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SOUTH AFRICA 2025



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YEARBOOK
2024/25

International Relations
and Cooperation

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

The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation is entrusted with the formulation, promotion, execution and daily conduct of South Africa's foreign policy. The Department of International Relations and Cooperation's (DIRCO) overall mandate, which is codified in the Foreign Service Act, 2019 (Act 26 of 2019), is to work for the realisation of South Africa's foreign policy objectives. This is achieved by:

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

DIRCO's strategic objectives are to:

- protect and promote South African national interests and values through bilateral and multilateral interactions;
- conduct and coordinate South Africa's international relations and promote its foreign policy objectives;
- monitor international developments and advise government on foreign policy and related domestic matters;
- contribute to the formulation of international law and enhance respect for its provisions;

- promote multilateralism to secure a rules-based international system;
- maintain a modern, effective department driven to pursue excellence; and
- provide a world-class and uniquely South African state protocol service.

The National Development Plan (NDP) is the overarching apex policy framework that guides the work of government. In the area of international relations, the NDP states that in order for South Africa to achieve its national goals of eradicating poverty, lowering inequality, creating jobs and making the transition to a resilient carbon economy, foreign relations must be driven by the country's domestic economic, political and social demands, as well as regional, continental and global obligations.

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

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

South Africa's international diplomatic footprint consists of diplomatic missions in 114 countries in which the country has representation, and through the accreditation of more than 160 countries and international organisations resident in South Africa. The country's diplomatic and consular missions implement its foreign policy to enhance its international profile and serve as strategic mechanisms for the achievement of national interests.

In addition, training and policy analysis remain of strategic importance for the execution of DIRCO's mandate. Chapter 7 of the NDP details a vision for facilitating South Africa's broad-based socio-economic development and fostering strong international ties. This articulation is supported by

Priority 7 (a better Africa and world) of government's 2019 – 2024 Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF).

South Africa will continue supporting peace efforts and the entrenchment of human rights around the globe. The country is a member (2023 – 2025) of the Human Rights Council and intends to renew its candidature. South Africa will use its presence in the Council to promote the work of the Council and pursue its objectives and priorities in the context of a human rights agenda, including the rights of vulnerable groups such as women, children, persons with disabilities and the LGBTQIA+ community. That agenda, informed as it is by the core values and principles enshrined in the Constitution including the Bill of Rights, which protects and preserves the rights of all people in the country, affirming the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom, will support South Africa's established and new global solidarity efforts. It will continue its support for a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine. South Africa continues with all efforts for peace and freedom for the people of Palestine and Western Sahara, and in solidarity with the blockaded people of Cuba.

Advancing the African Agenda

In its efforts to advance peace and security and prevent conflict in Africa, the department will continue playing an active role in the structures and processes of the African Union (AU). Accordingly, South Africa will continue advancing the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the AU's Agenda 2063. To support these activities, the department anticipates spending R952,2 million over the medium-term on AU membership fees. This expenditure is in the Membership Contribution subprogramme within the International Transfers programme.

The SADC is a major vehicle for South Africa's pursuit of regional development and integration. As such, the department intends to produce four reports per year on the outcomes of South-South engagements reflecting South Africa's participation and interests, such as enhancing trade relations and reducing conflict in Southern Africa. As a member of the SADC, South Africa will continue to ensure

that its interests and those of other members are advanced. An amount of R477,2 million over the MTEF period is set aside in the Membership Contribution subprogramme in the International Transfers programme for South Africa's membership contributions to the SADC.

Participation in global forums

South Africa advances its interests at the global level through its membership of and participation in United Nations (UN) programmes and forums. Accordingly, over the medium-term, South Africa will continue to promote and advance its foreign and domestic policy imperatives, which include advancing the African Agenda on peace and security, human rights, and economic and social development, as well as supporting the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The department plans to spend R624,4 million over the next three years on membership fees. This expenditure is in the Membership Contribution subprogramme in the International Transfers programme.

Managing infrastructure projects and properties

In an effort to strengthen its property portfolio over the MTEF period, the department plans to purchase properties for office and residential purposes to cut down on rental costs and re-purpose underused state-owned properties in its global portfolio. Re-purposing involves converting offices or large official residences into staff quarters. Plans are in place to build on state-owned vacant land in New Delhi, India, and Luanda, Angola, over the MTEF period; and refurbish, renovate and maintain 24 existing properties across the world in accordance with the outcomes of conditional assessments to preserve and prolong the department's property portfolio. To carry out these activities, R633,3 million over the medium-term is allocated in the Foreign Fixed Asset Management subprogramme in the Administration programme.

Peace and security

South Africa has continued to play a key role in contributing towards peace and stability on the continent. In January 2025, South Africa led a ministerial delegation to Juba, in its capacity as chair of the AU Ad Hoc High-level Committee on South Sudan (C5). In February 2025, on the margins of the AU Summit, South Africa also participated in the high-level meeting convened by the AU Peace and Security Council to discuss the evolving and concerning security situations in the DRC and Sudan. Moreover, South Africa participated in the 12th Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Great Lakes Region held in Kampala, Uganda, in May 2025.

In addition, in recent years South Africa deployed troops in Mozambique and the DRC to help combat violent extremism, terrorist insurgency, instability and conflict, respectively. While the SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) and the SADC Mission in the DRC (SAMIDRC) have withdrawn from both countries, South Africa still maintains troops in the DRC under MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade. All these efforts were aimed at achieving the Agenda 2063 flagship project of silencing the guns in Africa by 2030.

Development issues on the continent

On continental development issues, the AU Development Agency, also known as AUDA-NEPAD, is the implementing agent for "Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want". With the recent adoption of the Second 10-Year Implementation Plan (STYIP) by African Heads of State and Government at the AU Summit in February 2024, the programme activities of AUDA-NEPAD become even more crucial for continental economic growth.

As the host country to AUDA-NEPAD, South Africa played a continental leadership role in shaping active implementation of Agenda 2063 across Africa, inclusive of addressing regional needs through the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan and national needs through the NDP. Implementation of Agenda 2063 will also feed into meeting the targets of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). South Africa is currently

servicing a two-year term (2023 – 2025) as the 2nd Vice Chair of the AUDA-NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee (HSGOC) and the AUDA-NEPAD Steering Committee. Both bodies are responsible for overseeing the strategic and political direction of AUDA-NEPAD programmes and projects in Africa in support of Agenda 2063. In February 2024, South Africa successfully participated in the 41st Summit of the AUDA-NEPAD HSGOC.

African Peer Review Mechanism

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is a specialised agency of the AU, established in 2003. The APRM is considered a tool for sharing experiences, reinforcing best practices, identifying deficiencies, and assessing capacity-building needs to foster policies, standards, and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development, and accelerated sub-regional and continental economic integration.

In December 2023, South Africa hosted the 20th Anniversary Celebrations of the APRM in Sandton. During this meeting, the launch of South Africa's 2nd Generation Country Review Report took place, thereby further highlighting South Africa's commitment to the essence of good governance in Africa. In February 2024, South Africa successfully participated in the 33rd Summit of the APR Forum of Heads of State and Government.

Implementation of the AU Decade on African Roots and Diaspora (2021-2031)

South Africa, as a member of the AU Ministerial High Committee in charge of the Agenda of the Decade on African Roots and Diaspora, continued to participate on behalf of the Southern Africa Region, alongside Angola and Namibia. The High Committee provided a roadmap and way forward in relation to the convening of the 9th Pan-African Congress, which is scheduled to take place in Lomé, Togo, in December 2025. The theme of the Congress is "Renewal of Pan-Africanism and the role of Africa in the reform of multilateral institutions: mobilising resources and reinventing ourselves to act". South Africa's engagement within the High Committee provides an opportunity to refocus and inject

new impetus into the diaspora's thematic issue at a strategic level. South Africa actively participates and contributes to advancing the agenda towards the realisation of the objectives and vision of the Decade of African Roots and Diasporas.

Qualification of slavery, deportation and colonisation as crimes against humanity and genocide against the peoples of Africa .

The AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, through its Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.934(XXXVIII) adopted at its 38th Ordinary Session, designated South Africa alongside Algeria, Ghana and Togo to follow up on the implementation and implications of the Decision, in collaboration with the Commission, and the Republics of Ghana, South Africa and Algeria. Collaboration in this context must be with all AU member states, diaspora organisations, Afro-descendants and international organisations.

Pan-African Parliament

In discharging its obligations as the host country to the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), South Africa successfully facilitated the hosting of the requisite sessions of the Pan-African Parliament, which saw the successful election of the Bureau of the PAP to direct the operations of the organ.

AU Champion for Pandemic Preparedness, Prevention and Response (PPPR)

The Assembly of Heads of State and Government at its 37th Session held in February 2024, successfully realigned President Cyril Ramaphosa's title to now serve as the AU Champion for Pandemic Preparedness, Prevention and Response (PPPR). This is in recognition of the key role that South Africa played in terms of its COVID-19 response within the continent, including local vaccine manufacturing.

Agenda 2063

South Africa was appointed as the Chair of the AU Ministerial Follow-up Committee on the Implementation of Agenda 2063 for the years 2025 and 2026, demonstrating its commitment to the Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan. The critical role and responsibility of the committee is to provide political leadership and direction regarding the implementation of

Agenda 2063. The committee is also tasked with ensuring effectiveness, efficiency and accountability in the delivery of Agenda 2063 and its successful implementation.

In view of the above, South Africa will utilise its chairship of the Committee to call for action in terms of domestication, monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2063.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

South Africa has continued to play a leading role in the acceleration of the AfCFTA, focusing on the expedition of the ratification of the AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade, whose implementation will be a catalyst for women's inclusion in trade within the AfCFTA. South Africa continued to prioritise the finalisation of the Annexes to the AfCFTA Protocol on Investment.

South Africa was elected the co-champion of the AfCFTA Protocol on Digital Trade. The start of trading under the AfCFTA continues to result in a steady increase in South African goods entering the African market beyond SADC.

South Africa has undertaken to establish a National Implementation Committee (NIC). The Committee's core mandate is to promote overall effective coordination and collaboration among relevant stakeholders in an effort to maximise the opportunities presented by the expanded market access, as well as to address any challenges that may arise. The NIC is led by the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Parks Tau.

Institutional reform of the AU

The institutional reform of the AU remains a critical aspect in the strengthening of the AU as a fit-for-purpose organisation for the realisation of "Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want". South Africa actively participated in the process of the election and appointment of the senior leadership of the AU. The AU Heads of State elected Lerato Mataboge as the AU Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy. The successful conclusion of the election and appointment of the senior leadership of the AU consolidated the reform of the AU, and South Africa will continue to actively participate in other aspects of the reform going forward.

The African Monetary Institute (AMI)

The AU agreed to operationalise the African Monetary Institute (AMI) and that it undertake the coordination for the implementation of the macroeconomic convergence criteria of the African Monetary Cooperation Programme (AMCP) and further undertake the preparatory work requisite to the ultimate creation of an African Central Bank.

Following its adoption by the Assembly, the AMI will be based in Abuja, Nigeria. The Central Bank, when implemented, will enable the AfCFTA to thrive and increase intra-Africa trade. South Africa will continue to actively participate in the advancement of priorities related to finance, monetary affairs, economic planning and integration as critical building blocks to a prosperous continent.

South-South cooperation and BRICS

One of the ways in which a context of global collaboration could be advanced is through influential formations that work to advance an inclusive, progressive, forward-looking international development agenda in light of increased unilateralism, protectionism, health, climate and economic crises, as well as geopolitical tensions.

The Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa grouping (BRICS) was launched in 2006 by leading emerging and developing countries united by the urgent need to increase the representation, voice and role of the Global South in global governance. Building on their shared principles and common interests, BRICS members cooperate in a wide range of areas under the three BRICS pillars of political and security, financial and economic, and social/people-to-people cooperation.

Following expansion of its membership in 2025, BRICS accounts for around half of the world's population, over 40% of global economic activity, and around a quarter of the world's exports. BRICS is using its increased representation and voice to shape a just world order as well as to explore opportunities for South-South cooperation to develop pragmatic solutions to challenges facing the majority of the world.

Legislation

DIRCO derives its mandate from the following legislation:

- Foreign States Immunities Act, 1981 (Act 87 of 1981), which regulates the extent of the immunity of foreign states from the jurisdiction of the South African courts and provides for matters connected therewith;
- Diplomatic Immunities and Privileges Act, 2001 (Act 37 of 2001), which provides for the immunities and privileges of diplomatic missions and consular posts and their members, Heads of State, special envoys and certain representatives of the UN and its specialised agencies, and other international organisations and certain people;
- African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund (ARF) Act, 2001 (Act 51 of 2000), which establishes cooperation between South Africa and other countries, in particular African countries, through the promotion of democracy, good governance, the prevention and resolution of conflict, socio-economic development and integration, humanitarian assistance and human resource development; and
- International agreements (multilateral and bilateral): International agreements concluded by South Africa in terms of sections 231 (2) and 231 (3) of the Constitution.

Entity

African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund (ARF)

The African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund (ARF) was established in terms of the ARF Act of 2000 to enhance cooperation between South Africa and other countries, particularly African ones; promote democracy and good governance; prevent and resolve conflict; encourage socio-economic development and integration; provide humanitarian assistance; and develop human resources.

Over the MTEF period, the ARF will continue focussing on supporting projects that will enhance African trade, goods exchange, economic development and integration. Total expenditure is expected to increase at an average annual rate of 2,7% from R51,2 million in 2022/23 to R55,5 million in 2025/26. The entity is set to derive 97,5% (R157 million) of its revenue over the period ahead through transfers from the

department. These are expected to increase at an average annual rate of 3,1% from R49,7 million in 2022/23 to R54,5 million in 2025/26. The remainder is set to be generated through interest income.

Programmes

International Cooperation

The purpose of the programme is to participate in initiatives of international organisations and institutions in line with South Africa's national values and foreign policy objectives. Subprogrammes within the International Cooperation programme include the following:

- Global System of Governance—provides for multilateralism and an international order based on rules. This entails participating in and playing an active role in all forums of the UN system and its specialised agencies, and funding programmes that promote the principles of multilateral activity;
- Continental Cooperation—provides for the enhancement of the African Agenda and sustainable development;
- South-South Cooperation—provides for partnerships with countries of the South in advancing South Africa's development needs and the needs of the African Agenda; and creates political, economic and social convergence for the fight against poverty, underdevelopment and the marginalisation of the South; and
- North-South Dialogue—provides for South Africa's bilateral and multilateral engagements to consolidate and strengthen relations with organisations of the North to advance and support national priorities, the African Agenda and the developmental agenda of the South.

Public Diplomacy and Protocol Services

The purpose of the programme is to communicate South Africa's role and position in international relations to domestic and international arenas and provide state protocol services. It ensures a better understanding of South Africa's foreign policy by providing ongoing strategic public diplomacy direction and state protocol services nationally and internationally.

Its subprogrammes include:

- Public Diplomacy – promotes a positive projection of South Africa's image; communicates foreign policy positions to domestic and foreign audiences; and markets and brands South Africa by using public diplomacy platforms, strategies, products and services; and
- Protocol Services – facilitates incoming and outgoing high-level visits and ceremonial events; coordinates and regulates engagements with the local diplomatic community; provides protocol advice and support to the various spheres of government; facilitates the hosting of international conferences in South Africa; and manages the state protocol lounges and guesthouses.

International transfers

The objective of international transfers is to promote multilateral activities that enhance South Africa's economic and diplomatic relations on the continent and with the world by providing for:

- South Africa's annual membership fee contributions to international organisations such as the UN, the AU and SADC; and
- Annual transfers to recapitalise the ARF as a contribution to its operations.

Enhancing economic diplomacy

In anticipation of growth in the African and Asian regions, South Africa took a conscious decision to expand and strengthen its diplomatic missions in the two regions. As South Africa consolidated its political relations on the continent by expanding its diplomatic footprint through 47 embassies, high commissions and consulates general, the country has also rapidly advanced its economic relations in Africa through the expansion of its trade volumes, investment portfolio and economic relations across the length and breadth of the continent.

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

consumer goods, financial services and transport/logistics sectors. It is also worth noting that the SADC accounts for approximately 80% of South Africa's total trade with the continent. With regard to Asia and the Middle East, South Africa's trade and investment in these regions have grown considerably and continue to do so.

In 1994, trade with Asia and the Middle East combined was approximately R45 billion and has increased to approximately R2.8 trillion for Asia and R250 billion with the Middle East in 2024. There is a direct correlation between the growth of South Africa's diplomatic missions and the phenomenal expansion of its trade and investment relations on both the African continent and in Asia and the Middle East. The same applies to the Americas and Europe.

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

DIRCO also uses international summits such as the BRICS, Group of Twenty (G20), the SADC, the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) as well as state visits and bilateral consultation mechanisms to promote the trade and investment case for South Africa. Government created a significant footprint in Asian markets as part of efforts to return the country to pre-COVID-19 economic growth. In 2021, government intended to identify new opportunities and expand those that have benefit for South Africa.

In order to intensify efforts to stimulate growth, government is working tirelessly to raise the country's global visibility by promoting South Africa as the best place to do business, visit, work, study and to live. Government is also responding to new opportunities and harnessing the collective capabilities of DIRCO's resources both at home and abroad.

Disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control

A primary goal of South Africa's policy on disarmament,

non-proliferation and arms control includes reinforcing and promoting the country as a responsible producer, possessor and trader of defence-related products and advanced technologies. In this regard, DIRCO continues to promote the benefits that disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control hold for international peace and security.

As a member of the Supplier's Regimes and of the Africa Group and the NAM, the importance of non-proliferation is promoted, considering that export controls should not become the means whereby developing countries are denied access to advanced technologies required for their development.

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

South Africa is a signatory to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) at the UN in New York. The country signed the treaty at a ceremony held on the margins of the 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA). It aims to contribute towards achieving the objective set out in the very first resolution adopted by the UNGA in 1946 to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction.

The treaty complements other international instruments by contributing towards fulfilling the nuclear disarmament obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the objectives of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and the various nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties, such as the Pelindaba Treaty that already banned nuclear weapons in Africa. South Africa believes that efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons should be matched by a concurrent effort to eliminate all nuclear weapons in a verifiable and irreversible manner.

The TPNW does not spell out all the details of such a process but rather allows for further negotiations on these arrangements to be agreed upon when states possessing or

hosting nuclear weapons are ready to accede to it. While the doors into this treaty have always been open, some chose to abdicate leadership and not participate in it.

At the third Meeting of States Parties (3MSP) to the TPNW held from 3 to 7 March 2025 in New York, South Africa was elected as President of the TPNW and will preside over the First Review Conference of the TPNW to be held in December 2026.

South Africa chaired the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) in 2025 and the 34th Plenary Meeting of the NSG took place from 21 to 25 July 2025 in Cape Town, South Africa. The NSG brings together 48 participating governments with the European Commission and the Chair of the Zangger Committee participating as permanent observers. The plenary was chaired by Ambassador Xolisa Mabhongo of the Republic of South Africa. The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ronald Lamola, delivered the keynote address on behalf of the Government of South Africa at the opening session. The NSG is an effective component of the international non-proliferation architecture, of which the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is the cornerstone, including on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The group aims, in line with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540, to contribute to the prevention of proliferation of nuclear weapons through the implementation, on a national basis, of export controls for nuclear and nuclear-related dual-use equipment, materials, software, and related technology, without hindering international cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Global governance and continental agenda

South Africa's foreign policy is formulated and executed in a constantly evolving global environment. It therefore requires frequent recalibration through comprehensive reviews of various foreign policy levers, tools and instruments to remain relevant and in line with the department's mandate.

Global governance

South Africa participates in a rules-based multilateral system aimed at achieving global political and socio-economic stability and security. Multilateralism, and by implication,

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

These engagements consider that the multilateral system does not fully reflect global political and economic realities and needs reform. A key priority for South Africa is to accelerate the reform of the UNSC, revitalise the UNGA and to advance the reform of the broader global governance architecture with a view to improve its representivity and focus its responsiveness to the needs of, and challenges faced by developing states.

The current unpredictable global environment poses a number of risks to the UN and the global governance system, particularly as it relates to, among others, the dynamics within the UNSC on issues of peace and security (including the situation in the Middle East), promotion and protection of human rights, funding for multilateral processes and honouring commitments to enable national implementation of multilateral decisions such as the 2030 Agenda and SDGs, as well as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which for the first time brings all nations to a common cause of undertaking ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects, with enhanced support to assist developing countries to do so.

