to the co-ordination of NEPAD on the continent.

On 7 April 2005, a high-level South African delegation attended the 11th anniversary of the 1994 Rwanda Genocide, during which an estimated 800 000 people were killed in 100 days, when the ethnic Hutu majority attacked the minority Tutsis.

Relations are growing rapidly between the two countries as evidenced by the signing of the MoU between the City of Tshwane and the City of Kigali, the MoU on Defence Co-operation, and Trilateral Co-operation in the Field of Health, followed by an increase in the frequency of flights between South Africa and Rwanda from three to four a week.

Minister Dlamini-Zuma hosted her counterpart, Dr Charles Murigande, for the third session of the South Africa-Rwanda JCC in July 2004.

To further strengthen this bilateral structure, the Implementation Monitoring Committee (IMC) has been established at director-general level to provide the necessary co-ordinating, planning and monitoring framework to manage effective implementation of approved programmes and to ensure the delivery

of cross-cutting training and human resource capacity-building programmes.

More than 200 Rwandan students have been studying at South African tertiary institutions under a bilateral education agreement.

Burundi

South Africa's good relations with Burundi are demonstrated by the leading role the Government played in the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement signed by representatives of the main Hutu and Tutsi political parties, the Government of Burundi, and the National Assembly on 28 August 2000.

The agreement provided the foundation for the transition to democracy, peace and development in that country. South African diplomacy efforts, under the leadership of former President Nelson Mandela, was central in facilitating the Arusha agreement. The pivotal point of the agreement was the political power-sharing between the Tutsis and the Hutus.

In the constitutional referendum held on 28 February 2005, 91% of voters agreed to a new constitution aimed at reducing the power imbalance between the minority Tutsi and the majority Hutu.

South Africa's contribution towards the establishment of peace and stability in Burundi included the deployment of SANDF troops with an African peace mission in Burundi, now recapped as the UN Operations in Burundi. South Africa has also financially supported the election process by, for example, providing election material for the 2005 referendum and elections.

Burundi held its first democratic elections since 1993 on 4 July 2005. The 21-member South African observer mission concluded in their election report that the elections were executed in a transparent manner.

On 26 August 2005, President Mbeki, accompanied by First Lady Zanele and senior government officials, attended the inauguration of President Pierre Nkurunziza in Bujumbura, Burundi.

Democratic Republic of Congo

The second session of the South Africa-DRC Binational Commission (BNC), co-chaired by

President Mbeki and President Joseph Kabila, took place in Pretoria on 29 April 2005. The following agreements were signed:

- The Trilateral MoU between the South Africa-DRC-Sweden Governments on Co-operation in the Area of Public Service and Administration
- The MoU between the South Africa-DRC Governments relating to Co-operation on Capacity-Building for the Congolese National Police Force
- The Agreement on Co-operation between the South Africa-DRC Governments in the field of Agriculture
- The Convention between the South Africa-DRC Governments for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income
- The Agreement between the South Africa-DRC Governments regarding Mutual Assistance between the Customs Administrations.

The parties further reviewed progress and challenges in respect of the following areas of co-operation: political and diplomatic consultation; governance and administration; defence and security; and economy, finance and infrastructure. Both presidents agreed that additional structures should be established to increase co-operation between South Africa and the DRC.

The South African Police Service (SAPS) is working closely with the Congolese police forces to ensure security and to assist with the integration of armed forces in the DRC. In addition, South Africa, Britain and the Netherlands formed a partnership to assist the Congolese Government with the integration of their army.



By April 2005, seven countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), including South Africa, had ratified the SADC Mutual Defence Pact.

The pact reflects the commitment of the countries in the southern African region to ensuring peace and stability. The SADC Mutual Defence Pact binds South Africa into an SADC community of nations and defines their collective borders.

By mid-2005, the South African Government was also assisting with the DRC's reconstruction and development objectives.

A R25-million contribution from the African Renaissance Fund boosted South Africa's efforts to assist the DRC. The Swedish Government also pledged a further US\$3,5 million to the Public-Service programme in the DRC following the Trilateral MoU.

In May 2005, President Mbeki attended the adoption of the DRC's new constitution, which paved the way for democratic elections later in 2005. Following the signing of an MoU between the two countries, South Africa assisted the DRC in its preparation for the elections.

São Tomé and Príncipe

South Africa, as part of the AU delegation, assisted in the negotiations that restored President Fradique de Menezes to power in July 2003, following the bloodless coup d'état in São Tomé and Príncipe.

South Africa subsequently donated non-lethal equipment to the armed forces of São Tomé and Príncipe, and remains committed to the International Committee of Guarantee and Follow-up. This committee ensures that the conditions that led to the coup are addressed to the satisfaction of all parties involved.

Minister Dlamini-Zuma visited São Tomé and Príncipe in April 2005, where she held bilateral and economic discussions with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Co-operation and Communities, Mr Ovidio Manuel Barbosa Pequeno.

During her visit, the Minister met President de Menezes and held discussions with senior government officials.

The two countries agreed on the need to intensify co-operation in:

- education (especially Higher Education)
- health (particularly medical evacuation, construction of health facilities, and exchange of medical technology)
- air transportation
- tourism
- vocational training
- agriculture, focusing specifically on small- and medium-scale farming

- capacity-building for the São Tomé Diplomatic Service.

The two governments signed a general bilateral co-operation agreement.

Relations with North and West Africa and the Horn of Africa

The countries of North and West Africa and the Horn of Africa are becoming increasingly important trading partners for South Africa, as well as important partners within the context of the AU/African Economic Community.

Algeria

The South African Embassy was established in Algiers in November 1997. Political relations between the South African liberation movement and Algeria dates back to the 1950s.

In October 2004, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika attended the fourth session of the South Africa-Algeria BNC in Pretoria.

The BNC discussed, among other things, bilateral co-operation in fields such as science and technology, health, arts and culture, agriculture, telecommunications, and housing.

Côte d'Ivoire

South Africa established full diplomatic relations with Côte d'Ivoire in May 1992. Given South Africa's firm commitment to the African Renaissance, it continues to promote the restoration of peace and stability in that country.

Following the rebellion of 2002, the Marcoussis Agreement was eventually signed on 25 January 2003 in France by all belligerents. Implementation of the peace process was initially slow, given the political impasse since mid-2004 and early in 2005.

However, in light of South Africa's continued support and the mediation efforts by President Mbeki (as mandated by the AU) towards the resolution of the crisis, the Ivorian Government and opposition parties met for the first time since 2004 during peace talks held in Pretoria in April 2005.

Under the Pretoria Agreement, parties agreed to proceed with the disarmament and demobilisation process and to cease all violence. However, political

parties were unable to reach consensus on the adoption of Article 35 of the Ivorian Constitution.

Signatories to the Pretoria Agreement met again in June 2005 to review its implementation.

South Africa's mediation efforts will continue to promote the restoration of peace and stability in Côte d'Ivoire, under the aegis of the AU, the UN and in partnership with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

On 10 June 2005, a six-member strong SANDF team left for Côte d'Ivoire to prepare the way for a 40-member South African Military Advisory and Monitoring Team that was to follow. This deployment aimed to assist with the facilitation of the peace process in that country. On 24 June 2005, the UN Security Council extended the UN operation in the Côte d'Ivoire until 24 January 2006, following the unanimous adoption of Resolution 1609 (2005).

Egypt

Bilateral political and economic relations between Egypt and South Africa have improved greatly in recent years. These improvements were underlined in April 1996 with the convening of the first Joint Bilateral Commission (JBC) in Cairo.

Several agreements were signed between South Africa and Egypt during the sixth session of the South Africa-Egypt JBC in Pretoria in July 2003.

In September 2005, President Mbeki congratulated President Hosni Mubarak on his election victory.

Sudan

President Mbeki paid an official visit to Sudan from 30 December 2004 to 2 January 2005.

He held bilateral talks with President Omer Hassan Ahmed Al Beshir on bilateral political and economic relations between South Africa and Sudan, including the work of the AU Committee on the Post-Conflict Reconstruction of Sudan, which is chaired by South Africa; and regional African, and international issues of mutual interest.

South Africa and Sudan signed the MoU on Political Consultations and Co-operation. Issues covered by the MoU included co-operation in inter-

national and regional issues of mutual concern, and co-ordination on matters of mutual concern within the framework of the regional and international organisations of which both countries are members. The two countries also agreed to encourage co-operation in the field of oil exploration.