Ensuring sustainable development in the current global environment will require concerted engagement in the UN system and other multilateral structures, such as the G20, in promoting access to vaccines, post-COVID-19 economic recovery, debt sustainability and liquidity, economic growth and the improvement of social well-being

and infrastructure through increased trade and investment as well as the fair and equitable movement of goods and services. This will include addressing systemic issues to enhance the coherence and consistency of the international monetary, financial and trading systems in support of development.

The follow-up and review to commitments made in the International Financing for Development conferences,

including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, seeks to mobilise much-needed resources for the implementation of the SDGs.

Furthermore, in the wake of numerous terror attacks across the world, countering international terrorism remains a priority on the agenda of the UN, particularly regarding the abuse of cyber platforms for propaganda, recruitment and planning of attacks, radicalising the youth and inciting extremism leading to terrorist attacks. Development, human rights, security and international law are promoted through international forums such as the UN and its agencies.

United Nations

The UN occupies the central and indispensable role within the global system of governance. South Africa was one of the 51 founding members of the UN in 1945. Since then, UN membership has grown to 193 states. After being suspended in 1974 owing to international opposition to the policy of apartheid, South Africa was re-admitted to the UN in 1994, following its transition to democracy.

As a UN member state, South Africa has demonstrated its commitment to multilateralism and the central role of the UN in the system of global governance. South Africa has consistently proposed steps towards a stronger and more effective UN, including enhancing its role within the limitations of the charter in the maintenance of international peace and security, promotion of human rights and the emphasis on sustainable development.

In addition, South Africa has been actively involved in the reform processes of the UN, especially the UNSC. After 80 years in existence, the UN has made strides in terms of reforms; however, the reform of the UNSC still remains elusive. South Africa has called for urgent and comprehensive reform of the UNSC, and continues to participate in processes to revitalise the UNGA by ensuring that it fully dispenses with its role as envisioned in the United Nations Charter.

South Africa participated in the General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly and the 79th Session of the High-Level Week, which took place in New York from 20 to 26 September 2024. The theme for the session, chosen by the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Philemon Yang

of Cameroon, was "Unity in diversity, for the advancement of peace, sustainable development and human dignity for everyone, everywhere". President Ramaphosa led the South African delegation to UNGA79 from 20 to 26 September 2024.

South Africa's speech delivered at the UNGA79, and its overall participation in key high-level meetings and side events, provided an opportunity to outline the country's foreign policy priorities and to reflect on challenges facing states in the international system. Based on current geopolitical challenges, President Ramaphosa reiterated South Africa's commitment to promoting multilateralism, the pacific settlement of conflict and the necessity for "developed countries to support the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially relating to the need to focus on the means of implementation such as financing for development."

UN Security Council

South Africa's most recent term as non-permanent member of the UN Security Council was from 2019 to 2020. This was South Africa's third term on the UNSC. Its term was defined by the theme: "Continuing the Legacy: working for a just and peaceful world", drawing on the legacy of former President Nelson Mandela following the centenary of his birth as well as the legacy of South Africa's two previous terms on the council. During that time, South Africa built on its previous terms on the council and focussed on the implementation thereof, including UN-AU cooperation; the Women Peace and Security, and Youth Peace and Security agendas; and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

South Africa's last year in the council coincided with its chairship of the AU. This presented the country with a unique opportunity to advance the African Agenda in both institutions and harmonise its priorities of promoting UNSC decisions in support of the AU initiative of silencing the guns across Africa. During its time on the UNSC, South Africa continued to promote a multilateral approach to addressing issues relating to international peace and security in order to ensure global sustainable peace.

The importance of a proactive approach to the maintenance

of international peace and security, particularly in the form of drawing greater attention to preventative diplomacy mechanisms, as well as post-conflict reconstruction and development, underpinned much of South Africa's engagement on the council.

South Africa strived for consensus and unity of the UNSC in its attempts to play the role of a bridge-builder and to improve proactive actions on issues on the agenda of the council and thus the integrity of the UNSC. It achieved five consensus outcomes during its December 2020 presidency of the Council, illustrating its effectiveness in pursuing the unity of the Council and support for its initiatives. South Africa pursued collaboration with all council members and thus continued to identify opportunities for cooperation with like-minded countries. In this regard, as an elected member, the country forged close links with the other two African countries serving on the council, the so-called "A3".

Since its last term on the Council, South Africa has continued to closely follow the work of the UNSC, including by participating in the open debates of the Council, ranging from matters related to women, peace and security to preventative diplomacy. Most notably, South Africa participated actively in the quarterly debates on the question of Palestine, highlighting its initiatives regarding addressing the genocide in Gaza and re-establishing the viability of the two-state solution.

In Pretoria, South Africa has continued to coordinate and collaborate with the elected members of the Security Council based in Pretoria, highlighting its positions on various matters before the Council and thus maintaining South Africa's relevance despite not serving on the Council.

South Africa's multilateral approach to international peace and security emphasises conflict prevention, peaceful conflict resolution, and post conflict efforts to entrench the peace.

Regarding the Ukraine-Russia conflict, South Africa's approach continues to be informed by its commitment to a negotiated solution and the implementation of international law. The government of South Africa engages relevant role-players to promote a cessation of hostilities, an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, respect for sovereignty and

territorial integrity, the start of negotiations to end the conflict, and the inclusion of all key parties to the conflict. This approach has been represented during open sessions of the UNSC and in South Africa's international engagements on the matter.

South Africa supported the countering of extremism and terrorism within cooperative multilateral frameworks, including that of the UN, the AU, and BRICS, and remains committed to developing international consensus while ensuring global counter-terrorism efforts are informed by international law and a respect for human rights. Specifically, the department participated in the BRICS counter-terrorism working group in preparation for the 2025 BRICS Summit.

International Court of Justice

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the principal judicial organ of the UN. South Africa has been consistently active in the work of the ICJ, which has grown markedly in the last year. In 2023, DIRCO successfully led the campaign for the election of the first South African to be elected to the ICJ, Judge Dire Tladi.

South Africa has additionally been active in providing written and oral submissions in advisory opinions before the ICJ, notably the advisory opinion on Palestine and Climate Change.

South Africa instituted proceedings against Israel before the ICJ on 29 December 2023, alleging that Israel was responsible for violations of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide ("Genocide Convention") in Gaza and requested the Court to indicate provisional measures orders. The ICJ ordered provisional measures on 26 January 2024, 28 March 2024, and 24 May 2024.

Given the continued violations by Israel of the Genocide Convention and the ICJ's provisional orders, consideration is being given to the viability of approaching the UNSC to enforce the provisional measures orders already indicated by the Court under Article 94(2) of the UN Charter.

Such an effort would most likely fail due to a US veto, and the matter could then go to the General Assembly for consideration (there is a mechanism which allows for issues

to be considered by the General Assembly if the Security Council fails to act due to a veto). Alternatively, the General Assembly could be approached directly.

There is a likelihood that the General Assembly would adopt a resolution calling for compliance with the ICJ's provisional measures, but it would not be binding. However, if a resolution is adopted, it would signal that the majority of UN member states support compliance with the decisions of the ICJ.

DIRCO's active involvement in the work of the ICJ reflects South Africa's commitment to international law and justice, protecting human rights, advancing peace and security, multilateralism, and a rules-based international order based on international law. It is a clear example of the implementation of Chapter 7 of the NDP, which is positioning South Africa in the world.

Sustainable development

During the reporting period, the DIRCO engaged with multilateral international organisations, of which South Africa is a member state on sustainable development, with the objective to promote integrated implementation of the NDP, the UN 2030 Agenda, the AU Agenda 2063, and the SADC revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP).

South Africa participates in the annual High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) held under the auspices of the ECOSOC and the five-yearly review held under the auspices of the UN General Assembly. The HLPF is the UN's main platform on sustainable development, with the aim of following up and reviewing the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the global level. The policy approach is to advance all three pillars of sustainable development—economic, social and environmental— and to accord priority to all seventeen SDGs.

South Africa's participation in the HLPF is to learn from other developing countries that will be presenting their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) in dealing with the developmental agenda. The forum also keeps track of progress, promotes coherent policies informed by science,

evidence, and country experiences, and addresses new and emerging issues regarding the SDGs.

UN Economic and Social Council

The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is a premier organ of the UN responsible for the economic and social development matters of the world. South Africa regards sustainable development as a collective opportunity and responsibility that can be achieved through multilateral cooperation and will continue its active role in the ECOSOC-mandated processes to address the follow-up and review of financing for development outcomes and the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, all of which are crucial to the realisation of the SDGs.

South Africa further actively participates in the functional commissions of the ECOSOC such as the Commission for Social Development, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), amongst others.

Additionally, South Africa will serve as a member of the ECOSOC for the period of 2025 to 2027.

Climate Change

Climate change is an integral part of the UN 2030 Agenda on sustainable development, the AU's Agenda 2063 and the NDP, especially since climate change is a cross-cutting issue, and for developing countries the climate crisis cannot be solved outside of a development context. South Africa faces poor economic growth compounded by the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, acute energy challenges, and increasing pressure on natural resource-based sectors. As such, climate change further exacerbates socio-economic challenges while also offering new opportunities associated with the transition of the global economy towards a lower carbon future.

DIRCO, in partnership with national stakeholders, particularly the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) as the lead government agency, contributes to multilateral negotiations, foreign policy advice

and supports the implementation of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement. Addressing the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality informs South Africa's approach to addressing climate change, and hence building resilience strengthens development. In shifting to a low-carbon, inclusive, climate-change resilient development path and embracing the global energy transition, we must ensure that we leave no-one behind.

South Africa locates its climate actions and energy transition in the context of sustainable development, the right to development and just transitions. Cabinet has adopted a National Framework for South Africa's Just Transition, and we are working with international partners to secure support for the implementation of the Just Energy Transition Investment Plan (JETP-IP). The country's active participation in the Brazil, South Africa, India and China (BASIC) group and its prominent role in the AU's Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC), the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), and the African Group of Negotiators (AGN), as well as the Group 77 and China, necessitates that South Africa plays a key role in advancing, nationally and through the UNFCCC, not only its own interests but also those of fellow African and other developing countries.

Science and Technology

In partnership with the departments of Communications and Digital Technologies, Science and Innovation (DSI) and Trade, Industry and Competition, the DIRCO supports matters related to civil aviation, maritime transport, science, technology and innovation from a socio-economic perspective at a multilateral level. Key international engagements are within the International Civil Aviation Organisation, International Maritime Organisation, International Telecommunication Union, Universal Postal Union, the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the Internet Governance Forum. These engagements bolster South Africa's influence in this arena to support the country's economic and social growth to increase employment, gender and youth empowerment.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) was established in 1997 as a specialised UN agency to assist Member States in their fight against illicit drugs, crime, corruption and terrorism. South Africa participates actively in the meetings of the UNODC including the annual sessions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), taking place in Vienna, which provide a platform for South Africa to exchange information, technical assistance, capacity building, law enforcement, prosecuting and judiciary cooperation, and best practices in combatting transnational organised crime and corruption both on a national level and regional/international level and allows for a more coordinated approach.

Working with relevant departments/authorities in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice, DIRCO continues coordinating the requests for technical assistance from UNODC through its Regional Office for Southern Africa, located in Pretoria.

South Africa actively participated in the Ad Hoc Committee to elaborate a comprehensive international convention on countering the use of ICTs for criminal purposes which culminated in a Convention on Cybercrime adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2024. The Convention is expected to foster coordination and cooperation among state and non-state actors to combat cybercrime considering digital evolution, as well as provide capacity building, technical assistance and transfer of technology for developing countries.

South Africa is a party to the UN Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime, the Convention against Corruption as well as the three drug control Conventions, namely the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, as amended by the 1972 Protocol; the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971, and the Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988.

South Africa is a member of the Commission on Narcotic

Drugs (2024 – 2027) and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (2024 – 2026).

UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

South Africa joined the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) on 12 December 1994 and is an active participant in key UNESCO governance structures such as the General Conference and the World Heritage Committee. The country currently serves as a member of the organisation's Executive Board for the term 2021 – 2025. Through its participation in UNESCO meetings and conferences, including those of the World Heritage Committee (WHC), South Africa utilises UNESCO to advance its socio-economic development and to contribute towards building peace through international cooperation in the fields of education, science (human, natural and social), culture, communication and information.

South Africa also contributes to the organisation's programme of work and budget allocations and ensures that Africa and gender equality remain the key priorities for UNESCO. South Africa acceded to the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (December 2003) and the Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage (May 2015). Since South Africa ratified the World Heritage Convention on 10 July 1997, UNESCO has inscribed several sites in the country as world heritage sites, namely the:

- Fossil Hominid Sites of South Africa (1999);
- Robben Island Museum (1999);
- iSimangaliso Wetland Park (1999);
- Maloti-Drakensberg Park (2000);
- Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape (2003);
- Cape Floral Region Protected Areas (2004);
- Vredefort Dome (2005);
- Richtersveld Cultural and Botanical Landscape (2007);
- Khomani Cultural Landscape (2017);
- Barberton Makhonjwa Mountains (2018);
- Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites (2024); and
- The Emergence of Modern Human Behaviour: The

Pleistocene Occupation Sites of South Africa (2024).

World Health Organisation

The relevance and prominence of the nexus between foreign policy and global health issues, and the need to promote synergies between them, are significant and growing. Foreign policy can sustain political momentum, advance cooperation and find solutions to health and other global challenges based on the principles of global solidarity and equity.

South Africa is one of the 194 member states that constitute the World Health Organisation (WHO). The country takes part in the annual World Health Assembly (WHA), which is the WHO's supreme decision-making body, as well as in its executive board meetings. South Africa also participates in the WHO's Regional Committee for Africa, which convenes annually after the WHA to reflect on decisions taken at the assembly (particularly those relevant to the continent) and plan for the following year's WHA.

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

- the implementation of international health regulations;
- addressing antimicrobial resistance;
- the fight against HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria;
- building resilient healthcare systems in developing states;
- ensuring access to medicines;
- achieving Universal Health Coverage; and
- contributing to economic growth through health employment.

South Africa continues to see the WHO as the leading global institution to take forward issues of global health aimed at achieving the SDGs, including for delivering universal health coverage (UHC) with primary health care at its core and in strengthening pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response (PPPR).

South Africa continues to play an active role on the African continent, as well as in the international arena on global initiatives in dealing with future pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response. These include, but are not limited to, participating in the WHO's Intergovernmental

Negotiating Body (INB) tasked with developing and negotiating a legally binding WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, and in the Working Group on Amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005) (WGIHR).

South Africa chaired the Foreign Policy and Global Health Initiative (FPGH) from April 2023 to May 2024. The FPGH network was formed on the margins of the UN General Assembly Debate in 2006 when the then Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, France, Indonesia, Norway, Senegal, South Africa and Thailand agreed on the important role of global health issues in foreign policy matters. In 2007, they adopted the Oslo Declaration, which included an Agenda for Action. Now members of the FPGH network must consider whether their initiative has been successful and whether it is still relevant.

The FPGH Network is based on the premise that health is one of the most important, yet still broadly neglected, long-term foreign policy issues. It recognises the nexus between global health and foreign policy and that it should be at the crux of tackling health emergencies at a global level due to the cross-border nature of these pandemics. It underscores investment in health as fundamental to economic growth and development and that, threats to health may also compromise a country's stability and security. The initiative was thus born from the belief that health as a foreign policy issue needs a stronger strategic focus on the international agenda.

On 19 May 2025, the FPGH Ministers of Health convened their traditional meeting on the margins of the 78th World Health Assembly. It was chaired by the Vice Minister for Science, Technology, Innovation and Health Economic Industrial Complex in the Ministry of Health of Brazil, Dr Fernanda De Negri. South Africa's delegation was led by the Deputy Minister of Health, Dr Phaahla.

Brazil presented the theme for its chairmanship: Accelerating the Fight against Socially Determined Diseases, which was welcomed by the Group, particularly for drawing attention to the relationship between the necessity to combat inequality, poverty and hunger.

International Renewable Energy Agency

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) is an intergovernmental organisation mandated to facilitate cooperation, advance knowledge and promote the adoption and sustainable use of renewable energy. The agency was established in 2009, with South Africa as a founding member. Since its inception, the organisation has become the leading actor in facilitating international energy cooperation within the context of driving the global energy transition towards the increased deployment and utilisation of renewable energy.

The NDP identifies energy as a catalyst for economic growth and development, and these can be realised through investment in energy infrastructure. South Africa has maintained proactive steps in transitioning to a low-carbon economy and future cooperation with IRENA is integral to this transition.

Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development Centre

The Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) serves as a catalyst to generate discussions on the global economy, the international financial architecture, financial regulatory reform and global economic governance – with the aim of creating a strong platform for influencing global economic policy. Although South Africa is not a member of the OECD, it is one of five countries that have “Key Partner” status with the OECD, alongside Brazil, China, Indonesia and India.

Engagement with the OECD has the potential to relate directly to three overarching development objectives—ensuring that inclusive economic growth is a critical condition for addressing South Africa’s triple challenge of unemployment, poverty and inequality; sustaining a skilled and capable workforce in order to support the delivery of the NDP targets and advancing the African Agenda. The OECD holds an annual Ministerial Council Meeting consisting of high-ranking officials from both member nations and partner countries of the OECD.

In June 2025, Minister Ronald Lamola led the South African delegation, joined by Trade, Investment and Competition Minister Parks Tau, at the OECD headquarters in Paris, chaired by Costa Rica, with Australia, Canada and Lithuania

as Vice-Chairs under the theme: “Leading the way towards resilient, inclusive, and sustainable prosperity through rules-based trade, investment and innovation”.

South Africa’s relations with the OECD are governed by the South Africa-OECD Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Cooperative Activities signed in 2023. The MoU contains a Joint Work Programme for Collaboration over a period of five years. The MoU further aims to advance the implementation of South Africa’s National Development Plan 2030 and to assist South Africa to achieve its objectives to address the challenges of unemployment, inequality and poverty in all its forms and dimensions in South Africa.

International Labour Organisation

South Africa was a member of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) from 1919 to 1966, when it was suspended due to the apartheid policy, and was readmitted in 1994. South Africa’s objective in its engagement with the ILO is geared towards influencing global debates on labour issues as well as exchanging experiences towards resolving its challenges.

In November 2021, South Africa ratified the ILO Convention on Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work, as it is consistent with the domestic and international objectives of promoting women’s rights. South Africa is the 10th member state of the ILO to have ratified the convention. Convention Number 190 entered into force for South Africa on 29 November 2022.

The Convention was first adopted during the 108th International Labour Conference (ILC), the ILO Centenary Conference, which was held in Geneva in 2019. The convention recognises that violence and harassment in the world of work “can constitute a human rights violation or abuse – a threat to equal opportunities, is unacceptable and incompatible with decent work” and thus aims to encourage member states to come up with measures to protect workers and employees from violence and harassment.

It reminds member states that they have a responsibility to promote a general environment of zero tolerance. The convention covers violence and harassment occurring in the workplace, during work-related trips, in work-related

communications, in employer-provided accommodation, and when commuting to and from work.

In May 2022 South Africa and the ILO co-hosted the 5th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour that adopted the Durban Call to Action to end Child Labour. The outcome document included commitments on the following six issues:

- Make decent work a reality for adults and youth above the minimum age for work.
- End child labour in agriculture.
- Strengthen the prevention and elimination of child labour, including its worse forms, forced labour, modern slavery, trafficking in persons, and the protection of survivors through data-driven and survivor-informed policy and programmatic responses.
- Realise the child’s right to education and ensure universal access to free, compulsory, quality, equitable and inclusive education and training.
- Achieve universal access to social protection.
- Increase finance and international cooperation for the elimination of child labour and forced labour.

South Africa supports the recent ILO’s World Social Protection Report 2024-2026: Universal Social Protection for Climate Action and a Just Transition, which highlights that universal social protection is a pivotal policy lever to prevent and address the adverse consequences of the climate crisis and to enable a just transition as well as to reduce vulnerability and to increase the resilience of people, economies and societies by providing a robust response to mutually reinforcing lifecycle risks.

World Trade Organisation

Geoeconomic pressures and contestations – whether trade restrictions and unilateral sanctions, the weaponisation of the international payment system, or economic coercion – are reshaping the international economic and trade environment. The global trading system is facing unprecedented challenges due to the impact of unilateral measures, which undermine it and render it vulnerable to current evolving global trade and economic dynamics. Escalating global trade tensions have widespread repercussions that disproportionately affect

developing nations, ranging from negatively impacting the flow of goods and services to further undermining the role of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in regulating global trade.