President Al Beshir briefed President Mbeki on progress made with the Naivasha (Kenya) peace process between the Government of Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the situation in Darfur, and the related peace negotiations held in Abuja, Nigeria and N'djamena.

President Mbeki travelled to Naivasha, Kenya, to witness the signing of the Protocol on Implementation Modalities and the Permanent Ceasefire Agreement between Sudan and the SPLM that paved the way for the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement (CPA) in January 2005.

The signing of the CPA ended a 27-year war and marked the start of the six-month pre-interim period (January – July 2005) during which the SPLM had to assemble and constitute a government for South Sudan, and nominate members to form part of central government in Khartoum. This was to be followed by an interim period (July 2005 – July 2011) during which the SPLM will govern South Sudan, with a high degree of autonomy, and participate in central government in Khartoum in a comprehensive and effective manner.

The UN Security Council on 24 March 2004 unanimously adopted Resolution 1590 (2005) on the creation of a peacekeeping operation in South Sudan. The resolution established a UN mission in Sudan (UNMIS) for an initial six-month period to support the implementation of the CPA. The mandate of UNMIS includes monitoring and verifying the ceasefire agreement, assisting with the establishment of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes, and promoting national reconciliation and human rights.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and the University of South Africa co-hosted a training programme for SPLM cadres in Pretoria in April 2005. This was the second phase of the project, the first of which was launched in New Site, Kapoeta County, in February 2005.

By 6 May 2005, South Africa had deployed 294 South African troops in Sudan as part of the UN Mission and 18 members of the SAPS as part of a co-operation programme.

An additional 46 SAPS members were deployed to Sudan later in May 2005.

Morocco

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and the Kingdom of Morocco were established in 1991 when the South African Interest Office opened in Rabat. The Moroccan Interest Office was opened in Pretoria in April 1992 and both offices were subsequently upgraded to full embassies.

The first JBC Meeting with Morocco took place in Pretoria in 1998.

Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR)

On 7 April 2005, Minister Dlamini-Zuma paid an official visit to the SADR, the first such high-level visit by a senior South African minister following recognition of the SADR by South Africa in September 2004.

The minister held bilateral discussions with her counterpart, Mr Ould Salek. She announced that South Africa would provide humanitarian assistance for projects related to nutrition, water and sanitation.

She was also briefed on the status of the UN Baker Plan, a framework through which the current conflict between the SADR and Morocco should be resolved.

South Africa has officially established diplomatic relations at ambassadorial level. South Africa recognises the right of the Sahrawis to self-determination, which is an inalienable right contained in the Charter of the UN.

Mauritania

Full diplomatic relations between South Africa and Mauritania were established in January 1995.

Minister Dlamini-Zuma visited Mauritania in January 2005.

She held bilateral discussions with her counterpart, Mr Mohamed Vail Ould Belial, on different aspects of co-operation, ranging from trade and

industry to minerals and energy, fisheries, maritime, transport, infrastructure, and education. The two ministers also signed an agreement on a framework for co-operation, which provides for the establishment of a JCC at ministerial level.

Liberia

Following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Liberian Government, and the rebel groups Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia on 18 August 2003, the socio-political situation in the country has much improved.

In view of the large presence of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the security situation has remained stable. With the assistance of the UNMIL, the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) has greatly advanced the peace process. The NTGL has already deployed a small number of the newly recruited Liberian police force members.

The humanitarian situation has improved although the economy still remains weak. It was anticipated that elections would be held in 2005. South Africa continues to support initiatives towards promoting peace in the country as it has done in the past.

Nigeria

South Africa's bilateral and multilateral relationship with Nigeria remains of strategic importance, particularly in light of the development and promotion of NEPAD.

Nigeria is the current chair of the AU as well as the outgoing chair of the Commonwealth. The sixth session of the BNC was held in Durban in September 2004 while the seventh session was expected to take place in Abuja late in 2005. This co-operation framework is an illustration of the type of South-South co-operation that South Africa seeks to foster. In this regard, Nigeria is a key partner in the promotion of the ideals of the AU, its socio-economic programme NEPAD, as well as the engagement of Africa with the developed states of the G8.

Ghana

During her three-day visit to Ghana in November

2004, Minister Dlamini-Zuma and her counterpart, Mr Nana Akufo Addo, signed agreements on the establishment of a permanent JCC and the avoidance of double taxation.

On 7 January 2005, former Deputy President Zuma attended the inauguration of the President-elect of Ghana, Mr John Agyekum Kufuor, in Accra.

Between 1996 and 2003, there were about 35 South African multinational and small-scale companies registered in Ghana. In April 2004, a South African company, Anglo-Gold, signed a merger deal with Ghanaian Ashanti Goldfields valued at US\$1,4 billion. South African investment in the Ghanaian mining sector accounts for more than 60% of total FDI into the sector.

Burkina Faso

South Africa and Burkina Faso established non-resident diplomatic relations in May 1995. The Burkina Faso non-resident ambassador for South Africa is based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, while the South African Ambassador to Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, is accredited to Burkina Faso on a non-residential basis.

On 13 July 2004, President Mbeki and his counterpart from Burkina Faso, Mr Blaise Compaore, signed a co-operation framework agreement and a MoU in terms of which South Africa will assist Burkina Faso to find and access mineral deposits.

The two leaders also discussed the need to create stability in areas of conflict around West Africa. Though Burkina Faso has limited exploitable resources, opportunities exist for South African mining companies for mining deposits of gold, zinc and manganese. Since agriculture is the dominant industry, opportunities exist for the trade of various agricultural products.

Spoornet is one of the few large South African companies involved in Burkina Faso. Trade between South Africa and that country is limited. In terms of total trade with South Africa, Burkina Faso is South Africa's 11th-largest partner in the West African region.

Republic of Benin

Diplomatic relations between Benin and South

Africa were established in May 1994. The South African ambassador to Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, is accredited to Benin on a non-residential basis while Benin opened an embassy in Pretoria in 1999.

Former Deputy President Zuma paid a visit to Benin in August 2004 and met with President Mathieu Kerekou. Benin's economy is based largely on subsistence agriculture, cotton production and regional trade. Trade between South Africa and Benin is limited, with main imports into South Africa from Benin being vegetable products, and South Africa's main export products to Benin being base metals and machinery.

Republic of Togo

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Togo were established in 1997. The South African ambassador to Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, is accredited on a non-residential basis to Togo.

Former President Gnassingbe Eyadema visited South Africa in 1997. After his death in February 2005, South Africa strongly opposed the unconstitutional installation of his son as president and welcomed his decision to relinquish the post until further elections.

South Africa also supported the ECOWAS position on restoring Togo to constitutionality following President Eyadema's death.

Economic relations between South Africa and Togo are limited, with phosphates comprising the bulk of South African imports from Togo.

Cape Verde

South Africa and Cape Verde established diplomatic relations on 4 April 1994. South Africa's ambassador to Senegal is also accredited as South Africa's non-resident ambassador to Cape Verde, while the Cape Verdean ambassador to Angola is accredited to South Africa as non-resident ambassador.

The Gambia

In September 2004, the President of The Gambia, Dr Alhaji Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh, visited South Africa and held bilateral discussions with President Mbeki.

South African exports to The Gambia include motor vehicles, prepared foodstuffs and beverages.

Guinea

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Guinea were established on 16 February 1995. The first Guinean ambassador to South Africa took up his post in Pretoria in July 1996. The South African ambassador to Senegal is accredited to Guinea on a non-residential basis.

South Africa's trade with and investment in Guinea have increased substantially over the past few years, with the country's rich mineral sector being the main area of focus.

Diplomatic relations between the two countries were expected to be consolidated by an official visit to South Africa by senior officials from Guinea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in May 2005.

Guinea-Bissau

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Guinea-Bissau were established in October 1994. The South African ambassador to Senegal is accredited as South Africa's non-resident ambassador to Guinea-Bissau.

In an effort to support post-conflict reconstruction in the country, and in response to the call by the ECOSOCC Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Guinea-Bissau on the international donor community to give emergency assistance to the people of Guinea-Bissau, the South African Government in February 2004 made a contribution to the UN Development Programme Trust Fund to assist that country.

Mali

Full diplomatic relations between South Africa and

Mali were established in May 1994. The latter established an embassy in Pretoria in December 1995. A South African embassy was established in Bamako in November 2002, and the first South African ambassador to Mali was appointed in November 2003.

Mali is a strong supporter of the African Renaissance initiative and NEPAD.

In August 2002, the Agreement of the Preservation of the Ancient Manuscripts in the Ahmed Baba Institute of Higher Learning and Islamic Research in Timbuktu was concluded between the two countries. This followed a pledge made by President Mbeki during his state visit to Mali in November 2001 that South Africa would support a project aimed at improving the preservation of these ancient manuscripts. The manuscripts vary in content from religious treatises and poems, to documentary letters dealing with legal and commercial matters, while others relate to slavery, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, history – all of them subjects of immense interest to scholars and the African population at large. Three major thrusts to the project are to:

- implement a conservation programme to protect and improve environmental storage conditions for the manuscripts
- rebuild the Ahmed Baba Centre to one of international stature while ensuring its architectural harmony with ancient Timbuktu
- promote academic study and public awareness of the magnificent and ancient African and Islamic heritage at Timbuktu.

The two countries share a commitment to the promotion of democracy and good governance, and substantial South African involvement in the Malian gold-mining sector. AngloGold and Randgold run operations in Mali.

The first session of the South Africa-Mali JCC took place in Pretoria in August 2004.

Senegal

Full diplomatic relations between South Africa and Senegal were established in May 1994 and the two countries' representative offices upgraded to embassy level. After closing its embassy in Pretoria in December 1995, the Senegalese authorities re-



In January 2005, a South African delegation delivered relief aid to Asian communities affected by the tsunami on 26 December 2004.

The South African delegation comprised representatives from government departments and some leading relief organisations.

The donation was mobilised through the non-governmental organisation, the Gift of the Givers Foundation.

established it in 2001. The South African ambassador to Senegal is also accredited to Cape Verde, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania on a non-residential basis.

Bilateral relations between South Africa and Senegal are based mainly on the Senegalese Government's strong support for the African Renaissance initiative and NEPAD, as well as strong commitment to the promotion of democracy and good governance.

Senegal is one of the 15 members of the NEPAD HSIC and the AU PSC.

In November 2004, Minister Dlamini-Zuma paid an official visit to Senegal, where she signed an agreement establishing a joint commission for bilateral co-operation (JCBC) between the two countries.

On behalf of President Mbeki, Dr Dlamini-Zuma received the first biannual African Gender Award for 2005 in Senegal in May 2005.

The other recipient was Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade, in recognition of the leading roles the two leaders played in the 2003 adoption by the AU of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.

Tunisia

On 9 July 2004, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tunisia, Mr Habib Ben Yahia, attended the fourth South Africa-Tunisia JBC in South Africa. Several agreements were signed.

In October 2004, President Mbeki and nine Cabinet ministers paid a state visit to Tunisia, where they signed various bilateral agreements.

The fifth session of the South Africa-Tunisia JBC was expected to take place in Tunisia in 2005.

Libya

The long-standing unofficial relations between South Africa and the Great People's Socialist Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (Libya) dates back to the days of the struggle against apartheid.

The first session of the South Africa-Libya JBC was held in Tripoli in June 2002.

Former Deputy President Zuma led a senior government and business delegation on a visit to Libya in March 2005.

Bilateral political and economic discussions aimed to:

- consolidate bilateral political and economic relations between South Africa and Libya
- discuss the operationalisation of the AU and its organs, and the implementation of NEPAD
- consolidate efforts to achieve peace, security and stability in Africa.

This high-level visit to Libya followed that country's denunciation of its nuclear weapons programme and ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

Sierra Leone

Peace and security in Sierra Leone have been sustained with the assistance of the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). The Government of Sierra Leone has restored its authority across the entire country and, with the assistance of UNAMSIL, has increased its control over diamond-mining areas.

Although the country remains poor, it has made various accomplishments towards democracy and development. South Africa's Eskom has undertaken to assist the Sierra Leone authorities in improving and managing their electrification system.

Niger

Niger is one of the poorest countries in West Africa and is considered the second-poorest country in the world, according to the UN. It relies solely on foreign aid for its development.



The Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs, Ms Thoko Didiza, led a South African delegation to the launch of the Implementation of the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme in Accra, Ghana, in May 2005.

As a contribution towards the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the Department of Agriculture initiated the African Agricultural Development Programme. This programme provides a framework for restoring agricultural growth, rural development and food security on the African continent.

Overall, the Niger Government has undertaken several programmes to increase democratisation, improve governance and expand freedom and other civil rights. On 8 December 2004, President Tandja Momadou was re-elected with 65,5% of the vote.

On 6 April 2005, Minister Dlamini-Zuma held bilateral discussions with her Niger counterpart, Mr Achiatou Mindaoudou.

The talks focused on the consolidation of bilateral political and economic relations between the two countries, including the opening of a South African diplomatic mission in Niamey, a bilateral air services agreement and the promotion of South African investment in Niger's mining and agricultural sectors.

South Africa continues to support any initiative aimed at assisting Niger in its development.

Relations with Asia and the Middle East

Asia and Australasia

Since 1994, South Africa's political and economic interaction with Asia and Australasia has increased significantly. By mid-2005, South Africa had 17 residential diplomatic missions in 15 of the 30 countries or territories in Asia, Australasia and central Asia. Eighteen countries from this region maintained 30 diplomatic missions in South Africa.

Over the past two decades, rapid economic growth in the People's Republic of China (PRC), India and south-east Asian countries has made Asia one of the most economically dynamic regions in the world, generating tremendous business opportunities for South Africa.

While Japan, Malaysia and Taiwan already rank among the foremost sources of foreign investment to South Africa, the significance of China and India, as future sources of investment, is expected to grow. 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.

Greater Asia incorporates five central Asian states, which were formerly part of the Soviet Union.

The five central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) offer economic opportunities in, among others, the oil and mining sectors and related technology. Although this region offers a market for South African goods and services, the potential remains largely untapped. South Africa is also expanding and deepening its relations with the Pacific island states. These countries are natural friends of South Africa, sharing its colonial experience and development aims. Therefore, South Africa was expected to conclude diplomatic relations with all the independent and self-governing states of the Pacific, and open a micro-mission in Suva, Fiji, which hosts the Secretariat of the Pacific Islands Forum.

South African diplomatic representation in South Asia will similarly be increased with the establishment of a micro-mission in Colombo, Sri Lanka. During the second half of 2005, the first session of the South African-Pakistan Joint Commission was expected to be held while the sixth session of the JMC with India was also scheduled for 2005.

The assertiveness of this region in both global politics and economics is becoming increasingly visible, as demonstrated by the high-profile role played by key Asian countries in global affairs.

China is the only developing country that is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC); Japan is an influential member of the G8; while India, Japan and Indonesia have publicly declared their intention to lobby for a permanent seat on the reformed UNSC.

South Africa and key Asian countries agree on important multilateral issues, such as the reform of the Bretton Woods Institutions, the WTO and UN, international disarmament and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, small arms proliferation, and protection of the environment.

Several important Muslim countries, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Brunei, Afghanistan and Indonesia are members of the 52-nation Organisation of Islamic Conference.

Key Asian countries are also committed to contributing to the implementation of NEPAD. NEPAD projects that will make use of the US\$200-million credit line offered by India need to be identified.

India has also indicated its willingness to provide funds to electronically connect members of the AU by satellite and fibre-optic network.

Several existing Africa-Asia co-operation fora, such as the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) and the Forum on China-Africa Co-operation, are being synchronised with NEPAD to serve as implementing institutions. TICAD is an initiative for African development, launched in 1993 through the joint efforts of the Japanese Government, the UN and the Global Coalition for Africa.

The Vietnam-Africa Forum provides an important venue for greater co-operation between Vietnam and Africa.

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

The AASROC II Conference, held in August 2004 in Durban, identified three broad areas of co-operation between Asia and Africa, namely: political, economic, and social and cultural. It further identified the contribution of Asian-African subregional organisations towards the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership (NAASP), which was launched during the Asian-African Summit in Indonesia, in April 2005.

The NAASP will focus on practical, achievable and concrete ways of addressing the development of Asian and African countries in a pragmatic manner. The NAASP will focus on areas such as economic issues, trade, investment, health and human resource development (HRD).

Several key Asian countries are leading role-players of the South. They share common membership with South Africa in international organisations such as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), G77 and the Commonwealth. South Africa also plays a leading role in the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation.

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, the agenda of the South, and to

champion the needs of the developing world. The second Ministerial Trilateral Commission meeting held in Cape Town in March 2005 provided an opportunity for the further strengthening of co-operation among the three countries.