South Africa supports the rules and foundational principles of the WTO as key elements of a predictable rules-based multilateral global trading system and also unequivocally supports trade and export-led growth strategies and the WTO's trade liberalisation agenda.

Some WTO rules prejudice the trade and development interests of developing countries, and South Africa is fully committed to constructively working towards the necessary WTO reform with a view to making meaningful progress and to securing balanced and inclusive outcomes to deliver a successful 14th WTO Ministerial Conference in Cameroon in 2026.

World Intellectual Property Organisation

The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) is mandated to manage intellectual property services through global partnerships and collaboration. Through its various committees, WIPO advocates for the promotion and protection of intellectual property rights and the enforcement of trademarks, industrial designs, patents, trade secrets, copyright and related rights.

WIPO further provides a forum for its members to strengthen their developmental agenda, which is a critical component for intellectual property (IP) enforcement and development. It also provides capacity building and technical assistance on IP for the digital economy and international trade to developing countries applicable to small and medium enterprises prepare.

South Africa became a member of the WIPO on 23 March 1975. The country participates in the WIPO committees to advance and shape global IP policy framework development that is sensitive to the interests and applicable to developing countries. South Africa's participation in WIPO is guided by its IP Policy. Government regards IP as an important policy instrument for promoting innovation, technology transfer, research and development, industrial development and, more broadly, economic growth. South Africa believes that

the WIPO's efforts to advance IP, creativity and innovation, serve the country's objective for a people-centred development agenda based on Agenda 2030 and our continental vision contained in the AU Agenda 2063.

South Africa participated in two Diplomatic Conferences in 2024 which led to the conclusion of the Agreement on Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge, and the Design Law Treaty (DLT), and reiterated the imperative of building towards further consensus on the wide spectrum of issues related to IP facing WIPO. This has provided renewed impetus to the activities and role of WIPO.

World Economic Forum

The World Economic Forum (WEF) is an independent international forum that brings together senior leaders in business, as well as in political and academic spheres, for high-level discussions on how to accelerate global growth and development. Ordinarily, the annual meetings are organised in Davos, Switzerland, in January as well as a series of regional summits in Africa—WEF on Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, North Africa, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

South Africa's objective in dealing with the WEF is to promote the country as an attractive investment destination and to influence discussions pertaining to global and continental issues.

South Africa's participation in the 2025 WEF Annual Meeting coincided with the country's assumption of the G20 presidency from December 2024 until 30 November 2025. President Cyril Ramaphosa accompanied by nine Cabinet Ministers became the first African Head of State to address a WEF Plenary. South Africa utilised the WEF platform to promote its G20 presidency, to strengthen South Africa's role as a responsible and principled member of the international community, to promote the country as a dependable business partner and to lobby for inward investment.

The 55th Annual Meeting of the WEF in Davos presented an opportunity to align South Africa's participation with the WEF 2025 theme, "Collaboration for the Intelligent Age", and the priorities of South Africa's G20 presidency under the theme, "Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability", communicating

its vision for fostering multilateral cooperation, inclusive growth, and sustainable development.

Group of Seven

The Group of Seven (G7) was formally established in 1975, following the financial crisis brought about by the 1973 oil crisis. To improve the coordination of global economic and financial policy, the initial meetings were held by the Finance Ministers of the world's five most industrialised and developed countries—France, Germany, Japan, the US, and the UK, who were later joined by Canada and Italy at a presidential level, to form the G7. Russia joined the group in 1998, when it was known as the G8, until its suspension from the group in 2014 due to the situation in the Crimea.

South Africa is not a member of the G7, but some G7 presidencies invite the country as a guest to the outreach part of the Leaders' Summit, as a key voice from Africa and the Global South. The country's engagement with the group is aimed at leveraging resources and capacity of the G7 countries to facilitate Africa's socio-economic development.

The G7 countries represent approximately 40% of global gross domestic product (GDP) and 10% of the world's population. The agenda of the G7 has, since the turn of the century, evolved from a sole focus on discussions on economic and financial issues to matters of peace and security, global governance, international terrorism, the environment, refugees and other geopolitical and foreign policy-related matters.

President Cyril Ramaphosa participated in the G7 Summit Outreach Session held in Kananaskis, Canada, on 17 June 2025. South Africa reaffirmed the G7 as a strategic partner the country in a number of areas (including the G7's support for South Africa's just transition efforts) and highlighted the importance of international cooperation on matters of mutual interest (including cooperation between the G7 and G20 presidencies).

Financial Action Task Force

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an intergovernmental body that was established by the G7 in 1989 to set international norms and standards to promote the effective implementation of measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system. It comprises 37 jurisdictions, two regional organisations and nine associate regional groupings. Its recommendations are intended to be of universal application. South Africa became a member of the FATF in 2003. The country is also a member of a FATF-style regional body—the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG). One of the features of FATF and ESAAMLG is a mutual evaluation exercise.

Group of Twenty

South Africa assumed the presidency of the Group of

Twenty (G20) on 1 December 2024 and led the bloc until 30 November 2025. South Africa is the only African country that is a permanent member of the G20, and, therefore, this was the first time in the G20's history that an African country presided over this august bloc of developing and developed countries. The G20 Presidency, while being a privilege and an honour, also came with tremendous responsibility. This responsibility is even greater given that we live in what the United Nations Secretary-General calls a world of impunity, of inequality and of deep uncertainty, all fraying at the seams of our global order. Notably, structured and institutionalised inequality has become a major threat to global economic growth and stability. South Africa's presidency aimed to build on the successes of the past three presidencies led by the Global South – (Indonesia (2022), India (2023) and

Brazil (2024) – and was an opportunity for South Africa to champion the aspirations of emerging economies.

South Africa's presidency sought to address the three strategic priorities of the Government of National Unity's 7th Administration, namely, to reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living; to build a capable, ethical and developmental state; and to drive inclusive growth and job creation.

South Africa's G20 presidency was held under the theme: "Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability", a theme that sought to harness global will and capabilities to confront the enormous challenges facing the world. Under its theme, South Africa advanced the following four national priorities, which will be pursued through the relevant working groups:

- Strengthening disaster resilience and response.
- Ensuring debt sustainability for low-income countries.
- Mobilising finance for a just energy transition.
- Harnessing critical minerals for inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Three High-Level Task Forces:

- Task Force 1 – Inclusive Economic Growth, Industrialisation, Employment and Reduced Inequality.
- Task Force 2 – Food Security.
- Task Force 3 – Artificial Intelligence, Data Governance and Innovation for Sustainable Development.

One Review:

- A review of the work of the G20, "The G20 at 20 years": A Reflection on Key Achievements and the Way Forward, will also feature as one of South Africa's deliverables.

One elevated Compact with Africa 2.0:

- Building on the German G20 presidency's Compact with Africa deliverable, South Africa planned to work with all G20 members to pursue a G20 broadened and effective Compact with Africa (CwA), which includes increasing the number of participating African Union members in the CwA.

The high-level deliverables and priorities under this theme lie at the core of the original G20 mandate of promoting strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth.

Humanitarian affairs

Humanitarian affairs globally are at a critical juncture with an unprecedented level of humanitarian crises worsened



by ongoing armed conflicts. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the number of displaced persons increased to 123.2 million worldwide by the end of 2024. Humanitarian needs have increased amid the ever-increasing reduction of funding for humanitarian organisations. The humanitarian crises are driven largely by protracted conflicts. Stronger and more frequent shocks, including natural disasters are disproportionately impacting the world's most vulnerable, particularly women and children. Humanitarian responses to crises have saved lives and helped to restore livelihoods but have not always succeeded in addressing underlying vulnerabilities.

Informed by the spirit of ubuntu and the principle of solidarity, South Africa actively contributes to humanitarian diplomacy by engaging with the UN and other humanitarian agencies tasked with alleviating and addressing humanitarian needs across the globe. Among others, South Africa engages with and contributes to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the World Food Programme (WFP). South Africa also participates in multilateral platforms that discuss and chart a way forward on the global responses and coordination of humanitarian action, such as the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment.

South Africa is one of the core six founding members of the global initiative to galvanise political commitment to International Humanitarian Law (IHL) together with the ICRC. The country continues to demonstrate leadership in strengthening IHL at the national, regional, and international levels, in the face of increasing erosion of IHL in various parts of the world. The country also participated in the 34th International Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference to reinforce respect and compliance with IHL. It further co-hosted together with the ICRC the 23rd Regional Annual Seminar on the Implementation of IHL for Southern Africa and Indian Ocean Island States and the 6th Commonwealth Meeting on implementing IHL, underscoring the country's commitment to advancing humanitarian law and its practical application.

The Branch Global Governance and Continental Agenda (GGCA), as part of South Africa's humanitarian commitments, annually makes humanitarian contributions to humanitarian organisations, which allow the organisations to respond to the various complex humanitarian situations across the world. During the 2024/25 financial year, South Africa contributed R22 563 090 to five humanitarian agencies, namely, the UNHCR, OCHA, CERF, ICRC, and WFP. South Africa also participates actively in forums on disaster risk reduction, recognising the devastating impacts of disasters on countries, communities and livelihoods. The country is committed to the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and prioritises, among others, the importance of disaster preparedness, investing in disaster risk reduction, and building resilience. South Africa participated in the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in June 2025, in Switzerland, which served as a global multi-stakeholder forum to assess progress on the implementation of the Sendai Framework.

Moreover, South Africa is actively involved in multilateral forums dealing with food security through primarily the meetings of the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), including the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), WFP and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). These agencies also have country and/or regional offices based in South Africa, which form part of ensuring that the internationally agreed upon norms and standards on food security and humanitarian assistance are implemented at the national level through collaboration. South Africa, through its ambassador in Rome, continues to chair the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) for the period 2023–2025. CFS is the global committee entrusted with ensuring the coordination of global efforts to end hunger and ensure food security for all.

Food insecurity still remains extremely high, with 864 million people estimated to be severely food insecure and 2.3 billion people facing hunger globally (SOFI, 2024). About 343 million people are estimated to be acutely food insecure across the 74 countries with a WFP operational presence and where data is available. The number of acutely food-insecure people is nearly 200 million above pre-pandemic

levels. Immediate life- and livelihood-saving assistance is required for 44.4 million people estimated to be in a state of emergency or worse levels of acute food insecurity in 2024. Statistics South Africa further indicates that individuals living on less than R1 109, which is below the Lower Bound Poverty Line (LBPL), or roughly \$62.14 per month, were considered poor. To this effect, 13.2 million people in South Africa are living in extreme poverty with poverty thresholds of \$2.15 daily. This makes it important for South Africa to strengthen the country's collaboration with key agencies. In this regard, South Africa stands to benefit from the FAO support through the Technical Cooperation Framework (TCP).

South Africa also actively participates in forums dealing with migration, refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, as well as international humanitarian law. South Africa's participation in these forums, which include the UNHCR Executive Committee and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Council, is informed by the goal of influencing norms and standards aimed at ensuring protection for the above categories of people and creating a policy space to engage on these issues. South Africa often advocates for responsibility and burden sharing to ensure that there is also support for host countries. South Africa further advocates for the respect for and compliance with international humanitarian law in accordance with the Geneva Conventions and their additional protocols.

Continental agenda African Union

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

Following the realisation of the objectives that were set during the advent of the OAU, particularly the mission to emancipate the continent from the shackles of colonial and apartheid rule, the AU was formed and brought into force in 2002, wherein 54 countries agreed to chart a new path for

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

To this end, the AU is making progressive strides and moving in the right direction in its mission to address the longstanding challenges of underdevelopment, and consequent poverty, unemployment and inequality on the continent. The AU recognised the need to develop a long-term strategy, resulting in the adoption of Agenda 2063 in 2015 by the Heads of State and Government during the 24th Ordinary Session in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Agenda 2063 has identified seven cardinal aspirations, which provide an indication of what the continent should achieve by the year 2063:

- a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development;
- an integrated continent, politically united based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance;
- an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law;
- a peaceful and secure Africa;
- an Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics;
- an Africa where development is people-driven, unleashing the potential of its women and youth; and
- Africa as a strong, united and influential global player and partner.

Appreciating the need that the realisation of the objectives set by Agenda 2063 should be fulfilled, there was a formulation of its first 10-year implementation plan. Thus far, there has been progress in this regard, as evidenced by:

- the adoption of the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons in Africa,
- member states having committed to the AfCFTA; and
- the Single African Air Transport Market being launched.

These flagship programmes of Agenda 2063 are the

catalysts that will ensure the acceleration of integration within the continent and will further enable African countries to maximise economic opportunities, particularly trade amongst them. The objective of the AfCFTA is to promote intra-African trade and offer an opportunity to create larger economies of scale, a bigger market and improve the prospects of the African continent to attract investment. In addition, the AfCFTA will bring together the 55 member states of the AU, covering a market of more than 1.2 billion people, including a growing middle class and a combined GDP of more than USD\$3,4 trillion.

Furthermore, the AU has noted that in order to successfully move the continent forward, it has to transform the manner in which it conducts its business. Currently, the AU is undergoing a rigorous process of reviewing how it has been operating, through engaging the recommendations made during the institutional reform process. The successful implementation of the agreement borne out of this process will ensure that the AU becomes more effective and efficient in carrying out its mandate. South Africa, as a member of the AU, remains committed to the organisation and it has demonstrated its desire to ensure that the organisation succeeds.

Currently, South Africa is hosting the Pan-African Parliament, the APRM and the AUDA-NEPAD, among others. Additionally, the country continues to play a steering role in matters related to peace and security on the continent. South Africa is a member of and chairs the AU Committee of Five on South Sudan and, through the late former Deputy President David Mabuza, was involved in mediating the agreement that led to the establishment of the Transitional Government of National Unity in South Sudan on 22 February 2020.

South Africa is a member of the AU High-Level Committee on Libya tasked with supporting a Libyan-led process for peace, security and national reconciliation. South Africa is also one of 13 signatories to the Peace and Security Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the DRC and the Great Lakes Region. The 12th Regional Oversight Mechanism (ROM) Summit, which South Africa participated in, focused on finding solutions for the security challenges in the DRC,

Sudan and South Sudan. Through these initiatives and its active involvement, South Africa continues to contribute towards the realisation of the aspiration of silencing the guns in Africa.

Peace and Security Council

South Africa continues to promote peace and stability on the African continent through preventative diplomacy, peacemaking, peacebuilding and peacekeeping efforts. In this context, the country's approach to peacekeeping resonates strongly with the AU's aspirational goal of "Silencing the Guns by the Year 2030". The AU's flagship project on addressing peace and security issues in the context of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is built around structures, objectives, principles and values, as well as decision-making processes relating to the prevention, management and resolution of crises and conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction and development on the continent.

Furthermore, the Peace and Security Council of the AU remains the main pillar of the APSA, and it is supported by various structures, including the AU Commission, the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System, the African Standby Force and the Peace Fund. The relationship between the AU and the regional economic communities/ regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution remains crucial for the success of the APSA. South Africa has actively participated, through both bilateral and multilateral efforts, to resolve some of the continent's pressing conflict areas.

These countries include Lesotho, the DRC, Madagascar, Burundi, South Sudan, Somalia, the Central African Republic (CAR), Mali and Libya. South Africa also remains engaged in the peace and security dynamics of the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, the Great Lakes Region and the Lake Chad Basin. South Africa will continue to play its part in conflict resolution in these countries and respective regions. In addition, South Africa reaffirms its continued solidarity to assist the people of Western Sahara in pursuit of their inalienable right to self-determination and decolonisation. South Africa remains steadfast in its rejection of all acts of terrorism and extremism

that have increasingly affected Africa, contributing to internal instability.

AU regional economic communities

The AU is the principal institution responsible for promoting sustainable development at economic, social and cultural level, as well as integrating African economies. Regional economic communities are recognised as the building blocks of the AU, necessitating their close involvement in formulating and implementing all AU programmes. To this end, the AU must coordinate and take decisions on policies in areas of common interest to member states, as well as coordinate and harmonise policies between existing and future regional economic communities, for the gradual attainment of the AU's objectives.

Seven specialised technical committees are responsible for the actual implementation of the continental socio-economic integration process, together with the Permanent Representatives Committee. South Africa's development is intertwined with that of the southern Africa region and the African continent at large. The country's efforts at ramping up industrialisation should be viewed within the overall framework of the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap, as approved by the SADC Extra-Ordinary Summit in April 2015. South Africa seeks to industrialise the regional and continental economies in order to develop its own manufacturing capacity.

In addition, the country seeks to radically alter the colonial and postcolonial pattern where Africa was a supplier of raw materials. It is of the view that Africa should produce value-added goods for exports into the global economy. It is only in this way that Africa can address the paradox of a rich-resource continent inhabited by a poverty-stricken population and make a decisive break with the past.

Southern African Development Community (SADC)

The SADC developed from the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), which was established in 1980. It adopted its current name during a summit held in Windhoek, Namibia, in August 1992. Before 1992, the aim of the SADCC was to forge close economic cooperation with

southern African countries, excluding South Africa, to bolster their economies and reduce their dependence on the South African economy.

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

- promoting and defending peace and security;
- evolving common values, systems and institutions;
- establishing an open economy based on equality, mutual benefit and balanced development;
- breaking down tariff barriers;
- promoting trade exchanges and mutual investment;
- realising the free movement of goods, personnel and labour services;
- achieving the unification of tariffs and currencies; and
- establishing a free trade zone.

The initial member states were Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Eswatini, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. South Africa became a member after 1994. South Africa has consistently sought to nurture regional integration at three levels: the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), the SADC and the Tripartite Free Trade Agreement between the SADC, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and East African Countries (EAC). In particular, South Africa has championed a “developmental regionalism” approach that combines market integration, cross-border infrastructure development, as well as policy coordination to diversify production and boost intra-African trade.

Development partners

One key feature that distinguishes the AU from its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) is its vision of an integrated, prosperous, equitable, well-governed and peaceful United States of Africa, effectively managed by its own citizens and representing a creative and dynamic force in the international arena. The last component of this vision establishes the need to cooperate strategically with other regional groupings, international organisations and states to promote Africa's interests, acquire support to enable the attainment of her objectives, increase Africa's international stature and obtain the global leverage that

would enable the continent to maximise its impact in the geopolitical arena.

Consequently, South Africa through the AU, has entered a number of structured strategic partnerships around the world in line with the clear vision and development strategy of the AU. The partnerships emphasise the implementation of industrialisation and technology transfer, infrastructure development, trade and investment, development of human capital, social investment, and sustainable and inclusive growth policies, programmes and projects of continental, regional and national dimension.

These relations include continent-continent partnerships such as the Africa-EU partnership, the Africa-South America Summit and partnership between Africa and the Arab World, and country-continent partnerships such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), the Africa-India Forum, the Africa-Turkey partnership and the Africa-Korea partnership. These partnerships are established and covered or governed by strategic partnership agreements, MoUs, declarations and frameworks of cooperation and various senior officials meetings, ministerial meetings and summits have been held over the years to review these partnerships. These strategic partnerships enable African partners to take advantage of the continent's anticipated growth, its growing consumer market, demand for industrial products, demand for engineering, procurement, construction services, and supply of basic raw materials, natural resources and strategic industrial inputs.

Previously, the partnerships involved commitments to provide assistance in agricultural and technological development, human capital development, industrialisation, infrastructural development, as well as military expertise for the peacebuilding and peacemaking efforts of the AU. However, the emerging trend is that partners are aggressively promoting their respective private sectors to the fore and trade, investments and market access are acquiring prominence. Relations with countries of the South remain strong and the BRICS membership has yielded benefits for the country and is expected to do so for the rest of the continent.

Efforts continue within BRICS on common objectives, including addressing challenges in respective regions and the world at large. BRICS also continues to provide alternative market access as well as strategic political support in pursuit of a just and equitable world. In the same vein, South Africa continues to support the consolidation of the India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum. The forum serves as an intimate platform that coordinates matters of common interest and promotes development through the IBSA Fund for the alleviation of poverty and reduction in hunger.

The Indian Ocean region is of vital importance and of growing geostrategic significance. South Africa views the IORA as the preeminent regional organisation linking Africa, the Middle East and Asia via the Indian Ocean. The association is growing in stature and prominence.

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

In 2023, Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS) leaders decided to invite new members during the Johannesburg VI BRICS Summit, and by January 2025 BRICS had doubled to include Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates. BRICS now accounts for around half of the world's population, more than 40% of global economic activity and around a quarter of the world's exports.