It is estimated that South Africa's total trade with the Asian region rose from less than R60 billion in 1999 to more than R140 billion by the end of 2003. More than 27% of South African foreign trade is conducted with countries in Asia. Although investment from the region has grown significantly since 1994 and continues to expand, the levels need to be increased.

It remains vital to sharpen South Africa's expertise and capacity throughout the Asian region to raise the trade and investment profile of South African products and services.

The proposed FTA to be negotiated with China, India and Singapore provides an important framework for closer co-operation between the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and these countries in the quest for mutually beneficial trade links.

East Asia

Japan is by far South Africa's largest trading partner in this region, followed by Greater China and South Korea.

In September 2005, President Mbeki congratulated Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on his victory in the September elections.

Bilateral relations with the PRC have expanded substantially since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1998. There are strong links between the PRC and South Africa at various levels and China is a key global actor with whom South Africa seeks to broaden relations.

South Africa is the PRC's main trade partner in Africa, accounting for 20,8% of the total volume of China-Africa trade. The complementary nature of the two economies provides the impetus for the growth of trade. At the same time, bilateral trade amounts to only a very small percentage of both the PRC and South Africa's international trade profile, suggesting that there is still enormous potential for an increased exchange of goods and services. Total bilateral trade between the PRC and South Africa

reached R23,8 billion in 2004, with the balance in favour of the PRC.

Notwithstanding the absence of diplomatic relations, South Africa and Taiwan continue with trade, scientific, cultural and other relations. Taiwanese investors in South Africa continue to enjoy full protection under South African law, as well as all the other benefits extended to foreign investors.

South Africa participated in the fourth session of the TICAD III in Tokyo, Japan, in November 2004.

At the TICAD meeting, Japan committed itself to continued dialogue with Africa as well as to support capacity-building and provide other development assistance.

South Korea remains an important trade partner for South Africa. The second South Africa-South Korea Policy Consultative Meeting took place in Seoul during June 2004.

The strengthening of trade and investment relations was agreed upon. Opportunities for South Africa exist in mining and metal, steel, automotive components, agro-processing, textiles and cosmetics. A science and technology agreement with South Korea was signed during March 2004.

South Asia

South Africa and Afghanistan established diplomatic relations in September 1994. South Africa never recognised the former Taliban regime and has normalised relations with the current Government. The South Africa Liaison Office for Afghanistan was established in 2003, headed non-residentially by the South African high commissioner to Pakistan.

In 2004, South Africa congratulated Mr Hamid Karzai on his election as president of the

Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan. South Africa intended to monitor developments in Afghanistan through the parliamentary elections scheduled for 2005.

South Africa and Sri Lanka established diplomatic relations in 1994.

An advance team visited Sri Lanka in April 2005, in preparation for the establishment of a South African mission in Colombo. The first session of the Partnership Forum was expected to follow shortly thereafter.

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Pakistan were established in April 1994. A letter of understanding, establishing a joint commission (JC) between the two countries, was signed in March 1999. The lifting of the Commonwealth suspensions that had been imposed on Pakistan paved the way for the normalisation of South Africa's relations with that country, and created the opportunity to engage on issues of mutual interest.

The first session of the JC was expected to be held in 2005. South Africa supports the ongoing rapprochement between India and Pakistan on the Jammu-Kashmir issue.

India is South Africa's sixth-largest trading partner in Asia. In 2003/04, total trade between the two countries amounted to R6,47 billion.

In September 2004, the President of the Republic of India, Dr Abdul Kalam, paid the first-ever state visit by an Indian head of state to South Africa. Presidents Mbeki and Kalam stressed that the full potential for bilateral trade had not yet been tapped and undertook to make a concerted effort to at least double the existing volume by 2006. In this regard, a definite role is foreseen for the India-South Africa Commercial Alliance.

The sixth session of the South African-Indian JMC was held in New Delhi in May 2005.

South-east Asia

The ASEAN has emerged as one of the most important groupings within the Asia Pacific region. South Africa maintains embassies and high commissions in six of the 10 member states of ASEAN – Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines. These six ASEAN states, as well



By September 2005, the South African pavilion at the World Expo 2005 in Aichi, Japan, had clocked in excess of 2,5 million visitors.

The interest was attributed mainly to the exhibits, texts and audio-visual material on show.

The coelacanth, a fossilised fish dating back more than 400 million years, enjoyed much interest.

as Myanmar (Burma), also maintain embassies and high commissions in South Africa.

Vietnam plays an increasingly important role in south-east Asia and has vast economic potential and opportunities for mining, infrastructure development, and agricultural and manufacturing companies.

In November 2004, during the state visit to South Africa of Vietnamese Prime Minister, Mr Phan Van Khai, South Africa and Vietnam signed an agreement on the establishment of a Vietnam-South Africa partnership forum. He was accompanied by the largest-ever delegation to visit South Africa. South Africa's trade with Vietnam has increased eight-fold in the last 10 years.

Economic relations with Malaysia and Indonesia remain important, due to Malaysian investment in South Africa and the size of the Indonesian market.

The first JC meeting between South Africa and Malaysia was scheduled to take place in Indonesia during the second half of 2005.

Malaysia has indicated its support for NEPAD and has sought to promote the Malaysian-initiated Langkawi International Dialogue aimed at expanding co-operation among countries of the South, including those in southern Africa.

Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi paid an official visit to South Africa in July 2005.

Total trade with south-east Asia increased significantly from R10 billion in 1999 to R18 billion in 2003.

Central Asia

The economies of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are all at various stages of change and development. Furthermore, all five are developing states and, like South Africa, seek investment. Economic opportunities for South Africa in the Central Asian states include infrastructure development, mining technology, energy exploitation and related mining and engineering technology, agro-processing expertise and exports, water management expertise and infrastructure for adventure and ecotourism.

Australasia and the Pacific islands

South Africa and Australia established diplomatic relations in 1947 and have enjoyed very close political and economic ties. As campaigns for international isolation of South Africa intensified in the 1970s and 1980s, successive Australian governments placed Australia firmly in the anti-apartheid camp, supporting UN resolutions against apartheid and implementing the oil, trade and arms embargo as well as sport boycott against South Africa.

On 7 February 2005, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms Sue van der Merwe, held bilateral talks with her Australian counterpart, Mr Bruce Billson, in Pretoria. South Africa is Australia's third-largest trading partner in Asia, after Japan and China.

Diplomatic and trade relations between the two countries are valued at R11,4 billion. The merger in the 1990s of Australian BHP Billiton and Gencor created the largest mining company in the world.

New Zealand maintains a high commission in Pretoria, while the high commission in Canberra represents South Africa in New Zealand. The establishment of a resident high commission in Wellington is imminent.

Since 1994, political, economic and social links between the two countries have improved significantly. In 1996, the Cape Town Communiqué was signed, seeking to strengthen co-operation between South Africa and New Zealand.

The political relationship has been further strengthened through visits by numerous high-level delegations to New Zealand to gain expertise in their different fields and exchange knowledge to enhance capacity-building in central, provincial and local government structures.

South Africa and New Zealand enjoy wide-ranging multilateral relations. Both are members of the Valdivia Group, which aims to promote southern hemisphere views in international environmental meetings and enhance scientific co-operation.

They enjoy a close working relationship within the context of the Antarctic Treaty and Indian Ocean fisheries, and also interact within the context of the WTO and the Cairns Group. South Africa and New Zealand also work closely on Commonwealth issues, particularly those affecting Africa.

The South African Government wants to strengthen relations with the Pacific islands. As a result, a roving ambassador to the Pacific islands was appointed with effect from 1 August 2004.

The ambassador has been accredited to the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, the Fiji Islands and the Solomon Islands.

An advanced team visited Fiji to explore the feasibility of opening a mission there before the end of 2005.

The high commissioner in Canberra, Australia, has been accredited to the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Marshall Islands, the Republic of Vanuatu and the Independent State of Samoa. By mid-2005, diplomatic relations were being sought with the republics of Kiribati, Palau, Nauru, and Tuvalu.

The Middle East

In the Middle East, the Department of Foreign Affairs distinguishes between two clearly identifiable sub-regions. On the one hand, there is the Levant, which comprises Israel, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria, and on the other, the Arabian/Persian Gulf Region, comprising the member states of the Gulf Co-operation Council, namely Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Iran and Yemen.

The Middle East is an important economic region as it occupies a unique geopolitical position in the tri-

continental hub of Europe, Asia and Africa. It is the source of 67% of the world's petroleum reserves and commands two of the most strategically important waterways in the world, namely the Arabian/Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, giving access to the Asian hinterland via the Gulf of Aqaba. South Africa places strong emphasis on the expansion of diplomatic representation and activities in this region, where it was formerly underrepresented, particularly in the area of trade, which has grown significantly since 1994.

The South African consulate general in Jeddah, in addition to performing important functions relating to the promotion of trade, also serves members of the South African Muslim community on their annual pilgrimage to Mecca. More than 7 000 South Africans embark on the Hajj pilgrimage each year.

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. Peace and security for the Israelis and the Palestinians cannot be achieved without the fulfilment of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination within their own sovereign state.

South Africa has continued to call on all parties to the conflict in Israel and Palestine to avoid actions that could add to an already volatile situation. The country has been consistent in calling for the immediate implementation of the Road Map, without preconditions, to achieve comprehensive and lasting peace between Israel and Palestine.

The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Aziz Pahad, attended a meeting of the NAM Committee on Palestine convened on 13 May 2004 in Malaysia. This was followed by the NAM Ministerial meeting on Palestine in Durban in August 2004.

A senior delegation of the South African Government, led by President Mbeki and Minister Dlamini-Zuma, met with a senior delegation of the governing Likud Party in Israel, led by Israeli Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Labour, Mr Michael Ratzon, in September 2004. The delegations shared experiences and exchanged views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as the state of bilateral relations.



On 21 April 2005, President Thabo Mbeki paid a state visit to Singapore for bilateral and economic discussions with his counterpart, President Sellapan Ramanathan Nathan.

From 19 to 20 April 2005, President Mbeki paid a state visit to Indonesia for bilateral, political and economic discussions with his Indonesian counterpart, President-General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

President Mbeki attended the Asian-African Summit in Jakarta from 22 to 23 April 2005. On 24 April 2005, he attended the Commemoration Ceremony of the 1955 Bandung Summit in Bandung.

The South African Government sent an election observer delegation to Palestine during the Palestinian Presidential Election, held on 9 January 2005.

In August 2005, South Africa welcomed the withdrawal of Israel from Gaza, effectively ending 38 years of occupation.

During December 2004, Minister Dlamini-Zuma paid an official visit to Kuwait and the Islamic Republic of Iran. She attended the eighth South Africa-Iran JBC, where Iran and South Africa signed an agreement on co-operation in the field of health.

During February 2005, officials from the Iranian Central Bank visited South Africa and met with the deputy governor of the South African Reserve Bank and representatives of South African commercial banks.

Qatar Airways held a gala banquet in Johannesburg on 29 January 2005 to officially launch the new Qatar-Johannesburg-Cape Town air service that commenced on 16 January 2005.

South Africa participated in the Defence Exhibition, held in Dubai in February 2005, at which the South African-manufactured Rooivalk combat helicopter was exhibited.

In mid-2004, a successful first meeting of the South Africa-Saudi Arabia Joint Economic Commission took place in South Africa, during which the South African-Saudi Business Forum was established.

FDI from Turkey into South Africa amounts to US\$60 million, mainly in the textile and tourism sectors. Six Turkish companies have set up plants in South Africa. There are also over 50 registered Turkish companies trading or providing services in the tourism and restaurant sectors in South Africa. Several South African companies have also set up business in Turkey.

The official visit of Turkish Prime Minister, Mr Recep Tayyip Erdogan in March 2005, illustrated the growing economic importance of South African-Turkey relations.

South African exports to Turkey (including gold) increased by 20% during 2004 and reached R5,6 billion. South Africa's exports during the same period in 2003 totalled R1,8 billion.

Two successful business summits and exchange visits contributed to bilateral trade during 2004, totaling over one billion US dollars. The conclusion of the trade and economic co-operation and customs agreements during Prime Minister Erdogan's visit is expected to contribute to continued growth in trade, and economic and investment relations between the two countries.

Relations with the Americas

United States of America (USA)

South Africa's bilateral relationship with the USA remains strong. Since 1994, business, civilian and governmental links with the USA have expanded exponentially and a strong, long-term working partnership has been established between the two countries.

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

The USA remains the largest single foreign investor in the South African economy since 1994, and the largest trading partner, taken as an individual country, as well as the largest donor of official development assistance.

Current economic priorities with regard to the USA are two-fold: the conclusion of the SACU-US FTA negotiations which, once completed, would have the potential of securing Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) benefits for the long term; encouraging new investments in South Africa and continuing to market South Africa as a desirable investment destination for US companies, with the emphasis on promoting economic empowerment for previously disadvantaged communities.

The SACU-US FTA negotiations are considered important both in the context of encouraging US support for regional economic development and co-operation, as well as for the effective implementation of NEPAD. The talks have the potential to improve trade flows significantly between the SACU region and the US, and contribute to regional economic growth, stability and prosperity.

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 for 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 the Department of Finance and the USA 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. USAID programmes in South Africa focus, among others, on strengthening the capacity of educational institutions; improving primary healthcare delivery; providing technical assistance and scholarships to improve economic capacity in the country; and enhancing the quality of, and access to, housing in South Africa.

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.

President Mbeki and Minister Dlamini-Zuma held bilateral discussions with President George W. Bush in Washington in June 2005, ahead of the G8 summit hosted by the United Kingdom (UK) in Scotland in July 2005. Prior to the G8 summit, President Mbeki consulted with various G8 leaders to ensure practical outcomes for Africa and the South during the summit. In addition, presidents Mbeki and Bush discussed conflict resolution and peacekeeping in Africa, the G8 Africa Plan, the AGOA, the Millennium Challenge Account and overseas development aid to Africa.

In 2004, South African exports to the USA totalled US\$5 926 million, which was an increase over the total of US\$4 888 million in 2003. Imports from the USA came to US\$2 977 million in 2004, compared with US\$2 698 in 2003.

Canada

The healthy bilateral relations with Canada continue under the Government of Prime Minister Paul Martin. In the multilateral sphere, South Africa and Canada share a like-minded approach to a number of issues such as multilateralism and the need for UN reform. Canada remains a strong supporter of the African Agenda and NEPAD, also in a G8 context.

Canada is actively seeking closer co-operation with South Africa on 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 health, science and technology, as well as arts and culture, with the emphasis on capacity-building, the transfer of skills, research and funding.

Canada remains the largest foreign investor in the South African mining sector and has indicated its intention of increasing investments in this sector, not only in South Africa, but also on the continent as a whole. Bilateral trade, which has been growing since 1994 and shifted in South Africa's favour in 2004, will receive a further boost with the establishment of the South Africa consulate-general in Toronto.

Canada reconfirmed its commitment to development co-operation with South Africa by making available R100 million a year over the next five years. Its technical assistance programme is aimed at social upliftment, policy development and HRD.

The finalisation of the Country Development Programme Framework between South Africa and Canada, one of the first of its kind, ensures a focused approach to Canadian development assistance to this country.

Annual consultations on a senior official level between South Africa and Canada were instituted in 2004 in terms of the Declaration of Intent signed during President Mbeki's state visit to that country in November 2003. The annual consultations have

developed into an effective platform to annually review relations in all spheres and to identify priority areas for co-operation.

The Caribbean

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

In addition to Jamaica, the high commission also maintains responsibility for Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. The mission in Havana, Cuba, is responsible for the Dominican Republic.

In formulating South Africa's policy in relation to the emerging markets of the Caribbean, it is important to strengthen relations and develop common positions on global issues such as access to the markets of the industrial North, reform of international institutions, and the promotion of the development agenda. In this regard, special emphasis is placed on how South Africa and the rest of the African continent engage these countries in promoting the ideals of the continent and the Diaspora.

The South African Government will increase its focus on strengthening the relations with the Caribbean region in future. Trinidad and Tobago, the Dominican Republic and Suriname were either in the process or had opened diplomatic missions in South Africa during 2005.

South Africa signed a bilateral co-operation agreement with The Bahamas in May 2005. The first JBC between the two countries was scheduled to take place in 2005, focusing on closer co-operation in the fields of education, tourism and trade.

A JBC with Cuba was also scheduled to be held during 2005, while the fourth Consultative Mechanism meeting, a further instrument in the development of relations with Cuba, was to take place simultaneously. South Africa hoped to strengthen present agreements with Cuba during these meetings.