BRICS members cooperate in a wide range of areas under the three BRICS pillars of political and security, financial and economic, and social/people-to-people cooperation. South Africa's membership of BRICS, therefore, enables the country to employ additional and powerful tools in its fight to address the triple challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality, including through increased trade, investment, tourism, capacity building, skills and technology transfers. The broad scope of BRICS Science, Technology and Innovation cooperation and its funding mechanism and framework programme is another example of mutually beneficial BRICS cooperation that enables increased funding opportunities, capacity building, as well as skills and technology transfer. With an emphasis on pragmatic and mutually beneficial cooperation that delivers tangible results, BRICS cooperation has also expanded beyond governments to include, among others, parliament, the

private sector, entrepreneurs, professional organisations and academia. The Kazan BRICS Summit in October 2024 decided to elevate cooperation between BRICS civil society organisations and mainstream their interests with the establishment of a BRICS Civil Council alongside the existing BRICS Business Council, BRICS Think Tank Council, BRICS Women's Business Alliance and the BRICS Youth Council.

BRICS members also established the New Development Bank (NDB), which has provided South Africa over \$7 billion in funding for 15 projects that address our infrastructure needs in sectors such as water, energy, transport and logistics networks. In 2025, Algeria joined the NDB alongside Bangladesh, Egypt, and the UAE. Colombia and Uzbekistan are expected to finalise their membership soon following approval in June 2025.

Following the recent stages of membership expansion, BRICS continues to attract great interest globally, with many countries of the Global South sharing our needs, interests, values and principles and recognising the benefits of South-South cooperation. The 2024 Kazan BRICS Summit decided to invite like-minded progressive countries of the global South to explore deepened cooperation with BRICS, and by June 2025, Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam had joined as BRICS partner countries.

BRICS is using its increased representation and voice, and its deepened partnership with the Global South, to shape a more just world order as well as to explore opportunities to develop pragmatic solutions that the world so urgently needs. In Kazan, BRICS leaders responded to global economic disparities and geopolitical tensions by directing BRICS structures to play their role in supporting BRICS trade through increased local currency use as well as in shaping a more inclusive, sustainable global economy and driving reform towards a more representative financial architecture.

Following negative global developments, including the substantial defunding of development aid and multilateral development institutions, BRICS leaders responded during the 2025 Rio de Janeiro Summit by addressing these pressing global challenges with the development of

global norms that respond to the needs of the global South and the launch of BRICS-led initiatives on public health, climate finance and artificial intelligence. BRICS leaders also advocated for sustainable peace and security through dialogue and diplomacy and reiterated the urgent need for reform and the strengthening of multilateralism to better respond to the needs of the global majority.

IBSA Dialogue Forum

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

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

The IBSA Fund is a flagship programme of the dialogue forum that has successfully delivered impact-driven projects in developing and least developed countries. The IBSA Fund has made it possible for South Africa to contribute in a meaningful and substantive manner towards international efforts to alleviate extreme poverty and reduce hunger in developing countries. In 2023, Brazil took over as the new President of IBSA with a promise to invigorate the IBSA formation. The IBSA Fund has achieved great strides in uplifting the most vulnerable in some African countries, particularly women and children.

The fund has made available over \$4 million, which will be rolled out to projects in countries such as Mozambique, Lesotho, Senegal and the Gambia. The engagement process of the IBSA countries takes place on a number of levels, including Summit (Heads of State and Government), the IBSA Trilateral Ministerial Commission meeting (Ministers), and Senior Officials and Technical (through various working groups).

Indian Ocean Rim Association

The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) is a charter-based regional multilateral organisation of 23 member states around the Indian Ocean and 12 Dialogue Partner countries. It seeks to build and expand understanding and mutually beneficial cooperation through a consensus-based, evolutionary and non-intrusive approach. The IORA was established on 7 March 1997, and it is an initiative that came into existence through former President Nelson Mandela's visionary leadership during his official visit to India in 1995.

The IORA region is a huge market of more than three billion people. South Africa views the IORA as an important platform for the implementation of its economic diplomacy objectives as well as the articulation of its foreign policy, which upholds the importance of multilateralism and global collaboration in resolving the intricate challenges facing the world.

South Africa's membership of the IORA provides an important platform to pursue the country's domestic imperatives as well as other regional and global programmes, such as the AU's Agenda 2063; the 2050 African Integrated Maritime Strategy; the AUDA-NEPAD, Agenda 2030; and the AfCFTA. The IORA member states vary considerably in terms of their areas, populations and levels of economic development. They can also be divided into a number of sub-regions: Australasia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, West Asia and Eastern and Southern Africa, each with its own regional groupings (such as the ASEAN, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, Gulf Cooperation Council and the SADC). Despite such diversity and differences, these countries are bound together by the Indian Ocean.

The IORA is making significant strides as a platform for Indian Ocean states. The endeavours of IORA through its working groups have achieved substantial contributions to skills enhancement, technology transfer, technological simulations and industrial simulations. This work is important for unlocking the oceans economy through localisation and value chain creation.

Commonwealth

The modern Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 56 independent member countries. Membership is diverse and includes developed and developing countries in Africa, Asia,

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

South Africa remains an active member of the organisation and attends all high-level meetings, including the Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting and the biannual Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). The 2024 CHOGM took place in Apia, Samoa, from 25 to 26 October 2024 and handed over the position of Chair-in-Office from Rwanda to Samoa. Ms Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey was elected as the new Commonwealth Secretary-General. The Government of Antigua and Barbuda also offered to host the next CHOGM in November 2026.

Non-Aligned Movement

With its 121 member states, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is the largest grouping of countries outside of the UN, making it an important role player in global and multilateral affairs. Since its inception in 1961, the movement has played a crucial and highly visible political role in representing the interests of developing countries, particularly in the eradication of colonialism, supporting struggles for liberation and self-determination, the pursuit of world peace and the search for a more equitable and just global order.

South Africa remains an active member of the movement and attends all high-level meetings, including the monthly meeting of the NAM Coordinating Bureau (CoB) in New York, the NAM Ministerial Meeting, the NAM Committee on Palestine, and the NAM Summit. The NAM Summit is the highest decision-making authority of the movement and meets every three years. South Africa attended the NAM Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau (CoB) that was held in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 5 and 6 July 2023 to prepare for the NAM Summit.

At the summit, the chairship rotated from Azerbaijan to Uganda until 2026, and the Government of Uzbekistan offered to host the next Summit in 2026. The NAM Mid-Term Ministerial Conference will be held from 15 to 16 October

2025 in Kampala, Uganda, to review the developments and implementation of decisions of the preceding summit, to prepare for the following summit, and to discuss matters of urgency. A meeting of the NAM Ministerial Committee on Palestine will also be held on 15 October 2025.

The NAM remains an important role player in the multilateral system and continues to play an active role on issues pertaining to development, UN reform, disarmament, human rights, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, among others.

Group of 77

The Group of 77 (G77) was established on 15 June 1964 by 77 developing countries' signatories of the Joint Declaration of the Seventy-Seven Developing Countries issued at the end of the first session of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva, Switzerland.

Beginning with the first Ministerial Meeting of the G77 in Algiers (Algeria) from 10 to 25 October 1967, which adopted the Charter of Algiers, a permanent institutional structure gradually developed, which led to the creation of chapters of the G77 with liaison offices in Geneva (Conference on Trade and Development), Nairobi (UN Environment Programme), Paris (UNESCO), Rome (Food and Agriculture Organisation/International Fund for Agricultural Development), Vienna (United Nations Industrial Development Organisation) and the Group of 24 in Washington DC (International Monetary Fund and World Bank).

Although members of the G77 have increased to 134 countries, the original name was retained due to its historic significance. The G77 is the largest intergovernmental organisation of developing countries in the UN. It provides the means for the countries of the South to articulate and promote their collective economic interests and enhance their joint negotiating capacity on all major international economic issues within the UN system and promotes South-South cooperation for development. The functioning and operating modalities of the work of the G77 in the various chapters have certain minimal features in common, such as a similarity in membership, decision-making and certain operating methods.

A chairperson, who acts as its spokesperson, coordinates the group's action in each chapter. The Chairship, which is the highest political body within the organisational structure of the G77, rotates on a regional basis (between Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean) and is held for one year in all the chapters.

Southern Africa

South Africa has played a pivotal role in Southern Africa through its foreign policy initiatives, reflecting its commitment to regional stability and sustainable development. In the peace and security sphere, South Africa mediated in regional conflicts, including in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Mozambique. In terms of economic integration and trade, South Africa was at the forefront of advancing the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) and the streamlining of trade and investment growth within SADC.

Within the reporting period, President Ramaphosa hosted the following visits: the Republic of Namibia Working Visit in October 2024, the Republic of Angola State Visit in December 2024, and the Republic of Mozambique Working Visit in March 2025. President Ramaphosa attended the inauguration ceremonies of the President-elect Mr Daniel Chapo of the Republic of Mozambique in January 2025 and President-elect Dr Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah of the Republic of Namibia in March 2025 in his efforts to support and strengthen democracy in the region. Minister Ronald Lamola also held Political Consultations with his Namibian and Angolan counterparts in October and November 2024, respectively.

East Africa

Branch Africa further played a pivotal role in advancing South Africa's foreign policy objectives in the East African region during the reporting period, emphasising strengthened bilateral relations, economic diplomacy, and regional cooperation in alignment with the National Development Plan (NDP) and Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF). President Ramaphosa undertook significant Working Visits to Uganda, Rwanda, and South Sudan from 6 to 18 April 2024, focusing on regional peace and security initiatives and

consolidating bilateral cooperation. In Uganda, discussions between President Ramaphosa and President Yoweri Museveni addressed challenges in the DRC and South Sudan, committing to collaborative solutions. In Rwanda, a meeting between President Ramaphosa and President Paul Kagame emphasised resolving the DRC conflict and enhancing bilateral ties. In South Sudan, President Ramaphosa, as a guarantor of the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), engaged with President Salva Kiir and Dr Riek Machar to resolve outstanding provisions and build trust ahead of the forthcoming 2026 elections, reinforcing South Africa's commitment to regional stability.

Several planned high-level engagements with Eritrea, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Seychelles, Mauritius, Sudan, Uganda, and Comoros were deferred due to scheduling conflicts, political transitions, and regional instability in some areas. These engagements are set to be rescheduled in the near future. South Africa's missions in the region also monitored several key elections, including in the Comoros, Mauritius and Madagascar. These electoral outcomes underscored varied democratic progress, with Mauritius achieving a smoother transition compared to the significant integrity issues in Comoros and Madagascar.

North and Central Africa

In the North and Central African region, the strengthening of bilateral political and economic relations through structured bilateral engagements continued to be at the core South Africa's foreign policy priorities. South Africa held structured bilateral engagements in the region with various countries.

The 10th South Africa-Egypt Joint Commission for Cooperation (JCC) took place on 19 April 2024. The meeting focused on several areas of cooperation between the two countries, such as agriculture, land reform and rural development, correctional services, health, higher education and training, home affairs matters, justice and constitutional development, finance, science and innovation, sport, arts and culture, tourism, trade, industry and competition, transport, and water and sanitation. Following the JCC, the South Africa Egypt Political Consultations which took place

from 13 to 14 November 2024, two Ministers agreed on the establishment of Mid-Term Review meetings led by Senior Officials, to expand cooperation between the countries but also to seek collaboration with other African countries to promote continental economic integration and sustainable development.

Political Consultations also took place between South Africa and Algeria on 22 April 2024 at Senior Official's level as part of the Bi-National Commission (BNC) mechanism between the two countries. The consultations were aimed at solidifying the strong relations between South Africa and Algeria through enhanced political links and diplomatic cooperation. Discussions also focused on regional, continental, and international issues of mutual interest. The Political Consultations were followed by a State Visit by President Ramaphosa to Algeria from 4 to 7 December 2024, which included a meeting of the BNC between South Africa and Algeria. Bilateral Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) on bilateral cooperation in different sectors and the progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of the previous BNC were examined. It was also agreed that a follow-up mechanism will be established in order to oversee the advancement of the bilateral partnership and the implementation of the decisions made during the sessions of the BNC by way of a Ministerial Review Mechanism. In addition, a Business Forum took place on the sidelines of the State Visit, providing the opportunity for the business community to explore partnership potentials while offering a platform for exchange and networking for the public and private economic operators of both countries. A key outcome of the visit was to elevate the bilateral relationship to a strategic level through the signing of a "Strategic Partnership Declaration".

Minister Lamola undertook a Working Visit to Equatorial Guinea as President Ramaphosa's Special Envoy on 17 January 2025. The purpose of the visit was to deliver a special message from President Ramaphosa to President Nguema Mbasogo requesting him to grant clemency to the two South Africans detained since February 2023 on humanitarian grounds, and that they be released to return home to their families. No agreement was reached during

the discussion, but the two ministers agreed to meet again to continue deliberations on these matters.

West Africa

The overall picture in the West Africa region remains positive, despite some challenges. In Senegal, presidential and legislative elections were held in 2024, which further consolidated democracy. In addition, Ghana continued to consolidate its democracy, with presidential elections held in 2024 as well. However, the threat of terrorism and armed insurgency continues to pose a threat to the territorial integrity in some states.

Furthermore, in July 2024, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger signed a treaty marking the formal launch of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES), establishing steps aimed at creating a confederation. Following the outbreaks of military takeovers in the three countries, the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had imposed sanctions on the three countries.

In West Africa, South Africa continued to foster close relations with many countries in the region, including Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Togo. The 11th Session of the Bi-National Commission (BNC) between the Republic of South Africa and the Federal Republic of Nigeria was held in Cape Town on 3 December 2024. The session was co-chaired by President Ramaphosa and the President of Nigeria, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

The BNC was preceded by the Ministerial Meeting held on 2 December and the Senior Officials Meetings on 28 and 29 November 2024. Some of the key objectives of the BNC were to reach consensus on monitoring progress on commitments made during the 10th BNC and other related meetings with a view to finding ways to advance issues of common interest and mutual benefit. The BNC also agreed on the exploration of new possible areas of economic, trade and investment cooperation, especially in Nigeria's infrastructure development space. The Commission also encouraged the implementation of the 34 Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) signed between the two countries and committed to regular engagements between the various Working Groups in support of the Joint

Implementation Committee (JIC) and the Consular and Migration Forum (CMF).

The Ivorian-South African Week, which commemorated 30 years of diplomatic relations between democratic South Africa and Côte d'Ivoire, took place from 7 to 11 October 2024 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. The event featured a diverse range of activities aimed at enhancing the visibility of South Africa and Côte d'Ivoire. This included presentations on investment opportunities in both countries and focused discussions on animal resources and fisheries, agriculture, education, the financial sector, as well as minerals and energy. The South African delegation also included approximately 60 businesses executives which participated in various events and engagements.

The West African region is rich with mineral resources such as oil, gas, iron ore, manganese, diamonds and gold amongst others. The countries have developed National Development Plans (NDPs) accompanied by Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects, driving potentially significant development in the region and offering opportunities for South African banks, investors and finance development institutions. The investment attractiveness of the region in terms of foreign direct investment flows (FDI) is positive but deteriorating due to increasing instability and insecurity in several countries in the region. In addition, South African enterprises have faced challenges in the region, such as changing regulatory frameworks, unfavourable tax regimes, repatriation of funds, and arbitrary fines that have led to substantial disinvestment by South African enterprises.

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

South Africa and China established formal diplomatic ties in January 1998. Since then, relations have progressed from Strategic Partnership, Comprehensive Strategic Partnership to an All-Round Strategic Cooperative Partnership in the New Era. The recent elevation not only solidified relations but also signals the future trajectory grounded in strong political ties, a shared commitment to balanced trade and transformative economic growth.

The two countries have achieved a significant number

of bilateral cooperation agreements in economic, trade, investment, tourism, health, education, science and innovation, oceans and coastal environment, and environmental protection. South Africa and China are close international cooperation partners in the political, economic, social, technical, and diplomatic domains. The partnership transcends bilateral political cooperation to include regional and multilateral collaboration premised on mutual trust and interests.

South Africa remains committed to the One China Policy. Bilateral relations are anchored by the Ten-Year Strategic Programme of Cooperation (2020–2029), pursued through an exchange of State Visits and high-level engagements, and structured bilateral mechanisms at various levels, including the Bi-National Commission, the Joint Working Group on Cooperation, the Strategic Dialogue, the Joint Economic Trade Committee and the People-to-People Exchange Mechanism.

South Africa and China have committed to building, developing, and strengthening relations based on shared principles of friendship and mutual trust; equality and mutual benefit; coordination; mutual learning; and working together for development. This undertaking is founded on four strategic pillars:

- A strong and historic political bond;
- Vibrant economic ties that support mutual development and deepen technical cooperation;
- Multilateral collaboration on global governance reform and sustainable development within BRICS, FOCAC, G20 and the UN; and
- Deepening people-to-people exchanges and socio-economic cooperation.

South Africa and China maintain vibrant economic ties, with China as one of South Africa's largest global trading partners and South Africa as China's leading partner in Africa. In 2024, total trade reached R670 billion, down from R692 billion in 2023, with a trade deficit of R155 billion in China's favour (these figures include trade with Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao in line with the One China Policy). Addressing the structure of trade between the two nations remains a key priority. Efforts focus on expanding market access and

increasing exports of value-added goods, guided by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition's Top 100 Products for export to China.

South Africa is advancing export diversification and strengthening cooperation with China through a comprehensive strategy that promotes new investments, beneficiation and localised manufacturing, and inward procurement missions. A permanent South African expo in China will provide a year-round platform to showcase the country's products, services, and investment opportunities, enhancing its national brand in the world's largest consumer market.

Priority investment areas include chemicals, capital equipment, automotive (including electric vehicles and batteries), rail components, steel, and agro-processing aligned with South Africa's goals of decarbonisation, diversification, and digitalisation. A targeted investment booklet highlights opportunities in green hydrogen, mining, energy, chemicals, and agriculture, aimed at attracting Chinese investment and procurement. This was promoted at major platforms such as the G20 Summit and the South Africa Investment Conference, with a strong call for Chinese companies to participate.

The cooperation between the two countries is broad and multifaceted, encompassing a wide range of sectors and involving various government departments and provinces. Several bilateral technical projects under the FOCAC umbrella are currently at either the feasibility assessment or the early phases of implementation, which hold significant potential to contribute to local economic development and job creation. There is a regular consultation between South Africa and China on global and multilateral issues, such as within the frameworks of the United Nations, the G20, and BRICS, wherein both countries tend to actively articulate the interests of the developing world, the Global South, and the African continent.

Japan

South Africa and Japan enjoy well-established relations, which are particularly strong in the fields of trade and investment; science and technology cooperation; and

skills or capacity development assistance. Since 2010, the bilateral relations have been upgraded to a Strategic Cooperation Partnership.

South Africa and Japan cooperate within the framework of a structured bilateral mechanism called the Partnership Forum, which is convened at ministerial level. The 13th South Africa-Japan Partnership Forum Meeting co-chaired by the two foreign affairs ministers in October 2022 in Tokyo, resulted in successful deliberations that further strengthened bilateral relations between the two countries.

Over the years, cooperation has strengthened to foster closer political relations through high-level engagements between the two countries. The most recent of these was a Working Visit to Japan by the Deputy President from 15 to 19 March 2025, accompanied by the ministers of Trade, Industry and Competition; Sport, Arts and Culture; Agriculture; and Higher Education and Training; as well as the deputy ministers of International Relations and Cooperation; and Science, Technology and Innovation.

There was a focus on strengthening economic cooperation in areas such as manufacturing and machinery, mining and mineral beneficiation, energy cooperation (green hydrogen and green ammonia), the automotive industry and expanded market access for South Africa's agricultural products, amongst others.

Engagements with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) explored collaboration in technology, scientific research, skills transfer, TVET education, and employment opportunities through scholarships, internships, and programmes such as the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) initiative, alongside sport, cultural diplomacy, and support for South Africa's Just Energy Transition Programme.

Japan is a major investor in the South African economy, with investments exceeding R90 billion and 260 Japanese companies supporting over 150 000 local jobs. As the world's fourth-largest economy, Japan maintains strong trade ties with South Africa, with total bilateral trade in 2024 amounting to R132 billion and a South African trade surplus of R52 billion.

Republic of Korea

Bilateral relations between South Africa and Republic of Korea (ROK) continue to grow annually, with the focus on trade and investment. South Africa and ROK cooperate within the framework of the Joint Commission of Cooperation (JCC), which is convened at ministerial level. The inaugural session of the JCC between the ROK and South Africa took place in October 2022, covering a broad spectrum of sectoral cooperation. South Africa is scheduled to host the next edition of the JCC in 2026. On 16 June 2025, President Cyril Ramaphosa and ROK President Lee Jae-myung held an introductory meeting on the margins of the G7 Summit, reaffirming their commitment to deepening bilateral engagement.