The South Africa, AU and Caribbean Diaspora Conference held in Kingston, Jamaica, during March 2005, provided specific guidelines on how to

take South Africa's relationship with the Caribbean forward.

Latin America

The newly established South American Community of Nations covers 17 million square kilometres, with 361 million inhabitants, a gross domestic product of more than US\$973 billion, and exports above US\$180 billion.

The developing countries in Central America and the Andean Community are playing an increasingly important role in international political bodies and formations such as the NAM and the UN.

Brazil is a significant player in the multilateral context, particularly regarding the interests of the South. With its like-minded approach to a number of significant issues affecting the developing world, it is a strategic partner for South Africa.

The IBSA Dialogue Forum provides a mechanism for institutionalised engagement. Its second meeting was held in Cape Town in March 2005. In the bilateral sphere, a broad range of contacts and exchanges exist between Brazil and South Africa.

The third meeting of the JC between South Africa and Brazil, which took place in Brasilia in October 2004, gave added impetus to bilateral co-operation and comprised political discussions and technical interaction.

South Africa attaches great importance to its relations with other like-minded countries of the Southern Cone of Latin America such as Chile, Uruguay and Argentina, and efforts are underway to increase co-operation in a number of fields.

A JC agreement has been negotiated with Argentina, and a range of technical and commercial agreements are either in place or in the process of negotiation with several of the countries in the region.

There is furthermore significant potential for co-operation with the MERCOSUR (Southern Common Market) trading bloc, which consists of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay as full members, and a steadily-increasing number of associate members in the Latin American region.

Since the December 2000 signing by South Africa and MERCOSUR of an FTA, SACU negotiated

a partial preferential trade agreement with MERCOSUR, which was signed in December 2004. Negotiations towards a full FTA continue.

Relations with 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). The agreement is premised on political dialogue, trade and economic co-operation, and development assistance.

The TDCA provides for regular, high-level structured political dialogue at ministerial level. The Political Dialogue Forum enables the Minister of Foreign Affairs and her counterpart, the EU's High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, to discuss bilateral, African and global issues.

These include poverty eradication, NEPAD, peace-building, conflict prevention, respect for human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law, and good governance. The first South Africa-EU Ministerial Troika Meeting in Dublin in April 2004, heralded a new phase in an already good relationship with South Africa.

As a result, President Mbeki visited the European institutions in November 2004. This was followed by the first South Africa-EU Ministerial JCC meeting on 23 November 2004. The JCC is a forum of the TDCA, established to monitor the implementation of the provisions of the agreement. The second Ministerial JCC was expected to take place in South Africa towards the end of 2005.

With regard to trade and economic co-operation, the TDCA provides for an FTA 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.

During this period, South Africa 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. South Africa and the EU are finalising

sectoral agreements on co-operation in investments, mining, information society, agriculture, research, and small, medium and micro enterprises. The TDCA also provides for co-operation in trade-related aspects, which includes co-operation in competition policy, customs, statistics, standards and conformity.

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). The EPRD is funded directly from the EU Commission at 127,5 million euro a year.

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.

A unique feature of the TDCA is that it has a regional development dimension. To this end, up to 15% of the EPRD can be used for regional development. This provision in the agreement created a legal basis for the decision of the first South Africa-EU Ministerial Troika Meeting, that 1,5% of the amount allocated to South Africa under the EPRD would be made available towards the Africa Peace Facility.

Among other things, EPRD funds also serve to strengthen South Africa's democratic institutions. The EU donated R80 million in January 2005 to South Africa's Parliament and the nine provincial legislatures to help strengthen democracy and the rule of law.

South Africa assumed full membership of the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of countries in 1996. It became a qualified member of the Lome Convention in 1997 and of its successor, the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA), signed in Cotonou, in June 2000. The CPA is a framework for co-operation between the 79 ACP group of countries and the EU. The new EU members which

acceded in May 2004 adopted the agreement as part of the EU's legislative infrastructure.

Qualified membership means that South Africa is excluded from the trade regime provided in the agreement as well as from the provisions on development assistance. South Africa can, however, tender for projects in all ACP countries and participate fully in all political instruments of the agreement. South Africa's economic relations with the EU are governed by the TDCA.

The CPA differs significantly from its predecessor in that its duration will be 20 years, with a revision clause every five years and a financial protocol for each five-year period. The agreement underscores the importance of regional economic co-operation.

The most far-reaching changes are to be introduced in the area of trade, through regional economic partnership agreements (EPAs), where non-reciprocal preferences will be gradually abolished and regional integration processes encouraged. The present arrangements are to be maintained until 2008 when the EPAs would have been finalised. South Africa participates in the EPA negotiations as an observer.

One of the key aspects of South Africa's membership of the ACP is its active participation in the three ACP-EU joint political organs, namely the Council of Ministers, the Joint Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ambassadors. South Africa takes part in dialogue on important issues such as peace-building, conflict resolution, respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law.

South Africa regularly participates in ACP summits, council of ministers' meetings, trade ministers' meetings and the ACP Forum on Science and Technology.

The interest and commitment showed by the EU regarding the African continent and its development is encouraging. Within that context, the European Commission (EC) and the NEPAD Secretariat are closely co-operating through established structures and regular dialogue and information sharing.

They have also agreed to increase coherence between EU member states and the EC in support of NEPAD projects, the AU and its institutions, and the RECs.

Alongside political dialogue, there has been phenomenal growth in trade between South Africa and Belgium. The EU is South Africa's top export destination, and Belgian ports remain an important entry point through which South African exports find their way to countries both within and outside of the EU.

The Belgian Government continues to take a keen interest in South and southern Africa and the situation in the Great Lakes Region, particularly the DRC. There is a regular exchange of views between South Africa and Belgium on the issues and the complicated processes necessary to reach a durable solution to the conflicts in the region.

Since 1994, the Dutch Government has consistently supported South Africa in terms of bilateral and multilateral relations. A large number of bilateral agreements have been signed and high-level bilateral ministerial meetings are frequent.

Luxembourg and South Africa enjoy dynamic bilateral relations. High-level visits between the two states take place regularly.

Relations with Germany have expanded considerably since the introduction of the South Africa-Germany BNC in 1996, as the committees of the commission work continuously to enhance economic, scientific, cultural, environmental, defence and development co-operation.

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

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland visited South Africa in February 2004, during which the Declaration of Intent on the Promotion of Women Rights was signed.

A number of high-level visits, including the South Africa-Swiss Working Group Meeting and the Swiss State Secretary of Science and Technology's visit to South Africa took place during 2004. The Agreement Promoting Trilateral Co-operation in Africa ensures close liaison.

The Irish and South African governments agreed to set up the Ireland-South Africa Partnership Forum to boost co-operation between the two countries. The inaugural meeting of this structured, high-level and multisectoral engagement was expected to be convened late in 2005.

Relations with the UK were strengthened during the sixth meeting of the South Africa-UK Bilateral Forum in Cape Town in August 2004. Thirteen British and South African ministers participated and agreed on a number of new initiatives, including strengthening strategies to address the impact of healthcare personnel migration, as well as a detailed programme of cultural co-operation that is to be finalised through an MoU.

President Mbeki welcomed the report of the Commission for Africa published in March 2005, an initiative by Prime Minister Tony Blair to give impetus to African development.

In September 2004, former Deputy President Zuma visited Poland, where he briefed his Polish interlocutors on the current political situation in South Africa and thanked Poland for its support during the liberation struggle.

He also visited Romania to strengthen political and economic ties between the two countries. As a practical manifestation of this objective, the Agreement on Science and Technology Co-operation as well as the MoU on the Statute of the JC for Economic and Technical Co-operation were signed with that country.

Deputy Minister Pahad paid a successful visit to Croatia where he met, among others, his counterpart and the Croatian business community. To facilitate South Africa's initiatives in Croatia, a South African honorary-consul was appointed in Zagreb.

In December 2004, the Bulgarian Vice President, Mr Angel Marin, paid an official visit to South Africa to strengthen political and economic ties. The two countries signed agreements on police co-operation and co-operation in the fields of culture, healthcare and health science.

Notes were exchanged on the ratification by both parliaments of the Convention on Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income.

The historical links between South Africa and the Russian Federation are strong. The former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was one of the key supporters of the struggle for liberation in South Africa.

In April 1999, the Intergovernmental Committee on Trade and Economic Co-operation (ITEC) between the Russian Federation and South Africa was established. The fourth session of ITEC was held in Pretoria in November 2004 and resulted in the signing of the bilateral Agreement on Co-operation in the Peaceful Use of Atomic Energy.

During the 5th ITEC session in October 2005 in Moscow, considerable progress was achieved in further strengthening mutually beneficial co-operation.

The Intergovernmental Agreement on Co-operation in the Field of Maritime Transport and an MoU in the sphere of astronomy and nuclear research was signed.

In July 2005, Minister Dlamini-Zuma received the Order of Peter the Great First Class, in recognition of her outstanding achievement in strengthening international peace, security and friendship between Russia and South Africa.

Bilateral relations between South Africa and France are directed by institutionalised mechanisms such as the MoU on Political Dialogue, and joint commissions on trade and industry and education, arts, culture, science and technology, and sport.

Economic relations between France and South Africa continue to strengthen. South African Airways recently procured Airbus aircraft as part of its comprehensive fleet modernisation programme.

Former Deputy President Zuma paid a working visit to Italy in October 2004 and met with his Italian counterpart, Mr Gianfranco Fini, as well as Cardinal Angelo Sodano from the Holy See and representatives from the NGO, St Egidio. He also addressed the World Political Forum in Stresa on *Poverty in the World – A Challenge to Globalisation*.

President Mbeki, accompanied by the Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr Mandisi Mpahlwa, paid a working visit to Italy during May 2005 where discussions were held with President Azeglio Ciampi and Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. Issues on the agenda included the consolidation of political and

economic bilateral relations, European support for the African Agenda, peacekeeping and conflict management in Africa, the forthcoming G8 Summit and reform of the UN.

During this visit, President Mbeki also met the newly appointed Pope. President Mbeki was one of the first heads of state to be received by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. President Mbeki and the Pope discussed issues relating to the role of the Church in contributing to the African Agenda and the global fight against poverty and underdevelopment.

The Executive Programme for Scientific Co-Operation between Italy and South Africa was renewed for another three years. Implementation of the Film Co-Production Agreement saw South Africa participating in numerous film festivals, which culminated in the anniversary of South Africa's 10 years of freedom and democracy being one of the highlights of the Venice Film Festival.

The Forum Barcelona 2004 was the first of a series of international events aiming to bring together civil societies from all over the world to promote the study, reflection and innovative research of the various cultures that constitute the contemporary world.

The South African embassy in Spain participated extensively in this event, which was projected as an important aspect of its programme for the 10 Years of Democracy celebrations in 2004. Various ministers participated in these discussions, as did members of civil society.

The first session of the annual consultations between Deputy Minister Pahad and his former Spanish counterpart took place in February 2004 in Pretoria.

The third-largest Spanish company, El Corte Ingles, selected South Africa as a theme country for countrywide promotion in its 65 outlets in 2005.

In February 2005, President Mbeki paid a state visit to the Hellenic Republic.

Ten Years of Democracy were also celebrated in Greece and commenced with a multidominational thanksgiving service and performances by three South African music groups. In Cyprus the celebrations were marked by a week-long South African Food Festival presented by South African chefs,

accompanied by performances of the Sibikwa Marimba Band.

Several 10-year celebrations were also held in Portugal.

The South African embassy continues to pursue the hosting of the second Africa-EU Summit with Portugal in 2006.

In January 2005, Minister Dlamini-Zuma attended the fourth session of the Nordic-African Information Consultation in Helsinki, Finland.

Discussions included:

- peace and security architecture in Africa and current challenges
- strengthening human rights, democracy and governance to promote development and prevent conflicts
- the implementation of NEPAD, including the operationalisation of the APRM
- the reform of the global exercise of governance, such as the UN and all its institutions, including the Security Council and the International Monetary Fund.

Multilateral diplomacy

The global challenges for both developing and developed countries, highlighted by the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) and many other speakers during the General Debate of the 59th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA59) in September 2004, renewed the focus on the need to protect and strengthen multilateral mechanisms.

Events and issues that continued to undermine global peace and security and the multilateral system of governance made it clear that, for a collective security system to work, it is essential to address both development and security threats. Recognising the urgency of the matter, a number of member states, including South Africa, called for the speedy finalisation of discussions to restructure the UN.

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 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, both of mass destruction and small arms.

South Africa maintains that issues such as these pose major threats for world peace and security. Through participation in organisations and groups such as the UN, the AU, the NAM, the Group of 77 and China and the Commonwealth, South Africa seeks to ensure that national interests and objectives, as well as those of the continent and developing countries generally, are taken on board in discussions in multilateral fora and reports.

A major challenge for developing countries such as South Africa, is to be active in the protection and promotion of the agenda of the South in the current global geopolitical power configuration, and to ensure the pre-eminence and centrality of the UN in the eradication of underdevelopment and the maintenance of global peace and security.

International organisations

United Nations

South Africa's current priorities for participation in the UNGA, its main committees and organs, are:

- pursuit of an overarching human rights agenda including the right to development
- promoting global peace and security
- protecting and promoting multilateralism, international law and the centrality of the UN Charter
- addressing human development, poverty eradication and environmental degradation
- advancing the active follow-up and implementation of the MDGs, international development goals and the outcomes of major UN conferences
- advancing South-South co-operation through active participation in the NAM and other South-South co-operation arrangements
- promoting the reform of the UNSC General Assembly, ECOSOC, and regional organisations, and generally revitalising the UN system
- promoting the Common Africa Position on the reform of the UN, including the equitable representation of Africa on the UNSC

- disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation of both weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms
- implementing the Johannesburg Plan of Action of the WSSD
- humanitarian assistance
- promoting the AU and NEPAD in the UN context
- promoting gender mainstreaming
- supporting the global campaign against terrorism.

President Mbeki used UNGA59 as a platform to expand on these national priorities. In addition, the President also participated in meetings with other world leaders on actions against hunger and poverty, and the social dimensions of globalisation.

In terms of South Africa's priorities, a very important development was the decision of the UNSG to appoint the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and the panel for the UN Millennium Project, to assist it in compiling a comprehensive report for the review of the Millennium Declaration in 2005.

Various other important panels also presented their work to the UNSG, which produced a solid base to offer solutions, in its report, to the global problems and challenges facing mostly the developing world. The announcement of the UNSG thus focused attention on the reform of the UN in many multilateral fora and regional organisations.

Consequently, in pursuance of a common African position, the fourth Ordinary Assembly of the AU held in Abuja, Nigeria, in January 2005, established the Committee of 15 at ministerial level to consider all aspects of the recommendations contained in the Report of the UN High-Level Panel, particularly the reform of the Security Council.

A South African delegation led by Minister Dlamini-Zuma attended the meeting of the Committee of 15 in Swaziland in February 2005 during which an African common position, the Ezulwini Consensus, was adopted and later formally endorsed by the AU Executive Council in Addis Ababa on 7 March 2005.

In March 2005, the UNSG tabled its own comprehensive report, *In Larger Freedom*, which combines elements from the Report of the High-Level Panel and the UN Millennium Project.

In response to the aforementioned reports, South Africa embraced the emphasis that development is an indispensable foundation for a new collective security system and also actively promoted the African Common Position, which calls for the reform of the General Assembly, the ECOSOC and the Security Council.

South Africa's own candidacy for a permanent seat is pursued in the context of the African Common Position. The aforementioned reports, and consultations on it, provided input for the Millennium Review Summit, which reviewed the implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

The summit was held at the commencement of the 60th Session of the General Assembly (UNGA60) in September 2005.

In pursuit of an overarching human-rights agenda, including the right to development, the greatest challenge faced by the majority in the developing world, including South Africa, is global poverty and under-development notwithstanding advancement in technology and globalisation. Consequently, addressing the issues of poverty and underdevelopment is becoming an increasingly important part of South Africa's foreign policy objectives, also in multilateral fora, and it is a natural extension of government's domestic policy agenda of creating a better life for all.

The latter objective informs South Africa's participation in international organisations and processes that focus on vulnerable groups such as the aged, the youth or physically challenged people.

Recognising the active role South Africa plays in this regard, it was elected to chair the 43rd session of the Commission for Social Development in New York during February 2005.

Through its multilateral diplomacy, South Africa also plays an active role in supporting humanitarian causes internationally. In 2004, the South African Government donated R100 million to the World Food Programme and Food and Agricultural Organisation to address the food security situation in southern Africa in a sustainable manner.