South Africa is the ROK's largest trading partner in Africa, and the ROK is South Africa's fourth-largest trading partner in Asia. Total trade between the two countries has been growing steadily, with the balance in South Africa's favour. However, owing to recent global trade influences, the two countries have experienced a contraction in trade volumes, from R56 billion in 2023 to R44 billion in 2024, with exports to the ROK amounting to R30 billion and imports totalling R14 billion. These matters continue to be addressed through the existing structured bilateral mechanism.

ROK investments remain concentrated in the consumer electronics, automotive, original equipment manufacturing, and software and IT services sectors, with major companies such as Hyundai, Samsung, KIA, Daewoo, and LG maintaining a strong presence in South Africa.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Due to the imposition of various UNSC sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), bilateral relations between the two countries have remained limited.

To promote bilateral relations, South Africa and the DPRK signed an MoU on Diplomatic Consultation in 2022. This structured mechanism will serve as a platform to broaden the scope of sectoral cooperation between the two countries.

South Africa has consistently advocated for the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, maintaining that nuclear weapons and the pursuit of such capabilities do not enhance security but instead pose a threat to both regional

and international stability and security.

Mongolia

The Mongolian Embassy in Egypt is accredited to South Africa, while South Africa and Mongolia maintain cordial relations with their respective embassies in Beijing and Cairo accredited to each other and the most recent bilateral political consultations held in Pretoria in January 2020. The two countries see strong potential to deepen economic ties, particularly in mining, agriculture, education, culture, and clean energy. Mongolia, though sparsely populated, is rich in coal, gold, oil, gas, and arable land, and imports over US\$4 billion in goods annually, mostly from China and Russia.

Current trade is modest, valued at approximately R15.5 million and largely favouring South Africa, with key opportunities identified in mining and mining equipment, agricultural products and machinery, as well as SASOL's coal-to-liquid and green coal technologies. South Africa also has the potential to expand exports of wines, fruits, nuts, beef, and seafood to Mongolia, despite challenges posed by the country's landlocked geography.

South and Central Asia

Central Asia

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

Kazakhstan

Bilateral relations between South Africa and Kazakhstan are cordial and are conducted under the umbrella of the structured Protocol on Regular Political Consultations, signed in 1997 and co-chaired at the level of Deputy Minister. The Bilateral Political Consultation serves to explore opportunities to strengthen bilateral relations between South Africa and Kazakhstan, focusing on trade and investment, skills exchange and academic cooperation, and to build on existing cooperation at various levels in the multilateral

forums.

The seventh round of Bilateral Political Consultations took place in Astana on 7 June 2023. The consultations reviewed progress made since the previous round, and the consultations further explored closer cooperation in the fields of education and skills exchange, science and technology, mining, agriculture and energy to encourage the expansion of economic cooperation.

Total trade between South Africa and Kazakhstan has increased from \$16 million in 2015 to \$25 million in 2024, registering an average growth rate of 26.5%. South Africa's exports increased from \$11 million in 2015 to \$18 million in 2024, registering an average growth rate of 22%. There was, however, a decline in 2017 and 2018 with an annual growth rate of -61% and -4%, respectively, before trade jumped by 28% in 2019. Exports improved again after a decline in 2020 from \$14 million to \$27.8 million in 2023 and declined again in 2024 with an annual growth rate of -34%.

South Africa's imports from Kazakhstan increased from \$4.8 million in 2015 to \$7.4 million in 2024, registering an average growth rate of 46%. South African imports from Kazakhstan have shown an undulating pattern from 2015 to 2024. Increased imports between 2018 and 2022 can be attributed to South African imports of inorganic and organic chemicals of precious metals; salt; sulphur; earths and stone; zinc and articles; as well as lead and articles from Kazakhstan.

South Asia

South Africa's economic strategy in South Asia is strongly focused on deepening trade and investment linkages, particularly with countries that offer potential for future growth and where synergies and complementarities in products and technologies exist. South Africa enjoys cordial relations with India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Afghanistan, and the Maldives.

India

The strategic partnership between South Africa and India is anchored by a deep and shared history of friendship and solidarity. Bilateral relations with India are structured via

a Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) and Foreign Office Consultations (FOC), which are held at Senior Officials' level.

Cooperation in strategic areas of interest such as digital technologies, tourism, agriculture, trade and investment continues between the two countries under the umbrella of the strategic and historical relationship that both countries share. These areas of co-operation have the potential to unlock growth and development opportunities for South Africans, as well as enhanced economic opportunities.

Many of the common foreign policy objectives that both countries share are pursued multilaterally, especially through South-South initiatives. South Africa and India are both committed to the BRICS, IBSA, IORA, the BASIC group of countries, the G77 plus China, the NAM, the Commonwealth and the G20. Close cooperation with India exists within these groupings.

Pakistan

South Africa's bilateral relations with Pakistan were established in April 1994 and are underscored by strong bonds of solidarity, friendship and cooperation. The relations are managed through a Joint Commission (JC), which meets biennially. The Agreement establishing the JC was signed on 25 November 2021.

The signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of a JC was a great milestone for the two countries and is expected to further reinforce the existing warm relationship.

There is potential for the two countries to expand economic and trade ties as Pakistan seeks new opportunities to grow its economy. In times of global economic uncertainty, the promotion of economic co-operation in strategic areas such as manufacturing, oil and gas, services and general trade and investment are areas of mutual strategic benefit to both countries.

South Africa continues to pursue relations with Pakistan in adherence to its core foreign policy principles of non-alignment, and through such engagements, opportunities can be found to enhance the lives of South Africans and the economic prospects of South Africa, with both countries considered regional markets with large and diverse

resources.

Sri Lanka

Bilateral relations between South Africa and Sri Lanka are cordial and conducted under the umbrella of the structured Partnership Forum. The major exports to Sri Lanka are minerals, primarily coal. Bilateral relations have shown a marked strengthening as a result of growing collaboration over a wide spectrum of activities, most notably tourism, investment, trade, and educational exchanges.

Following the end of the civil war in Sri Lanka in 2009 and upon request from Sri Lanka, South Africa has been supporting reconciliation and nation-building initiatives in Sri Lanka by sharing South African best practices in reconciliation and nation-building with Sri Lanka. In March 2023, a Sri Lankan ministerial delegation led by the Foreign Minister, Ali Sabry, and which included the Justice Minister, Dr Wijeyadasa Rajapaksha, visited South Africa to study South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. A key outcome of the visit to South Africa was an agreement to sign an MoU on technical cooperation relating to the establishment of the proposed Commission for Truth, Unity and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka.

Bangladesh, Nepal and Maldives

The South African High Commissioner in New Delhi, India, is accredited to Bangladesh on a non-residential basis. Bangladesh holds large potential for the expansion of trade and economic relations. Over the recent years, bilateral relations between South Africa and Bangladesh have deepened and grown exponentially.

Bilateral relations between the two countries are cordial and are conducted under the umbrella of the structured Agreement on the Establishment of Regular Diplomatic Consultations, which is co-chaired at Senior Official level.

Nepal

The South African High Commissioner in New Delhi is accredited non-residentially to Nepal, while Nepal has a resident diplomatic mission in Pretoria. South Africa and

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

In an effort to further enhance the strong bilateral relations between the two countries, South Africa and Nepal have, on 10 March 2023, signed a Declaration of Intent on Co-operation, which provides for a structured bilateral mechanism at Senior Official level, through which bilateral relations would be advanced.

Maldives

The South African High Commissioner in Colombo, Sri Lanka, is accredited to the Maldives on a non-residential basis. While bilateral relations between South Africa and the Maldives are cordial, there is currently no bilateral mechanism in place to advance relations between the two countries.

South-East Asia

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is the primary intergovernmental regional organisation in Southeast Asia, established in 1967 to promote economic and security cooperation among its ten member states: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. Timor-Leste is on track to become the organisation's 11th member. ASEAN's combined population exceeds 680 million people. In 2024, the region's collective gross domestic product reached approximately US\$3.9 trillion, positioning ASEAN as the fifth-largest economy in the world. Its strategic location at the crossroads of major global trade routes, coupled with its role as a manufacturing and supply chain hub, underscores its growing geopolitical and economic significance.

In July 2023, South Africa was formally approved as the eighth Sectoral Dialogue Partner (SDP) of ASEAN, becoming the first African country to attain this status, following its application in February 2023. This milestone highlights ASEAN's recognition of South Africa as a key partner in promoting interregional cooperation. On 21

November 2024, Deputy Minister Moraka co-chaired the second ASEAN–South Africa Joint Sectoral Committee (ASA-JSCC) meeting alongside the ASEAN Secretary-General in Jakarta, Indonesia. The outcomes of this meeting have laid the groundwork for the implementation of projects under the Practical Cooperation Areas (PCA), as well as the strategic planning of future ASEAN–South Africa collaboration. ASEAN features strongly in South Africa's market diversification strategy.

Thailand

South Africa's bilateral relations with Thailand continue to grow, anchored by strong economic cooperation and expanding sectoral engagement. Thailand is South Africa's largest trading partner in the Southeast Asian region, with increasing investment in key sectors such as automotive manufacturing. Agricultural trade is also advancing, with South Africa regaining market access for apples in December 2024 after a 16-year hiatus, and exports of citrus and table grapes are expanding.

Malaysia

South Africa's bilateral relations with Malaysia, marked by traditional friendship and cordiality, have continued to progress, supported by an active commercial relationship that promotes two-way trade between the countries. Reflecting the deepening of these ties, President Cyril Ramaphosa has been invited to attend the ASEAN Summit in Malaysia in 2025. Additionally, South Africa has invited Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim to participate in the G20 Summit in his capacity as Chair of ASEAN.

Singapore

South Africa and Singapore enjoy warm and collaborative relations. Singapore is world-renowned as a centre of excellence, and it has been particularly supportive in assisting South Africa with skills development under the Singapore Cooperation Programme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. More than 1 500 South African civil servants have participated in training courses in Singapore. A high point in our relations was the incoming State Visit of the

former Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong to South Africa in May 2023 and the Official Visit of Deputy President Paul Mashatile to Singapore in December 2023.

Indonesia

Formal diplomatic relations between South Africa and Indonesia were established in 1994. In 2008, South Africa and Indonesia signed the Joint Declaration on a Strategic Partnership for a Peaceful and Prosperous Future, elevating the long-standing relations between the two countries to a strategic level. A Joint Commission, Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) and a Joint Trade Committee (JTC) have been established. President of the Republic of Indonesia, H.E Prabowo Subianto, has formally invited President Cyril Ramaphosa to undertake a visit to Indonesia in 2025.

Vietnam

Ties between South Africa and Vietnam have evolved into a robust and multi-dimensional partnership, underpinned by growing cooperation across a wide range of sectors. Bilateral economic relations are coordinated through the Partnership Forum for Economic, Trade, Scientific, Technical, and Cultural Cooperation, which convenes biennially and is co-chaired at Deputy Minister level. Notably, progress has been made on key bilateral instruments, including an MoU on Combating Crime and an MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Minerals, both of which are expected to further deepen collaboration.

Philippines

South Africa and the Philippines established diplomatic relations on 1 November 1993, marking the beginning of a warm and cordial partnership. Bilateral relations have steadily progressed, supported by high-level interactions such as the 5th Bilateral Consultative Forum (BCF) held on 23 February 2023 in Pretoria, co-chaired at Deputy Minister level. This Structured Bilateral Mechanism aims to deepen cooperation across multiple sectors and enhance policy dialogue. The Philippines is scheduled to host the next BCF in Manila in 2025.

Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Laos and Timor-Leste

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

Australasia and the Pacific Islands

Australia

South Africa and Australia enjoy cordial relations and interact biennially through the Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM). The last SOM was held in South Africa in March 2023. The next session of the SOM is due to be held in Australia. South Africa and Australia cooperate across a range of sectors and issues, including law enforcement, sport, tourism, education, defence relations, and science and technology.

Recent high-level meetings have signalled Australia's intention to strengthen ties with Africa. In July 2025, South Africa launched new passport application centres in Sydney and Melbourne to improve service turnaround times for applicants through the VFS Global services.

Australia is one of South Africa's largest trading partners, with both countries possessing large, export-orientated resource sectors alongside advanced agriculture, mining, and service industries. South Africa's major imports from Australia include chemicals, mineral products, and machinery. Conversely, South Africa's exports to Australia are dominated by high-quality passenger motor vehicles, aircraft, vessels, machinery, and iron and steel products.

New Zealand

South Africa and New Zealand enjoy cordial bilateral relations coordinated through a biennial Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM). The last SOM was held in South Africa in May 2022, with the next session scheduled to be held in New Zealand. Both countries share cooperation in business, tourism, agriculture, disarmament, fisheries, environmental protection, and issues related to indigenous people and human rights.

A significant feature of the South Africa-New Zealand relationship is its sporting ties in rugby, cricket, netball

and, of late, soccer. Reflecting the close people-to-people relations, South Africa amended its visa requirements in 2019 to allow New Zealand citizens visa-free entry for up to 90 days for tourism and related purposes. In July 2025, South Africa launched the VFS Global Services for South African passport applications in Auckland, to reduce turnaround times for obtaining these documents.

The two countries work well within the multilateral arena, as evidenced by close co-operation within the UN and the Commonwealth. New Zealand remains a major commercial partner for South Africa in the Oceania region. Given the strength of these political relations, South Africa has invited New Zealand's Minister of Trade, Todd McClay to participate in the G20 Trade and Investment Working Group meeting in Gqeberha.

Relations with the Middle East

South Africa enjoys strong historical relations and ties of solidarity with countries of the Middle East, anchored by the strategic objective of strengthening South-South relations. South Africa has strengthened the bilateral relationships with countries from the Gulf region from a political as well as economic perspective. The Gulf region's strategic location and vast energy reserves are also critical for ensuring export hubs as well as global energy security. Within the political realm, South Africa's engagements to promote peace and security have been through diplomatic support for conflict resolution efforts in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen and contributing towards finding a sustainable resolution to the protracted Israel-Palestine conflict.

Deputy Minister Thandi Moraka undertook a visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman in May 2025, also engaging Chambers of Commerce and Special Economic Zone Authorities with the specific aim of deepening economic diplomacy as well as driving further inward investment.

Palestine

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

were established in 1995. Over the last two decades, bilateral relations have strengthened with the establishment of a JCC, while a Political Consultations Mechanism has further reinforced relations. The overall objectives of these platforms are to monitor and guide the conduct of bilateral relations.

South Africa remains concerned and condemns the continued illegal settlement expansion by Israel, which constitutes a contravention of international law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. South Africa believes that the only way to bring about lasting peace in the Middle East is to have a two-state solution for Palestine and Israel based on the international recognition and independence of the State of Palestine.

This would be based on the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, functioning within recognised and secure borders and living side-by-side in peace with Israel and its other neighbours, as endorsed in the Quartet Roadmap, the Madrid Principles, the Arab Peace Initiative, and the relevant UNSC resolutions.

Syria

Since the start of the Syrian civil war in 2011, the two countries have continued to maintain diplomatic relations. South Africa affirmed its support for Syria's territorial integrity and reiterated its support for a political solution to the conflict in Syria. South Africa also declared its condemnation of all violence and human rights violations and remains concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian and security situation in Syria. South Africa has called on all parties involved to work for a comprehensive and peaceful resolution of the conflict, considering the legitimate aspirations of the people of Syria, through inclusive national dialogue and a Syrian-led political process.

South Africa remains committed to protecting the fundamental interests of the Syrian people, maintaining peace and stability in the Middle East region and upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter of the UN and basic norms governing international relations.

The MoU on Bilateral Consultations between the Republic of South Africa and the Syrian Arab Republic was concluded

in 2023 on the margins of the Africa-Saudi Summit. The MoU recognises the importance of a formalised and constructive dialogue concerning bilateral relations between South Africa and Syria, as well as the fact that there are regional and international issues of common interest between the two countries.

Iraq

Bilateral relations are cordial and collaborative. The level of trade between the two countries has fluctuated. There are several bilateral agreements in various fields being negotiated, which will constitute an important framework for advancing bilateral relations. South Africa supports all international initiatives and the government of Iraq's efforts to restore stability and build inclusive and effective governance. The country reaffirmed its support for the mandate of the UN mission in Iraq. It also supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq in line with the principles of the UN Charter.

Jordan

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

The two countries enjoy a warm and increasingly diverse relationship, underpinned by strengthening political ties. An MoU on Bilateral Political Consultations (BCP) was concluded in 2023, which recognises the importance of constructive dialogue as well as engaging on regional and international issues of common interest between the two countries. The MoU on Bilateral Political Consultations provides the two countries with an ideal mechanism for structured cooperation in existing opportunities and untapped potential; these straddle a wide spectrum of human endeavour, from political cooperation to socio-economic issues.

In addition to leveraging the MoU on BCP for political co-operation, focus will also be on the enhancement of economic ties, as well as in the areas of cultural interaction, tourism, education and people-to-people relations.

Lebanon

South Africa has no residential diplomatic presence

in Lebanon, but the South African embassy in Syria is accredited to Lebanon. South Africa and Lebanon established diplomatic relations on 27 June 1994. To further enhance bilateral ties and to institutionalise regular and structural political engagements between the two countries, an MoU on Bilateral Consultations was signed on 23 August 2022. It is envisaged that the MoU will institutionalise a structured bilateral consultation mechanism between the two countries at Senior Officials' level.

At a political level, bilateral cooperation with Lebanon on regional peace and security challenges is important for South Africa to reach its strategic objectives in this region, pursuing significant trade, investment, tourism, and other opportunities.

United Arab Emirates

South Africa has strengthened its diplomatic and economic relations with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in recent years, reflecting its position as South Africa's largest trading partner in the Middle East. The UAE is also a growing source of investment into the South African economy. Bilateral relations between the two countries are driven through a Ministerial Joint Commission, which reviews relations in the various fields of cooperation, including trade and investment, energy, agriculture, transport, and social development. The third Session of the Joint Commission between the Republic of South Africa and the UAE was held in Abu Dhabi on 13 June 2023. The mechanism also allows for the identification of new projects in a broad field of cooperation. The UAE also joined BRICS on 1 January 2024.

Iran

The primary mechanism for engagement with Iran is the Joint Commission for Cooperation (JCC), established in 1995, which allows for a high-level review of bilateral relations and considers areas to further strengthen relations. During the ministerial segment of the 15th session of the South Africa-Iran JCC held on 10 August 2023, the respective foreign ministers reflected on the level of bilateral relations between the countries and the progress made since the previous session to further strengthen bilateral sectoral cooperation.

The Commission is supported by an intersessional mechanism, the Deputy Ministerial Working Group, which further monitors the implementation of decisions and undertakings made during the JCC.

South Africa remains committed to diplomacy and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, as a matter of principle, and considers the JCPOA an important achievement in this regard. The JCPOA was unanimously endorsed by UNSC Resolution 2231, which provides a binding legal framework to the agreement.

Saudi Arabia

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Saudi Arabia were formalised in May 1994. South Africa imports approximately 47% of its oil from Saudi Arabia. The various positive outcomes of the State Visit by President Ramaphosa from 15–16 October 2022 were further pursued. Deputy President Mashatile attended the inaugural Saudi-Africa Summit on 10 November 2023. On the margins of the summit, a meeting was also co-chaired by former Minister Naledi Pandor and the Saudi Minister for National Economy, Dr Majed Al Qasabi, and it was agreed that South Africa and Saudi Arabia will cooperate in areas such as renewable energy, finance, agriculture and in support of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).

To grow trade, investment and economic ties, including business-to-business cooperation between South Africa and Saudi Arabia, several business interactions have been arranged with Saudi Arabia. The country is a large investor in the energy sector in South Africa, with ACWA Power playing a major role in South Africa's energy mix through its solar plants in several parts of the country.

The Kingdom has increased its cooperation with South Africa in the agro-processing sector, and Saudi Arabia is now a vital partner and key market for our exports, including South African red meat in Saudi Arabia. South Africa remains committed to solidifying strong bilateral relations in all fields, in line with the aspirations of the leadership of the two countries. This includes increased interaction on regional and international developments.

Qatar

South Africa's political and economic relations with Qatar have diversified and grown significantly over recent years and have become more diverse. Qatar has traditionally enjoyed a healthy trade surplus owing to the high proportion of oil and petrochemical trade with South Africa. SASOL has invested in and is a 49% shareholder with Qatar Energy (51%) in the US\$1 billion ORYX GTL joint venture, which is its flagship project abroad. In Qatar, ORYX GTL, the world's first commercial-scale gas-to-liquids plant, uses SASOL's proprietary GTL technology to convert natural gas into liquid fuel and chemical products. Qatar's significant investments in South Africa focus on the financial and business services and chemicals sectors (sales, marketing and support projects).

At the invitation of the Amir of Qatar, His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, President Ramaphosa undertook a State Visit to the State of Qatar in Doha from 14 to 15 November 2023 accompanied by the Ministers of International Relations and Cooperation; Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform; Trade, Industry and Competition; Defence and Military Veterans and Basic Education. Three bilateral MoUs were signed during the visit, covering areas such as the establishment of a Mechanism for Bilateral Consultations, which would upgrade the current Senior Officials' bilateral consultations level to a ministerial level, cooperation on basic education, and cooperation on the empowerment of women and persons with disabilities.

Kuwait

Kuwait remains an important partner for South Africa in the Middle East, particularly in terms of economic relations. Kuwait has become an increasingly important market for South African exports of live animals, processed food products, machinery, and products of the chemical and allied industries. Kuwaiti companies have made substantial investments in the construction and development of hotels and real estate in South Africa and have invested on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. Kuwait has a diverse investment portfolio in South Africa, which includes, among others, investments in blue-chip companies, real estate

and resorts, an airfreight wholesaler, an auto parts import company and companies organising livestock imports from South Africa, such as Al-Mawashi.

Oman

Diplomatic relations were established in 1995 and are managed through the South Africa-Oman Bilateral Partnership Forum. Oman has a resident embassy in Pretoria. Due to austerity measures implemented post-COVID-19, the South African embassy in Muscat was closed in April 2022, and the South African embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, is now accredited to Oman. Oman is also South Africa's second-largest trading partner in the Middle East, preceded only by the UAE. Oman is also of strategic importance for South Africa's energy security, as almost 20% of all diesel imports in 2023 were sourced from Oman. Both countries are keen to attract further investment in diverse areas. Significant potential exists for enhanced cooperation in various fields such as agro-processing to enhance, notably, livestock and frozen meat exports, construction, education, training, defence, energy, science and innovation, etc.

Yemen

Relations between South Africa and Yemen are cordial. Both countries are members of the UN, the IORA and the NAM. The continued civil war in Yemen has hindered the development and strengthening of bilateral relations.

South Africa continues to support the ongoing efforts by the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg, towards a peace process in Yemen.

Bahrain

Relations with Bahrain were formalised in November 1993. Trade relations between South Africa and Bahrain have been steadily expanding, with promising prospects for further growth.

To further capitalise on relations, South Africa appointed an Honorary Consul in Manama to assist the accredited embassy in Riyadh, serving as a contact point for South African business interests, promoting trade, investment and

tourism.

North America

Canada

Canada and South Africa share cordial and historic relations based on shared values such as respect for democracy, human rights, multilateralism and diversity. Historic relations are based on Canada's opposition to apartheid in South Africa and contribution to the development of the Constitution. In multilateral forums, Canada and South Africa collaborate on such issues as the promotion of ethical governance, gender empowerment, sustainable development and climate change.

The Annual Consultations, at Senior Official level, are a structured mechanism that provides a platform for foreign policy discussions and sectoral cooperation on various areas, including trade and investment, development cooperation, science and innovation, clean technology, environmental affairs, mining and the cultural industries. About two-thirds of South African exports to Canada relate to minerals and mining equipment, with agricultural and chemical products making up the rest.

Canadian investments in South Africa are also largely concentrated in the mining and minerals sector, with more than 50% of total investment in this sector. The other 50% is fairly diversified across a number of sectors, including transportation, food processing, hospitality, ICT and instrumentation sectors. There are ongoing efforts to further diversify trade and investment relations, including through Canadian investments in the energy sector in support of South Africa's green transition.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, cooperation in the health and science and innovation sectors has been strengthened through the signing of an MoU on Health, which will allow the two countries to intensify cooperation in specialised fields, taking advantage of their respective strengths and world-class expertise. Canada has officially joined the Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO), and Canadian technologies are key components of the MeerKAT telescope. On the environmental front, the Working on Fire (WoF) initiative allows for the deployment of South African

firefighters to Canada to combat wildland fires and has been hugely impactful, with scope for further expansion.

Canada's Strategy for Africa: A Partnership for Shared Prosperity and Security, launched on 6 March 2025, signals new opportunities for enhanced collaboration, whilst building on continued support for the African Union (AU), African Development Bank and the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) and capacitating its Secretariat. Canada supported the AU's full membership in the G20 and worked with South Africa in identifying areas of convergence for a common agenda during their respective 2025 presidencies. South Africa and Canada have been having direct engagement on the alignment of their respective G20 and G7 presidencies for the betterment of humanity and the deepening of their bilateral relations. Canada is supportive of the AU's full membership in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in the future.

United States of America

Formal diplomatic relations between the United States of America (US) and the Republic of South Africa were established in 1799 with the opening of a US Consulate in Cape Town. Following South Africa's democratic transition in 1994, both nations share foundational constitutional values, notably a commitment to human rights, democratic governance, and an independent judiciary. This period witnessed a series of high-level state visits designed to solidify the bilateral relationship and foster personal rapport between successive leaders: President Nelson Mandela visited the US in October 1994; President William J. Clinton reciprocated in South Africa during March 1998; President Thabo Mbeki undertook an official visit to the US in May 2000; President George W. Bush visited South Africa in July 2003; President Barack H. Obama travelled to South Africa in June 2013; and President Cyril Ramaphosa conducted Working Visits to the US from 15 to 17 September 2022 and 19 to 22 May 2025. Engagement has been further sustained through regular visits by senior US administration officials and multiple congressional delegations.

Despite persistent divergence on geopolitical issues,

bilateral cooperation with the US remains robust, broad and historic, covering a wide spectrum of sectoral cooperation aligned to the National Development Plan (NDP) and Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) priorities. South Africa and the US also share strong people-to-people ties through the African diaspora and bonds of solidarity that were fostered during the confluence of the Civil Rights and anti-apartheid movements.

Bilateral relations are at the strategic level, and the US remains a key partner for South Africa in pursuing domestic priorities and in supporting the African Agenda (economic integration, peace, security and post-conflict reconstruction). The relations are primarily conducted through three structured bilateral mechanisms (SBMs), which are the Strategic Dialogue at Ministerial Level; the Working Group on African and Global Issues (WGAGI) at Director-General Level; and the Annual Bilateral Forum between DIRCO and the US Embassy at the level of Deputy Director-General. Both countries are committed to building on issues of common interest and to maintaining a constructive dialogue on areas of divergence while deepening common understanding of convergences, with a view to strengthening the bilateral strategic partnership for mutual benefit.

On the economic and trade fronts, the US is the second-largest trade partner of South Africa by country. Furthermore, the US was the second-largest destination of exports, accounting for 7.5% of total South African exports globally. The top South African exports to the US account for 84% of total exports to that destination, and this include Platinum Group Metals (PGMs); automotive; aluminium; iron and steel: ores, slag and ash; nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; edible fruit and nuts; organic chemicals; electrical machinery and equipment; and inorganic chemicals. South Africa's exports to the US are under three programmes, which are the most favoured nation (MFN) scheme of the WTO; the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA); and the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP). The share of exports under these programmes was as follows in 2024: MFN (72%), AGOA (26%), and GSP (2%).

On the investment front, both countries have witnessed

relatively high figures of two-way investments, with South Africa being home to over 600 direct US enterprises and the US having attracted over 20 South African companies, making South Africa the biggest African investor in the US.

Regional organisations

European Union

South Africa has made significant strides in advancing its strategic partnership with the European Union (EU) in pursuance of its foreign policy objective of strengthening North-South relations. Milestones in this strategic partnership include several high-level engagements in the past year, including the 16th Joint Cooperation Council (JCC) held on 15 January 2025 in Brussels; the 28th Inter-Parliamentary Meeting (IPM) held 18 to 19 February 2025 in Cape Town; and the 16th Ministerial Political Dialogue (MPD) held on 19 February 2025 in Cape Town, which culminated in the convening of the 8th South Africa-EU Summit in Cape Town on 13 March 2025.

These high-level meetings reaffirmed the importance of the partnership for both sides, based on shared values and common interests. South Africa was able to secure the continued commitment of the EU to support national priorities such as education, health, science, technology and innovation, energy, and trade and investment. In particular, we agreed on pathways to intensify our cooperation on the clean energy transition, pandemic preparedness and response, vaccine production, and digital and infrastructure connectivity. Importantly, the EU agreed to support the beneficiation of critical raw materials at source, as well as a commitment to contribute to the just element of the energy transition to cushion the impact on vulnerable communities and to create jobs and skills. The opportunity was also used to elevate cooperation on strategic matters such as peace, security and defence, including shared commitments to peaceful resolution of conflicts in the region and the world.

Amid growing global geopolitical tensions and economic realignments, South Africa has leveraged its principled, non-aligned stance to assert itself as a credible partner to the EU. This was especially evident during the 8th South Africa-EU Summit, where alignment on global governance

reform and multilateral trade cooperation was reinforced by President Ramaphosa and his EU counterparts. The EU's endorsement of South Africa's G20 presidency and its support for WTO reform demonstrate a shared vision for a more equitable international trading system. Notably, the EU's Global Gateway Investment Package of €4.7 billion for South Africa marks a pivotal opportunity to accelerate our transition to a low-carbon economy, while also bolstering health systems and digital infrastructure. Importantly, it also includes a "just" component to support jobs, skills and capacity building to help cushion the impact on vulnerable communities.

South Africa remains the EU's key trade partner on the African continent, and the EU as a bloc is South Africa's largest trading partner. Total trade between South Africa and the EU grew by 56%, rising from approximately R512 billion in 2016, when the EPA came into force, to R797.7 billion in 2024 (the dtic).

Key Outcomes of the 8th South Africa-EU Summit

- The parties agreed to launch negotiations towards a Clean Trade and Investment Partnership (CTIP) to support the development of strategic and cleaner value chains for raw materials, including for local beneficiation, renewable and low-carbon energy (including safe and sustainable low-carbon hydrogen) and clean technology by improving the conditions for mutually beneficial investment. This will help to facilitate the leverage of public and private financing towards developing cleaner supply chains in South Africa. The CTIP with South Africa will be the first of its kind on the continent and is expected to boost the competitiveness of both sides.
- In recognition of the need to harness critical minerals for inclusive growth and sustainable development and support the development of a framework towards clean industrialisation and investments, South Africa and the EU agreed to launch negotiations with the view to establish an MoU on Sustainable Minerals Value Chains. Both sides support an agreement that promotes value addition and beneficiation of critical minerals at – or close to – the source of extraction.
- To bolster existing energy cooperation in support of a just

energy transition in South Africa, the EU, and globally, it was agreed to establish a regular Bilateral Energy Dialogue that will cover energy access, low-carbon energy technologies and also complement our already rich engagement in multilateral fora. It was further agreed to support the development of strategic low-carbon value chains, which can support decarbonisation and industrial development.

In the current volatile geopolitical environment, South Africa and the EU committed to strengthening their strategic partnership based on mutually beneficial outcomes and shared values such as democracy, human rights, respect, support for inclusive multilateralism and the fundamental principles of the UN, as well as to defending and reforming institutions of global governance.

Western Europe

Austria

South Africa-Austria relations are on a new trajectory after the first-ever State Visit to South Africa by President Alexander van der Bellen of Austria took place during the first week of July 2025. The main outcomes of the State Visit are closer trade and investment relations and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the field of Technical Vocational Training through Work-Based Learning and a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation on Consular Affairs.

The South Africa-Austria Bilateral Consultations, chaired at the level of Deputy Minister, is the primary formal mechanism for the coordination of relations between the two countries, which is focused on the fields of arts and culture, higher education, renewable energy, trade and investment, and waste management. Austria hosted the fourth Meeting of the Bilateral Consultations on 5 May 2025 in Vienna, during which it was agreed that the fifth Bilateral Consultations Meeting will be hosted by South Africa in the 2025/26 financial year.

Bilateral trade is gradually recovering to pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels. South Africa's total trade with Austria reached R16 billion in 2024, a marginal increase on the previous year. Austria maintains a healthy trade surplus

with South Africa, and its biggest exports are automotive components and machinery, while South Africa's major exports to Austria are machinery and iron and steel products.

South Africa is Austria's top economic partner in Africa, receiving a third of Austrian exports to the continent. There are more than seventy Austrian companies with subsidiaries or agencies in South Africa. These enterprises are active across various sectors, including energy, water management, manufacturing, and infrastructure. According to the South African Reserve Bank, Austria's direct investment in South Africa in 2023 totalled R17.7 billion, most of which was in equities and investment funds. These investments have made an invaluable contribution to job creation and skills and technology transfer in South Africa.

The latest tourism statistics show the impact of COVID-19 on the flow of tourists. In 2019, South Africa received 30 376 Austrian tourists, this number declined to only 3 914 in 2021. The number of Austrian tourists to South Africa has since recovered to 21 313 in 2024, still below the pre-pandemic level.

Belgium

South Africa and Belgium enjoy substantive and diverse relations, which were reinforced by the State Visit of King Philip of Belgium in March 2023. High-level structured engagements between South Africa and Belgium take place through a Joint Commission (JC) at Deputy Ministerial level. Five meetings of the JC have taken place, the last of which was hosted in Brussels on 18 December 2024. The meeting celebrated progress since 2022 and highlighted collaboration in vaccine production – particularly the mRNA Tech Transfer Hub in Cape Town – and in science, research, and education through initiatives like VLIR-UOS scholarships. Both sides emphasised the value of Belgian expertise in innovation, offering South Africa new opportunities in recycling, raw materials, and skills development.

In addition, South Africa has very strong relations with the Flanders region of Belgium, which has a regional representation in South Africa. South Africa and Flanders also manage their relationship through a JC, but at Deputy Director-General level. The main areas of cooperation

with Flanders are arts and culture; human rights; higher education, science and innovation; trade and investment; as well as youth. The 8th South Africa-Flanders Joint Committee meeting, held on 19 December 2024 in Brussels, underscored the continued deepening of bilateral relations through strategic dialogue and practical cooperation across multiple sectors.

Economic engagement continues to grow, with Belgium emerging as a key trade and investment partner. With over \$13 billion invested in South Africa by 2023, Belgium is a major contributor to sectors such as mining, pharmaceuticals, agrifood, and green technology. Trade flows remain strong and balanced in South Africa's favour, while new avenues are opening in renewable energy, hydrogen innovation, and circular economy practices. The Port of Antwerp-Bruges functions as a gateway for South African goods into Europe, and Belgian interest in South Africa's green economy strategy, especially under the Hydrogen Society Roadmap, reflects long-term complementarity.

South Africa's bilateral trade decreased slightly from R91 billion in June 2023 to R83.79 billion in May 2024. Belgium is also one of the top 10 investors in South Africa, with over 180 Belgian companies in South Africa in areas such as mining, green energy, ports, logistics and agriculture.

COVID had a significant impact on Belgian tourist arrivals in South Africa. In 2019, the last "normal" year for tourism before the pandemic, South Africa received 54 233 Belgian tourists, but this number declined by 83% to only 9 106 in 2021. The number of tourists has since recovered from 34 826 in 2022 to 47 733 at the end of June 2024.

Germany

Germany is one of South Africa's most important strategic partners. It is the second-largest market for South African exports, the third-largest source of overseas tourists, and a major investor, with about 600 German companies in South Africa, mainly in the auto industry, telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, and machinery and mining industries.

Bilateral relations between the two countries are managed through a Bi-National Commission (BNC), which is chaired at the level of foreign ministers. The 11th Meeting of the BNC

was held in Pretoria on 27 June 2023, and the 12th BNC is scheduled to take place in Berlin in 2025. South Africa and Germany have concluded 72 bilateral agreements, which provide a legal framework for cooperation in several areas.

Germany also has an extensive development programme in South Africa, covering areas such as vaccine production, developing infrastructure for renewable energy, vocational education and training aligned strongly with the needs of the energy transition, upskilling women to make them fit for jobs in digital technologies, and upgrading urban spaces in South African townships that are particularly affected by violence.

Germany is among the largest contributors to climate resilience programmes in South Africa. It is an original member of the International Partners' Group of the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP). Focus areas for the ongoing German-South African Energy Partnership, which was established in 2013, include just energy transition, energy storage, green hydrogen, digitalisation and energy efficiency.

South Africa is Germany's largest trade partner in Africa. Trade between the two countries has grown from €3.5 bn in 1990, the first year on record, to €29.6 bn in 2024. South Africa's major exports to Germany in 2024 were vehicles, aircraft and vessels. South Africa's major import during this period was equipment components.

The latest tourism figures from Statistics South Africa show that the number of German tourists to South Africa amounted to 254 992 for the period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024.

Luxembourg

South Africa and Luxembourg enjoy cordial bilateral relations, with a number of South Africa's largest companies having subsidiaries or European headquarters registered in Luxembourg. The largest of these is MINORCO (a company owned by Anglo American, De Beers and the Oppenheimer family).

Since 1994, South Africa and Luxembourg have signed seven bilateral agreements, ranging from economic to development cooperation in the areas of health and agriculture. Luxembourg's significance for South Africa

lies mainly in the country being an important centre of the international financial community.

According to SARS South Africa's imports from Luxembourg amounted to R746,79 million and South Africa's exports to Luxembourg to R578,95 million.

The Netherlands

The Netherlands is South Africa's sixth-largest trading partner, a major investor and development partner and the fourth-largest source of overseas tourists. Much of the focus of the bilateral relationship is on green hydrogen and just energy transition. The Netherlands is now a full member of the International Partner Group of the JETP.

Relations between South Africa and the Netherlands are managed through a Joint Commission for Cooperation (JCC), which meets biennially at Ministerial level. Four meetings of the JC have taken place since the inaugural meeting in Pretoria on 3 February 2020. The Fourth Meeting of the South Africa-Netherlands Joint Commission for Cooperation was hosted by Dutch Foreign Minister Caspar Veldkamp in The Hague on 19 May 2025.

The latest trade figures show that total trade had increased from R70 billion in 2020 to R100 billion in 2024. However, trade declined from 2020 due to a decrease in coal exports, which reached R26 billion in 2022 but only R4 billion in 2024. In 2024 South Africa's exports to the Netherlands were fruit and iron ore, while South Africa's major imports from the Netherlands were petroleum oils and machinery.

More than 350 Dutch companies are operating in South Africa, making an invaluable contribution to job creation and skills development in South Africa.

In 2019, the last "normal" year for tourism before the COVID-19 pandemic, South Africa received 144,071 Dutch tourists, but this number declined by 85% to only 21 755 in 2021. The number of tourists has since recovered to 132 422 in 2024.

South Africa and the Kingdom of the Netherlands also have an excellent and longstanding partnership in the management of water resources, which was reaffirmed by the signing of the renewed Memorandum of Understanding on 22 March 2023.

Switzerland

South Africa's bilateral relations with Switzerland remain strong, covering areas such as trade and investment, science and innovation, higher education (in particular vocational training), arts and culture and human rights. In recent years, the political dialogue has expanded as a result of Switzerland's mediation role in Mozambique and elsewhere on the African continent.

The annual bilateral High-Level Consultations (HLC) and regular high-level visits reflect strong and growing political ties. The HCLs are chaired by the deputy foreign ministers of the two countries. The 11th Meeting of the HLC was held in Bern, Switzerland, on 25 November 2024, with the 12th HLC scheduled to take place in South Africa towards the end of 2025.

Switzerland maintains a development programme in South Africa, which has transitioned from development assistance to economic development. The programme is implemented in consultation with National Treasury. The Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) manages programmes that support capable entrepreneurs, foster access to sustainable value chains, and improve resource efficiency, which all support the South African government's efforts to rejuvenate the economy.

Swiss non-government organisations (NGOs) and foundations have always been involved in social development projects in South Africa. The International Committee of the Red Cross, hosted in Switzerland has, for example, played an important part in South Africa's history. During the time of apartheid, the Red Cross was an important channel of communication between political prisoners on Robben Island and their families.

Total trade between South Africa and Switzerland declined marginally from R20.8 billion in 2023 to R19.8 billion over the 12 months to the end of July 2024. South Africa's main exports to Switzerland were aluminium and coal, precious metals (especially gold), agricultural products, and wine, while the main imports were machinery and pharmaceutical products.