During 2004/05, an additional R8,5 million was transferred to various UN agencies in support of projects alleviating the plight of vulnerable groups such

as women, children, internally displaced persons and refugees. South Africa also continues to render in-kind and monetary assistance to countries affected by natural sudden-onset disasters, including the cyclones that affected Madagascar and the devastating tsunami in Asia and East Africa during 2004.

The signing of a number of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and the hosting of the WSSD in 2002 placed South Africa in the forefront of environmental diplomacy. In April 2005, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) listed President Mbeki and South Africa as 'Champions of the Earth'.

As party to the UN conventions on climate change, desertification and biodiversity, South Africa is committed to poverty alleviation and protection against loss of biodiversity by 2010. South Africa is also firmly committed to the protection of the oceans and the sustainable management of its marine resources.

It has put its commitment to the protection of the oceans into practice, by ratifying all the major treaties dealing with marine, maritime, fisheries and Antarctic matters, such as the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and its related instruments, the International Maritime Convention, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation Compliance Agreement and the Antarctic Treaty.

South Africa is one of the major participants in intergovernmental discussions relating to all aspects of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, as these relate to both weapons of mass destruction



In June 2005, Advocate Albertus Jacobus Hoffmann was elected as a judge to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. This is the first time that South Africa has a judge on the tribunal. The other African candidate to be elected was Ambassador James L. Kateka of Tanzania.

The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea is an international court established by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to deal with the peaceful settlement of disputes relating to the use of the seas and oceans and their resources.

and conventional arms, including small arms, light weapons and anti-personnel mines, especially in relation to the continent.

South Africa also continues to promote the importance of ensuring that non-proliferation controls do not become the means whereby developing countries are denied access to advanced technologies required for their development.

On 20 February 2004, South Africa's commitment to combat transnational organised crime was reflected in its ratification of the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and its three supplementary protocols: the Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea; the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components, and Ammunition. South Africa also ratified the UN Convention against Corruption in 2004.

To ensure that South Africa's interests, as well as those of the African continent and developing countries in general, are adequately catered for in the UN budget, South Africa actively participates in the UN's budgetary and administrative activities. Priority areas for South Africa include the funding of UN structures and programmes that focus on Africa and NEPAD, as well as sufficient funding for peacekeep-

ing operations on the continent. In the context of UN budgetary issues, South Africa plays a prominent role and was elected to the Bureau of the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) for UNGA59; and also for a three-year term (2003 – 2005) on the 34-member Committee for Programme and Co-ordination.

For the 2004/05 regular budget of the UN, South Africa's assessed contribution was US\$5,196 million. Its contribution to the UN peacekeeping budget was US\$1,537 million. It also contributed US\$503 648 to the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and former Yugoslavia.

South Africa met its financial obligations to the UN in full, on time and without pre-conditions, resulting in the country being one of a few UN member states meeting its membership obligations on time. As a result, South Africa was honoured again by being included in the Secretary-General's Roll of Honour of countries that paid their dues timeously.

The South African Auditor-General will serve on the UN Board of Auditors until the end of 2006. Three UN member states, nominated by the Fifth Committee and appointed by the General Assembly for a non-consecutive term of six years, constitute the UN Board of Auditors.

South Africa has also been elected to serve on the following UN bodies:

- ECOSOC (1995 – 1997; 2001 – 2003; 2005 – 2007)
- International Law Commission (2002 – 2006): Professor John Dugard
- International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (2005 – 2009): Judge J. Moloto
- International Criminal Court (2003 – 2009): Judge M. Pillay
- Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2005 – 2008): Ambassador P. January-Bardill.

South Africa has been elected by ECOSOC to serve on the following subsidiary bodies:

- Commission for Social Development (2001 – 2005, 2006 – 2009)
- Statistical Commission (2002 – 2005)
- Commission on Human Rights (2004 – 2006)
- Commission on Status of Women (2002 – 2006)



Various multilateral economic fora, such as the World Trade Organisation, the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development, the G8 and the World Economic Forum serve as focal points for South Africa to engage in dialogue with the countries of the North on key global economic issues, ensuring that the Africa and development agendas remain part of the focus of such fora.

The 2005 G8 Summit in Gleneagles, Scotland, provided an important platform for engagement on the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The G8 announced adopted measures to combat global warming and African poverty, by boosting aid to poor countries in Africa and elsewhere by R170 billion a year by 2010, and cutting farm subsidies.

- Commission on Narcotic Drugs (2002 – 2005)
Committee for Programme Co-ordination (2003 – 2005)
- Governing Council on Human Settlements (2004 – 2007)
- Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on International Standards of Accountancy and Reporting (2003 – 2005)
- Commission on International Trade Law (2005 – 2007)
- Commission on Sustainable Development (2002 – 2005).

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

The first agreement South Africa signed with the UN was the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement with the UNDP. The Comprehensive Country Co-operation Framework (CCF) to cover the period 1997 to 2001 followed. The current CCF covers 2002 to 2006.

In terms of the CCF, the UNDP seeks to implement programmes that are relevant to government's transformation and development imperatives. Programmes focus on priority areas such as the eradication of poverty and underdevelopment, strengthening local government, building civil society co-operation and addressing the challenges of globalisation.

South Africa's voluntary contribution to the UNDP for 2004/05 was R950 000, which was utilised by the UNDP towards operational costs of development programmes in South Africa. 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.

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) establishes an integrated framework for co-operation for development assistance between the UN System and the Government.

The UNDAF for South Africa currently has three main priorities, namely HIV and AIDS, rural development and regional integration. Regular UNDAF reviews are held, with the participation of all UN agencies with offices in South Africa, as well as all

government departments that interact with these agencies.

The UNDP plays a prominent role in the region. The latest development in this regard is a UNDP Regional Service Centre for eastern and southern Africa. The centre was established in Johannesburg in 2004 in pursuit of the UNDP's objective to use South Africa as a 'hub' to provide technical assistance and expertise for programme implementation in 22 countries in the region.

Commonwealth

The Commonwealth comprises 53 member countries, representing 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, from the smallest and poorest to the richest and most populous, with cross-cutting affiliations straddling the North-South divide.

Notwithstanding its geographical, religious and cultural diversity, the Commonwealth is united by its shared ideals and common traditions manifested in similar structures of governance, public administration and law, a common working language, commercial and business practices and understanding.

Its mandate has been determined by consultation, sharing of experience and consensus rather than by vote. The Commonwealth subscribes to the principles of international peace and order, global economic development and the rule of international law, democratic values, individual liberties, human dignity, and racial, gender and other equality.

Its programmes of action are focused on human and government capacity-building, economic and



On 14 September 2005, President Thabo Mbeki joined other world leaders in appending his signature to the United Nations (UN) International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism in New York.

President Mbeki led a delegation of senior government officials attending the Millennium Summit and the 60th session of the UN General Assembly.

social development, the removal of disparities in living standards across the world and the alleviation of poverty and illiteracy.

In this context, South Africa actively participates in all meetings of the Commonwealth and has played a leading role, also as a voice of the South, in supporting the Commonwealth's commitment to furthering the UN MDGs, relations with NEPAD, poverty relief, debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries, a human rights agenda, assistance to small and island states, Information Technology and human and administrative capacity-building.

Non-Aligned Movement

With the exception of the UN itself, the NAM with its 115 member countries is the largest political grouping of countries in the world. It was founded in 1961 in response to the challenges tabled for the Third World countries of the Cold-War era by the Bandung Summit of 1955. It has since steadfastly adhered to certain guiding principles, seeking consensus through peaceful means, non-interference in domestic affairs of member countries, a multilateral approach to global issues and close South-South

co-operation. It further agitates against marginalisation and impoverishment of the South, and human indignities.

South Africa has played a leading role since joining the NAM in 1994. The XII Summit of Heads of State or Government was hosted in Durban in 1998 when South Africa took over as chair from Colombia until 2003.

In August 2004, South Africa hosted the XIV Ministerial Conference of the NAM. Ministerial conferences, also known as mid-term reviews, are held to review the development and implementation of decisions of the preceding summit and to discuss matters of urgency. In pursuit of the strengthening of multilateralism, South Africa initiated the Durban Declaration on Multilateralism, which was adopted by the conference. The conference also adopted declarations on Palestine and the Gatumba Massacre.

The NAM Co-ordination Bureau meets regularly at ambassadorial level at the UN in New York to review the agenda of the movement and make proposals to further enhance the agenda of the South.

Acknowledgements

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