Switzerland is amongst the 10 largest direct foreign investors in South Africa, with an estimated 100 companies,

subsidiaries, or production plants sustaining approximately 50 000 jobs. Swiss investments in South Africa are mainly in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, finance, and manufacturing. Swiss companies in South Africa include Adeco, Cargill, Clariant, Credit Suisse, Franke Geberit, Glencore Xstrata, Mercuri Energy, Nestle, Novartis, Roche, and Schindler Lifts.

Tourism flows are recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019, the last "normal" year for tourism before the pandemic, South Africa received 55 432 Swiss tourists. The number declined to only 11 375 in 2021 but recovered to 42 721 over the twelve months to the end of July 2024.

Switzerland officially joined the Square Kilometre Array Observatory as a full member on 19 January 2022, which is an addition to the significant science, technology and education programmes between the two countries. Science and innovation remain top priorities in South Africa's bilateral cooperation with Switzerland. In this regard it is worth mentioning that Switzerland has for the past 10 years occupied the top of the Global Innovation Index of most innovative countries in the world.

United Kingdom

Bilateral relations between South Africa and the United Kingdom (UK) are broad, deep and strategically significant, encompassing cooperation in health, education, science and technology, energy, the environment, defence, police, arts and culture, and sport. The relationship is anchored by the biennial South Africa-UK Bilateral Forum at Foreign Ministerial Level, most recently held in Cape Town from 4 to 5 November 2024, where Foreign Minister Ronald Lamola and Foreign Secretary David Lammy agreed to strengthen ties in trade, agriculture, defence, and the just energy transition. The two nations share strong institutional and diplomatic ties as members of the Commonwealth, G20, WTO and other multilateral fora.

The UK is one of South Africa's most important trading partners, with bilateral trade valued at approximately \$6.93 billion in 2024. Trade between the UK and South Africa is regulated by the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), Mozambique and UK Economic Partnership Agreement

(SACU+M – UK EPA). In 2024, the UK was South Africa's eighth-largest trading partner in the world and second-largest in Europe.

The UK is a leading source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in South Africa. A total of 386 UK companies have invested in 505 FDI projects in South Africa and created 51,023 jobs with a capital investment recorded at \$22.62 billion. The UK has invested in sectors such as business services, financial services, software and IT services, communications, industrial equipment, metals, coal, oil and gas, transportation & warehousing, food and beverages, hotels and tourism.

Ireland

Relations between Ireland and South Africa are historic, cordial, and marked by shared values and experiences, particularly in the fight against apartheid and the pursuit of peace in Northern Ireland.

Political and economic relations between the two countries encompass a broad spectrum of cooperation, such as trade and investment, education, science and innovation and gender equality. Ireland's developmental programmes have greatly assisted many initiatives in South Africa since 1994, and the partnership continues to this day. The third South Africa-Ireland Joint Commission for Cooperation was successfully held in Dublin on 18 September 2024 and represents the commitment of both countries to further bilateral cooperation in trade, investment and business; education and skills development; science and innovation; women empowerment; and gender equality, amongst others. South Africa and Ireland often cooperate at the multilateral level where they share a common commitment to multilateralism, the international rule of law, and the promotion and protection of human rights.

Since 2013, Ireland has been offering scholarships to South Africans to study a one-year master's programme under the Kader Asmal Fellowship Programme (KAFFP) annually. The programme targets and supports women in STEM and prioritises early career professionals and graduates from Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDI) and Universities of Technology. Approximately 107

South Africans had benefited from the programme. There is also strong cooperation in the field of science and technology between the two countries, which is centred around two main initiatives: the Irish Tech Challenge South Africa and the Digiskills Africa programme. The Digiskills Africa initiative ensures support for graduates currently undertaking or who have completed their master's degrees by providing short courses in digital transformation, which is an in-demand skill in the pharmaceuticals, engineering, and manufacturing sectors. The Irish Tech Challenge is rooted in promoting innovation, fostering technology development, and ensuring effective technology deployment within South Africa. It also aims to empower diversity with a special emphasis on encouraging applications from women, young entrepreneurs, and start-ups aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including climate-focused start-ups. The aim is to provide South African start-ups with global expansion support.

Bilateral trade between South Africa and Ireland increased by 12,5% to US\$638 million in 2024. A total of 31 Irish companies have invested in 47 FDI projects in South Africa. These projects represent US\$2.81 billion of capital investment and created 1 479 jobs. Irish companies have invested in sectors such as renewable energy, software and IT services, business services, aerospace, communications, financial services, food & beverages, automotive components, coal, oil and gas, consumer electronics and others.

France

France is a significant technological, trade, investment, tourism and development cooperation partner for South Africa. Bilateral technical cooperation between South Africa and France exists in various sectors, including energy, agriculture, manufacturing, transport, education and science and technology. About 250 French companies have invested in South Africa and employ around 300 000 people. On 16 May 2025, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ronald Lamola, met with his French counterpart, Jean-Noel Barrot, in Paris for the ninth Session of the South Africa-France Forum for Political Dialogue

(FPD). The two ministers engaged on a number of areas for bilateral cooperation of mutual interest and concern. Minister Lamola and his French counterpart also discussed pertinent regional issues on the African continent, and on the global scale, the Russia-Ukraine conflict and current political situation in the Middle East were discussed. The ministers agreed to speed up the finalisation of the elevation of the FPD to a Joint Ministerial Commission.

On 21-23 May 2025, Deputy President, H.E Paul Mashatile undertook a Working Visit to France on the occasion of the Investment Conference. The event sought to enhance economic and people-to-people relations between the two countries and brought together public and private sector leaders. The delegation comprised leaders of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). Also accompanying the Deputy President were a number of ministers and deputy ministers. The conference served as a platform for presenting investment prospects within South Africa, particularly in critical sectors such as energy, infrastructure, and manufacturing.

Greece

South Africa and Greece enjoy traditional ties of friendship and cooperation as well as a convergence of views and cooperation on various regional and international issues in general. South Africa-Greece relations are underpinned by the presence of a substantial and influential Greek professional and business community. The South African Embassy in Athens is actively engaged with the Greek Foreign Ministry and other key ministries to enhance bilateral relations between the two countries, particularly in the maritime and education sectors.

Cyprus

South Africa has long-standing bilateral relations with Cyprus. It has maintained strong ties with the country, partly because of a substantial and influential Cypriot community in South Africa. The two countries collaborate mainly in the field of education. Currently, there are about 47 South African students enrolled at the University of Nicosia, with the majority pursuing medicine and business administration.

Italy

South Africa and Italy's bilateral relationship has evolved over time, with both countries engaging in diplomatic, economic and cultural cooperation. South Africa is host to more than 30 000 Italian citizens.

Both countries have signed several agreements in various areas of cooperation in fields such as science and technology, culture, defence and police. The 2nd Bilateral Consultations meeting was co-chaired by the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Alvin Botes, and the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Edmondo Cirielli, on 21 November 2024 in Rome, Italy. The countries are in the process of exploring further areas of cooperation in sectors such as energy and environment, agriculture, health, education, water resource management and small business development.

In 2024, Italy was South Africa's 16th-largest trading partner in the world and fourth-largest in the EU. According to FDI Markets, between January 2003 and June 2024, 43 Italian companies invested in 70 FDI investment projects in South Africa, with the capital investment recorded as \$5.11 billion.

Spain

South Africa's bilateral relationship with Spain is managed through the Bilateral Consultations, which meets annually at Deputy Minister level. The 15th South Africa-Spain Bilateral Consultations was held in Pretoria on 23 April 2024. Spain was represented by the State Secretary for Foreign and Global Affairs, Diego Martínez Belío. The discussions focused on various areas of mutual interest, including bilateral trade and investment, climate change and renewable energy, sport, culture, education and language training, as well as science and innovation.

In 2024, Spain was South Africa's 21st-largest trading partner in the world and fifth-largest trading partner in the EU. According to FDI Markets, from January 2003 until August 2025, seven South African companies invested in 13 FDI projects across Spain. These projects represented \$326.60 million of capital investment in Spain. During the

same period, 43 Spanish companies invested in 60 FDI projects across South Africa. These projects represented \$2.46 billion of capital investment in South Africa. Spanish companies invested in sectors such as renewable energy, textiles, financial services, software and IT services, and consumer products, among other sectors.

Portugal

South Africa and Portugal maintain friendly political relations, and the two countries have strong historical and cultural ties. There are approximately 500 000 South Africans of Portuguese descent and about 200 000 Portuguese nationals who reside in South Africa permanently, serving as an important economic link between South Africa and Portugal.

The South Africa-Portugal Bilateral Consultations facilitate cooperation in the fields of agriculture, defence, education, energy, science and technology, tourism as well as trade and investment. The relations between the two countries were further advanced by a series of high-level engagements, which took place between 2022 and 2025. These meetings were at the level of President, Minister, and Deputy Minister.

The eighth meeting of the South Africa-Portugal Bilateral Consultations took place on 27 March 2025 in Pretoria and was co-chaired by Deputy Minister Alvin Botes and the Portuguese Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Prof. Nuno Sampaio. The Bilateral Consultations focused on strengthening bilateral political trade and cultural relations, science and innovation and language training.

Investment has been growing, with 26 Portuguese companies having invested in South Africa over 30 years, creating many employment opportunities as well as providing local supply content as well. Between January 2003 and August 2025, 8 Portuguese companies invested in 16 FDI projects across South Africa with approximately \$341 million in capital investment. The main activities are business services, sales, marketing and support, retail, logistics, distribution and transportation, and manufacturing.

Holy See

South Africa's relations with the Holy See were formally

established in March 1994 by an agreement signed between former President Nelson Mandela and Pope John Paul II. The Holy See actively participates in events that promote sustainable economic growth, reduce poverty, create jobs, encourage inter-religious dialogue and mediate conflict.

Central, Eastern Europe, Nordic and Baltic countries

Nordic countries

South Africa enjoys good relations with all the Nordic and Baltic countries, flowing from the strong grassroots support of these countries for democratisation in South Africa. Relations have been established in various fields at both public and official levels. The scope of Nordic development cooperation is broad and has benefitted civil society and government. Although Nordic countries stopped providing development assistance to South Africa in 2009, these countries continue to provide technical support and also partner with South Africa and civil society in addressing development needs in various fields. There is also close cooperation on multilateral issues informed by mutually shared values and human rights.

The Nordic countries are strong supporters of the AUDA-NEPAD and are directly involved in conflict resolution and reconstruction projects in Africa. This was reinforced by the signing of the Declaration of Intent on Partnerships in Africa in 2008, which laid a framework for future trilateral cooperation.

Denmark

Bilateral relations between South Africa and Denmark are predicated on the historic Danish support and solidarity with the liberation struggle against apartheid in the early 1960s, leading to the eventual establishment of formal diplomatic relations at the advent of South Africa's democracy. Denmark is also an important partner with regard to overseas development cooperation. South Africa's relations with Denmark are coordinated through the South Africa-Denmark Senior Officials Consultations and the main areas of cooperation include water resource management, science and technology, and maritime and environmental affairs. South Africa's relations with Denmark are coordinated

through a strategic partnership agreement. In signing the strategic partnership agreement, both countries confirm their mutual commitment to a strategic partnership aimed at advancing political cooperation, expanding economic relations and promoting trade and investment, among others.

Estonia

South Africa formally recognised the independence of Estonia and the other Baltic States on 28 August 1991. Bilateral relations between the two countries have been developing gradually since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1991. In 2023, the Government of Estonia appointed a non-resident ambassador to South Africa based in the capital, Tallinn, Estonia. The South African Embassy in Stockholm, Kingdom of Sweden, is accredited to Estonia. The first Senior Officials Consultation between South Africa and Estonia took place in April 2024 at the level of Deputy Director-General and focused on strengthening bilateral political and economic cooperation, specifically in the areas of digitisation and cyber security.

Finland

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Finland were re-established in 1994. The bilateral relationship was given more definite structure with the signing of the Declaration of Intent at the Skagen Nordic Summit in 2000. Regular Bilateral Consultations are coordinated at Senior Official Level. The main areas of cooperation include trade and investment, science and technology, innovation, education (marine studies), ICT, and energy. The Blue Economy and Circular Economy are central to both countries and are also emphasised as areas with potential for future partnerships.

South Africa and Finland signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) on 25 April 2023 to support more inclusive and participatory peace mediation approaches that are gender and youth responsive and to enhance the role of peace mediation in multilateral fora. In accordance with the objectives of this Letter of Intent, the two countries will co-operate on aspects of mutual interest related to peace mediation, including but not limited to the following areas:

- cooperation in thematic priority areas such as youth, peace, and security; and
- explore opportunities for enhanced cooperation in peace mediation initiatives.

To give practical application of the intent, South Africa and Finland is hosting a Young Peace Mediators' Mentoring Programme, launched on 6 June 2025.

Finland is also a strong international partner in areas of global concern such as strengthening multilateralism, international law, peacebuilding and mediation, the advancement of gender and human rights, as well as on issues of climate change.

Iceland

Diplomatic relations were established in 1995 on a non-residential basis. Iceland is accredited to South Africa from its Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Reykjavík, and South Africa is accredited to Iceland from its Embassy in Oslo, Norway. Iceland forms part of the Nordic coalition of like-minded states concerning their policies towards South Africa, Africa, and international issues, and they play an important role in keeping Africa on the global agenda.

Latvia

South Africa was among the first countries to recognise the independence of Latvia, following the restoration of the independence of the country on 29 August 1991. South Africa established full diplomatic relations with Latvia on 4 November 1991. The two countries have since enjoyed warm and cordial relations, but due to a lack of vigorous economic interaction and a well-defined bilateral cooperation framework, relations between the two countries have failed to reach their full potential.

Latvia does not have an embassy in South Africa, but the country has a non-resident ambassador accredited to South Africa stationed in Riga, the capital of Latvia. South Africa has non-resident accreditation through the Ambassador in Sweden.

Lithuania

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

in Sweden is accredited to Lithuania. Relations between South Africa and Lithuania are coordinated at Senior Official Level. The main areas of cooperation between South Africa and Lithuania include trade and investment, energy, transport, science and technology, academics, and cultural cooperation.

Norway

Full diplomatic relations between South Africa and Norway were established in January 1992. Both countries cooperate and support each other in bilateral and multilateral relations. South Africa's relations with Norway are coordinated through the South Africa-Norway High-Level Consultations – a mechanism within the framework of the 1996 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Bilateral Political Consultations, established to deepen relations and expand trade and investment.

Bilateral cooperation has grown to include regional and international issues of mutual interest. South Africa and Norway have worked together on the UNSC in promoting the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, and peace and mediation on the African continent. Norway also supports the NDP priorities through technical cooperation in the areas of oceans management, cooperation in trade and investment, renewable energy, climate change, materials efficiency, waste management and recycling, shipbuilding (boat building), agro-processing and minerals.

Sweden

Relations between Sweden and South Africa date back to the 1930s, when a South African legation was opened in Stockholm. Relations were upgraded to ambassadorial level in 1994. Bilateral relations between South Africa and Sweden were further cemented by the South Africa-Sweden Partnership Year in 1999. Since then, a number of events have taken place, reinforcing and deepening the already close bilateral relations. In recognition of a strategic partnership that exists between the two countries, the South Africa-Sweden BNC was established in 2000, chaired at the level of Deputy President and Deputy Prime Minister, respectively.

Areas of cooperation include trade and investment, higher education, science and technology, water-resource management, energy, maritime affairs, culture, ICT, environmental affairs, and defence. Besides the work of the BNC, South Africa and Sweden established a Defence Committee that convenes independently of the BNC. A memorandum on Defence Cooperation was concluded in 2000. The defence committee discusses and exchanges information within areas of regional security, defence management, bilateral defence agreements, peacekeeping operations, mutual visits, exchange of defence-related information, training and defence-industrial cooperation.

Eastern Europe

The Eastern Europe region is of crucial importance to South Africa's strategic objectives, straddling a wide spectrum of political and economic interests. The region is well endowed with strategic commodities and minerals that are of vital significance to South Africa's economy. Eastern Europe offers South Africa strategic opportunities to support its Industrial Strategy through increased trade, investment, and technology transfer. Countries in the region possess advanced manufacturing capabilities, particularly in sectors such as machinery, automotive components, and industrial equipment, all of which align with South Africa's goals to strengthen its domestic manufacturing base. By fostering partnerships with Eastern European nations, South Africa can gain access to cost-effective technologies and expertise that support industrial upgrading, skills development, and infrastructure improvement.

In addition, Eastern Europe provides South Africa with access to wider European markets, creating opportunities for increased exports and deeper integration into global value chains. By establishing targeted bilateral partnerships, joint ventures, and collaborative initiatives in sectors such as agro-processing, renewable energy, and digital technologies, South Africa can broaden its industrial foundation and lessen reliance on its conventional trade partners. Such cooperation supports the country's goals of reindustrialisation, employment creation, and inclusive economic development.

Azerbaijan

South Africa and Azerbaijan established diplomatic relations in 1991. The South African Embassy in Ankara is also accredited to Azerbaijan on a non-residential basis. Structured bilateral relations were established by means of an MoU on Regular Diplomatic Consultations that was concluded in February 2014. The MoU provides for the strengthening and broadening of the scope of bilateral cooperation in the political, economic, scientific, technological, cultural and humanitarian areas. Other areas of potential interest are energy, defence and air services.

Bilateral relations are coordinated at the level of Senior Officials and areas of cooperation include trade and investment, defence, energy and higher education.

Belarus

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Belarus were established in March 1993. Currently, the South African ambassador to the Russian Federation is the non-residential Ambassador to Belarus. Belarus opened its embassy in South Africa in January 2000, and the first South African ambassador presented credentials in February 2000. The two countries enjoy good bilateral relations that have been strengthened by the exchange of high-level visits for political consultations in the past few years. On the economic front, South Africa and Belarus mainly engage through the Inter-governmental Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation (ITEC), led by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition.

The committee is co-chaired at the level of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs on the Belarusian side and Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition on the South African side. The primary objective of the cooperation is to strengthen and develop trade and economic cooperation on a long-term and stable basis and on the principles of equality and mutual benefit.

Georgia

Full diplomatic relations between South Africa and Georgia were established in 1992. The South African Embassy in Kyiv, Ukraine, is non-residentially accredited to Georgia.

The Government of Georgia opened an embassy in South Africa in August 2011. Structured bilateral engagements between South Africa and Georgia, at the level of Senior Officials, were established in November 1993 by means of a Protocol on Cooperation between the then Department of Foreign Affairs (now the DIRCO) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. The Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Alvin Botes attended a Senior Officials meeting held in Georgia in 2023, which focused on strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries across various sections as well as the continuous support for the two countries on issues of mutual interest in the multilateral structures such as the United Nations.

Areas of focus include tourism, trade and investment, agriculture, culture and sport. The two countries have established a winemakers exchange programme, which has seen student and expert exchanges between Telavi State University, a Georgian university and Stellenbosch University's Wine Sciences Department.

Russian Federation

Diplomatic relations between Russia and South Africa were established on 28 February 1992. The historical links between the two countries remain strong. The former USSR was one of the key supporters of the struggle for liberation in South Africa. South Africa became the first African state to recognise the independence of Russia, post the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). South Africa regards Russia as an important strategic partner, and close bilateral and multilateral ties exist between the two countries.

Since the re-establishment of bilateral relations, South Africa's relations with Russia have evolved into a strategic relationship over the past few years through continued high-level political engagements. The Declaration on a Strategic Partnership between South Africa and Russia was signed on the margins of the fifth BRICS Summit held in Durban in March 2013 by the two countries' heads of state. President of the Republic of South Africa, H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ronald Lamola attended the 16th BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia

in October 2024. President Ramaphosa held a bilateral meeting with the President of the Russian Federation, H.E. Vladimir Putin, on the margins of the BRICS Summit. The Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Thandi Moraka participated in the First Ministerial Conference of the Russia-Africa Partnership Forum in Sochi, Russia in November 2024. Several telecons took place at the Heads of State and Ministers level during the reporting period with several counterparts in Russia, Türkiye and Ukraine. Bilateral meetings with countries in the region took place on the margins of the multilateral foras. The former Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Dr Naledi Pandor, participated at the BRICS Foreign Minister's meeting held in Russia in June 2024. Several Cabinet Ministers and other senior government officials undertook Official Visits to Russia.

Deputy President Paul Mashatile undertook a Working Visit to the Russian Federation in June 2025. The Working Visit took place in two cities: Moscow for political engagements with the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation and St Petersburg to participate in the St Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF'25). The purpose of the visit was to strengthen bilateral political, economic and trade relations between South Africa and Russia, with a particular focus on sectors such as agriculture, automotives, energy and mining industries, as well as science and technology cooperation.

One of the primary mechanisms for improving the bilateral relationship and advancing government's development objectives is the Intergovernmental Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation (ITEC), which was established in 1999.

The committee is the most important mechanism underpinning mutually beneficial trade and economic ties between the two countries. It has proven to be an effective instrument for effective engagement on trade and investment issues, as well as critical skills and technology transfers, amongst others. The ITEC has given practical substance to the political commitment on the part of the two countries to work together, as expressed in the Treaty of Friendship and Partnership signed by both countries.

Sectors covered within agriculture, forestry and

fisheries, energy, education, mineral resources, science and technology, transport, water and sanitation, trade and industry. Besides the work of the ITEC, South Africa and Russia established a defence committee that convenes independently. There is also growing inter-regional and provincial cooperation that bodes well for strengthened economic cooperation, tourism and people-to-people contact. The 18th ITEC Session took place in Moscow, Russia, in April 2025.

Serbia

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Serbia were established in April 2002 when Serbia was still referred to as the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Serbia regards South Africa as a strategic partner on the African continent, a regional power and a leading economy that is playing a positive role in promoting peace, security and sustainable development in Africa. South Africa held structured engagements at a Senior Officials level chaired by the Deputy Director-General, Americas and Europe of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, Ambassador Maud Dlomo, co-chaired by the Acting Assistant Minister for Bilateral Cooperation of Serbia, Ambassador Irena Šarac, in September 2023. The Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) discussed matters related to South Africa-Serbia bilateral relations, including scholarship programmes for South African students, possible cooperation in the area of visa waivers, and enhancing trade between the two countries.

South Africa's contribution to the advancement of multilateralism, the rule of law, human rights and an equitable global governance system is similarly appreciated. Serbia opened its embassy in Pretoria in June 1996. The South African ambassador in Athens, Greece, is accredited to Serbia on a non-resident basis. Both countries enjoy cordial bilateral relations, which are coordinated at the level of Senior Officials. Areas of cooperation include trade and investment, education and agriculture.

Türkiye

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Türkiye were established in 1995 and they have resident embassies in Pretoria and Ankara, respectively. The two countries enjoy

good bilateral relations, which have been strengthened by a number of bilateral agreements on different areas of cooperation. The two countries signed a Bi-National Commission, which is to be inaugurated in October 2025. The South Africa-Türkiye Strategic Partnership is informed by the two countries' growing political and economic profiles and their geostrategic locations in Africa and Euro-Asia; Türkiye's rapidly growing political and economic footprint in Africa, including the Africa- Türkiye Strategic Partnership; the two countries' capacity to project their foreign policies regionally and globally; and active participation and membership in various organisations such as the G20 and the UN. The former Minister of International Relations and Cooperation participated as a guest speaker by delivering a lecture at the Antalya Diplomacy Forum (ADF) in Türkiye in March 2024.

On the economic front, relations between South Africa and Türkiye are coordinated through the South Africa- Türkiye JEC, led by the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition on the South African side. The primary objective of the JEC, which was established in 2005, is to promote and deepen bilateral trade and economic relations between the two countries. Priority sectors for the JEC include agriculture and agribusiness; automotives; infrastructure, energy and construction services; minerals resources; textile and clothing; and tourism.

Ukraine

Bilateral relations between South Africa and Ukraine are cordial. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in March 1992, and their embassies were established in Kiev and Pretoria in 1992 and 1995, respectively. The South African Embassy in Ukraine is accredited on a non-residential basis to Georgia, Moldova, and Armenia. The two countries regularly engage through political consultations at Senior Official Level.

These political consultations are guided by both the MoU between Ministries of Foreign Affairs of South Africa and Ukraine (1994) and the Joint Declaration on Relations and Cooperation between South Africa and Ukraine (November 1996) that provide for regular bilateral political

consultations between the foreign ministries. The main areas of cooperation between the two countries are science and technology; defence; and cooperation between the South African Council for Geoscience and the Ministry of Environmental and Natural Resources of Ukraine, with more possible areas of cooperation currently being explored. There are growing trade relations between

South Africa and Ukraine. The Director-General of International Relations and Cooperation, Zane Dangor, and the National Security Advisor, Dr Sidney Mufamadi, participated in a series of Ukraine Peace Initiative meetings in Kyiv, Germany, and Switzerland in 2024.

The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ronald Lamola, hosted his counterpart, the Foreign Minister of Ukraine, H.E Andri Sybiha, on a Working Visit in Pretoria in October 2024, which resulted in a commitment to strengthen bilateral and economic relations between the two countries. The engagements also led to the remote signing of the Agreement on the Visa Waiver for Diplomatic and Official Passport holders.

Central Europe

Central Europe has seen substantial improvement in relations with South Africa. A number of bilateral mechanisms with these countries were established at various levels. The areas of cooperation have been considerable in, inter alia, the fields of education, arts and culture, science and technology, agriculture, water affairs, trade and tourism. South Africa works very closely with Central European countries on multilateral forums. While a number of Central European countries are serviced by non-residentially accredited ambassadors, relations with these countries are considered important to South Africa's foreign policy goals.

Bulgaria

South Africa and Bulgaria have maintained cordial and warm relations dating back to the liberation struggle, as Bulgaria hosted a number of anti-apartheid activists. Diplomatic relations at the level of ambassador were established through the exchange of notes in February 1992, and the South African Embassy in Sofia started functioning in 1992,

while the Bulgarian Embassy in Pretoria was opened in February 1993.

With the intention of expanding relations, several bilateral agreements have been concluded in the areas of air services, defence, tourism, security, arts and culture, healthcare and medical sciences, and education, while several others are under consideration. Bilateral trade and investments remain at a low level.

Following a Cabinet decision to close South African foreign missions across the globe as a strategic cost-cutting measure, the South African Embassy in Bulgaria was officially closed on 30 June 2025. This, however, does not mean that bilateral relations with Bulgaria have been downgraded, and the mission in Athens, Greece, has been accredited on a non-residential basis to Bulgaria to continue engagements with Bulgaria, given the historical importance of the relations.

Croatia

Bilateral relations between South Africa and Croatia have developed steadily since diplomatic relations were established in 1992. The South African Embassy in Hungary is accredited to Croatia, while Croatia opened its embassy in Pretoria in November 1995. Bilateral relations between the two countries are coordinated at the level of Senior Officials, with emphasis in various areas such as marine technology, higher education and training, science and technology, and tourism. The most recent round of Political Consultations took place in December 2024 at the level of Deputy Minister.

Czech Republic

Full diplomatic relations between South Africa and the Czech Republic were established in 1991, and resident embassies in each other's capitals were established soon after. Bilateral relations have evolved to a level of maturity, underpinned by increasing commercial and business-to-business activities, as well as people-to-people exchanges. Political consultations are coordinated at Deputy Minister level. Areas of cooperation between the two countries include tourism, defence, medical equipment, pharmaceuticals and agro-processing.

Trade and economic relations between South Africa and

the Czech Republic are governed by the South Africa-Czech Republic Joint Committee for Economic Cooperation (JCEC), which aims to promote and deepen bilateral trade and economic cooperation. The sixth session of the JCEC will be held in Prague, Czechia, in the course of 2025.

Hungary

Hungary was the first among the Central European countries to establish diplomatic ties with South Africa. Full diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in July 1991. Both countries enjoy cordial bilateral relations. Political consultations are coordinated at Deputy Ministerial Level. Areas of cooperation between the two countries include higher education, science and technology, water-resource management, defence and agro-processing. The two countries are working towards the signing of a Joint Commission of Cooperation (JCC), which aims to promote and deepen bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

Poland

Diplomatic relations between South Africa and Poland were concluded in December 1991, and embassies were opened in each capital. Political consultations between the two countries are coordinated at the Deputy Ministerial Level. Areas of cooperation between Poland and South Africa include aeronautics, automotive, defence and agriculture. Poland, with a population of 38 million people, is the largest single market among the "new" EU states. South Africa is Poland's top trade partner in Africa. The two countries have agreed to establish a JEC, which will promote and deepen trade and economic cooperation. It is envisaged that the JEC will be inaugurated during the next session of the Political Consultations scheduled for the fourth quarter of the current financial year.

Romania

South Africa and Romania established diplomatic relations in November 1991. The formal mechanism, legalising bilateral political consultations on an institutionalised basis between South Africa and Romania, was signed in September 2016. The protocol is crucial in strengthening bilateral relations as well as providing a political framework for other agreements

and commitments. South Africa and Romania signed an agreement in the field of science and technology in September 2004.

The partnership has successfully contributed to scientific advancement in both countries. Other areas of cooperation between South Africa and Romania include energy, mining, agriculture and marine technology. The Government of Romania, through the embassy in Pretoria, has launched a successful programme of donating equipment to South African schools in disadvantaged areas.

Slovakia

Full diplomatic relations between the former Federal Republic of Czechoslovakia and South Africa were established in October 1991. The dissolution of the Federal Republic of Czechoslovakia brought about the Slovak Republic as a separate sovereign state in 1993. The bilateral diplomatic relations entered into with the Federal

The Republic of Czechoslovakia continued uninterrupted with the Slovak Republic. South Africa's bilateral relations with Slovakia are sound. Whilst South Africa does not have an embassy in Bratislava, the country's relations with Slovakia are managed on a non-resident basis by the South African Embassy in Vienna.

Areas of cooperation between South Africa and Slovakia are in the fields of automotive (including automotive components), agro-processing, medical equipment and pharmaceuticals. Economic relations between South Africa and Slovakia are governed by a JCEC.

Slovenia

Full diplomatic relations between South Africa and Slovenia were established in 1992. While South Africa does not have an embassy in Slovenia, the country's relations with Slovenia are managed on a non-resident basis by the South African Embassy in Vienna. The Ambassador of Slovenia to Egypt is accredited on a non-residential basis to South Africa. Both countries enjoy cordial bilateral relations. Bilateral relations between the two countries exist at the level of Senior Officials, with meetings taking place alternately every two years.

Latin America and the Caribbean

South Africa continues to build and maintain mutually beneficial political, economic and social relations with Latin America and the Caribbean, and to strengthen cooperation to advance the developmental agenda of the South and global governance reforms through the UN, NAM, G77 plus China, BRICS, IBSA, G20 and the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM).

At a bilateral level, the scope of cooperation covers, among others, the following areas: agribusiness; Antarctica; aquaculture and fisheries; arts and culture; defence, education and skills development; energy; environment; health; infrastructure development; mining; science and innovation; social development; trade and economic cooperation; tourism; and transport.

The SACU-MERCOSUR (Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay) Preferential Trade Agreement opens new markets for SACU members to South American countries, particularly in sectors like agriculture, mining, and manufacturing. For MERCOSUR countries, it provides an opportunity to access the African market, which is often underexplored compared to other regions like Europe or Asia.

The region is also an integral part of the AU's sixth region due to the significant presence of an African diaspora in Latin America and the Caribbean. This shared heritage and history provides a strong basis to build enduring relations and cooperation to advance the African Agenda as elaborated in Agenda 2063.

Mexico

Bilateral relations between South Africa and Mexico are sound. South Africa and Mexico's bilateral relations are conducted through a Bi-National Commission (BNC) at Ministerial Level. South Africa is Mexico's biggest trading partner in Africa. The priority areas for bilateral cooperation are agribusiness, arts and culture, the automotive industry, education and skills development, mining, science and technology, and tourism.

The two countries work closely together in multilateral forums on issues such as South cooperation, human rights,

gender equality, global governance reforms and nuclear disarmament. Several South African companies, such as Old Mutual, Aspen, Blue Label Telecoms, Standard Bank, Naspers, Sappi, Mondi, and Dimension Data, have operations operating in Mexico.

Guatemala

South Africa and Guatemala enjoy cordial relations. The South African Embassy in Mexico is responsible for South Africa's relations with Guatemala on a non-residential basis.

Panama

South Africa and Panama enjoy cordial bilateral relations. The diplomatic relations were established on 10 January 1995. The Government of Panama opened an embassy in Pretoria in August 2000.

There are over 3 000 South Africans living and working in Panama, especially in mining, banking and finance, and the logistics industry. South Africa's Ambassador in Mexico City is also accredited as South Africa's non-residential Ambassador to Panama. Panama's experience as a regional trade and logistics hub presents opportunities for mutually beneficial technical cooperation with South Africa.

Nicaragua

South Africa enjoys cordial and historical relations with Nicaragua. South Africa and Nicaragua established bilateral relations on 15 September 1994. The South African Ambassador in Mexico City is also accredited to Nicaragua. Nicaragua opened its embassy in Pretoria in January 2024. Gold has become Nicaragua's most valuable export and is continuing to make a substantial contribution to the Nicaraguan economy.

Brazil

South Africa continues to enjoy cordial relations with Brazil, premised on the principles of solidarity and development cooperation. The two countries also enjoy strategic partner status and close cooperation in BRICS, IBSA, the UN, and the G20. The South Africa-Brazil Joint Commission meets at Ministerial level and is supported by a Senior Officials Meeting comprising ten thematic working groups, including

mining and energy; environment; health; justice and correctional services; trade and investment; tourism; arts; culture; sport, higher education and cooperation between the diplomatic academies; defence; technical development cooperation; and agriculture.

Argentina

Argentina is South Africa's third-largest trading partner in the Latin America and Caribbean region after Brazil and Mexico. Relations are managed through a Bi-National Commission at Ministerial Level. More recently, political consultations at Deputy Ministerial level convened to ensure regular high-level bilateral interaction and to deepen bilateral cooperation. Key areas of bilateral cooperation with Argentina include agriculture, energy, mining, ocean and Antarctic cooperation, science and technology, outer space, and sport.

The Caribbean

South Africa enjoys cordial relations with the countries of the Caribbean. Most inhabitants of the Caribbean are of African descent and have strong historical and cultural links to the continent. South Africa's endeavour, in conjunction with the AU and the Caribbean Community, to strengthen cooperation between Africa and the African Diaspora in the Caribbean, has given added impetus to bilateral and multilateral relations. South Africa attaches importance to strengthening its relations with the Caribbean and developing common positions on global issues such as access to the markets of the industrial North, reform of international institutions and promoting the development agenda and protection of small island states.

The Caribbean Community

The Caribbean Community was established in 1973. The organisation comprises 15 Caribbean nations and dependencies. The community's main purposes are to promote economic integration and cooperation among its members to ensure that the benefits of integration are equitably shared and to coordinate foreign policy. South Africa enjoys cordial relations with the countries of the Caribbean Community and recognises that the majority of inhabitants in this region are of African descent with historical

and cultural links to the African continent.

In this regard, South Africa is committed to strengthening relations with the African Diaspora in line with a similar commitment by the AU that is guided by Pan-African solidarity and South-South cooperation. South Africa was granted formal Observer Status to the Caribbean Community in February 2014. South Africa and the Caribbean Community continue to work together in multilateral forums.

South Africa supports the Caribbean-led push (through CARICOM) for reparatory justice reparations for slavery and colonialism. Both regions are part of the Global South coalition pushing for climate adaptation financing, especially for loss and damage. There is also growing cooperation through university partnerships, heritage programmes, and Pan-African festivals.

Uruguay

South Africa and Uruguay have solid bilateral relations that are conducted through political consultations at Deputy Ministerial level. The priority areas for cooperation are agribusiness, mineral resources and energy (especially renewable energy), education (higher [STEM] and basic), sport, software development, and trade and investment.

Chile

South Africa and Chile enjoy sound bilateral relations, which are conducted through a Joint Consultative Mechanism at Deputy Ministerial Level. South Africa is Chile's largest trading partner in Africa and is a significant investor in the country's mining sector, with major South African mining houses such as Anglo American and Gold Fields having invested in the Chilean market. The biggest area of trade between South Africa and Chile is capital goods for mining and mining technology and services. Other important areas of cooperation are agribusiness, fisheries and aquaculture, education, science and innovation, Antarctic cooperation, trade and investment, science and innovation (including astronomy), and sport.

Central America and the Andean region The Andean Community

The Andean Community is composed of Bolivia, Colombia,

Ecuador, and Peru and they have a Free Trade Agreement with the objective of creating a customs union. Cooperation with Latin American countries is in line with South Africa's foreign policy objective of South-South cooperation to strengthen social and economic relations and technical cooperation to advance mutual development priorities.

With regard to South Africa's industrialisation imperatives, the Latin American region is rich in mineral resources, and countries such as Chile, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia have expressed a strong interest in working with South Africa to strengthen trade, investment and technical cooperation in mining.

Ecuador

The bilateral relationship between South Africa and Ecuador remains cordial and is conducted through a Political Consultation Mechanism. The main areas of cooperation are environment, fisheries, defence industry, mineral resources and energy, science and innovation, and trade.

Paraguay

South Africa and Paraguay have concluded the MoU on Political Consultations, an important step forward in the bilateral relations. The MoU will serve as a framework for the development and consolidation of cooperation at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels.

Peru

Bilateral relations between South Africa and Peru are anchored through an MoU on the Establishment of Political Consultations. The areas of cooperation include mining, agriculture, defence, aqua-culture and fisheries, science and technology, tourism, and trade and investment.

South Africa is a large investor in Peru. Major South African mining companies in Peru include Goldfields Ltd, Anglo-American South Africa Ltd, and Dust-a-Side Pty (Ltd), among others. South African mining investments in Peru have significantly facilitated market opportunities for capital and mining equipment and mining services in Peru. Agro-processing, aquaculture, arts and culture, trade and investment, and sport are important areas for cooperation.

Venezuela

South Africa-Venezuela relations are underpinned by historic ties of solidarity. South Africa continues to pursue relations with Venezuela, especially in the context of South-South cooperation through NAM, G77 plus China, and the UN. Priority areas for cooperation are agribusiness, arts and culture, energy (oil and gas), mining, and pharmaceuticals. In April 2025, the inaugural session of the Consultative Mechanism that the two countries established in 2009 was launched at Deputy Ministerial level.

Colombia

South Africa has cordial and growing bilateral relations with Colombia. There is a steady and significant growth of two-way investments between the two countries, especially in mining and agribusiness. Colombia has the second-largest population of Afro-descendants in Latin America after Brazil, and close people-to-people relations are forged. The priority areas for cooperation are agribusiness, arts and culture, the defence industry, education, energy, the environment, science and technology, trade and investment, and sport. In July 2025, the Political Consultations Mechanism was launched at Deputy Ministerial level.

Cuba

South Africa's solidarity with Cuba is one of the most enduring and meaningful international relationships in its post-apartheid foreign policy. Rooted in a shared anti-colonial struggle and revolutionary solidarity, this bond is political, historical, and deeply symbolic. The deep and multifaceted relations between South Africa and Cuba are anchored through the Joint Consultative Mechanism (JCM). The two countries have firm bilateral cooperation and partnership with around fifteen (15) bilateral agreements, at the apex of which is the Nelson Mandela-Fidel Castro Health Programme. After health, the most active sectors of cooperation remain basic education, science and technology; water resources; and public works in which Cuban doctors, engineers, teachers and technical experts are deployed across several provinces.

Both countries are part of the Global South and collaborate

in forums like the G77+ China, BRICS+, and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The Dominican Republic

South Africa and the Dominican Republic enjoy cordial diplomatic relations established in May 2002. The Dominican Republic has a free-market economy and benefits from strong trade links with the Caribbean region as well as the US. The main economic drivers are construction, manufacturing and tourism.

The Dominican Republic is an attractive trading partner for South Africa in the Caribbean owing to the country's advanced and open economy. The priority areas for cooperation with the Dominican Republic are arts and culture, mining, energy, tourism, and sport.

Guyana

Prior to the dawn of freedom and democracy in 1994, Guyana was one of the strong supporters of South Africa's freedom struggle. South Africa and Guyana enjoy cordial bilateral relations established on 4 November 1994. One of the largest offshore oil discoveries in Guyana recently

presents opportunities for trade, investment and technical cooperation in the Guyanese oil industry and infrastructure development.

Jamaica

South Africa and Jamaica have strong historical and political ties; the latter having played an important role in supporting South Africa in the struggle against apartheid. Bilateral relations and sectorial cooperation with Jamaica were strengthened during the second Political Consultations at senior officials' level that took place on 24 October 2024.

Trinidad and Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago is viewed as an important bilateral partner in the Caribbean region. The large African diaspora in Trinidad and Tobago forms a strong link with Africa and serves as a further catalyst for ongoing cooperation between the respective regions. Trinidad and Tobago's economy is propelled through a well-developed hydrocarbons sector that presents opportunities for trade, investment and technical cooperation in the oil sector.

