



OFFICIAL GUIDE TO SOUTH AFRICA 2019/20

**INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS**

In terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, the President is ultimately responsible for the foreign policy and international relations of South Africa. As such, it is the President's prerogative to appoint heads of mission, receive foreign heads of mission, conduct state-to-state relations, and negotiate and sign all international agreements.

International agreements that are not of a technical, administrative or executive nature will only bind the country after being approved by Parliament, 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's overall mandate is to work for the realisation of South Africa's foreign policy objectives by:

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

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation's (DIRCO) 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.

Chapter 7 of the National Development Plan (NDP) details a vision for facilitating South Africa's broad-based socioeconomic 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.

Over the medium term, the DIRCO aims to give effect to these guiding policies by focusing on strengthening the African Agenda and regional integration; consolidating global economic, political and social relations; and developing and managing state-owned properties in foreign missions. The work of the department is primarily realised through the 125 diplomatic missions in 108 countries in which South Africa has representation.

Strengthening the African Agenda and regional integration

The department will continue to play an active role in the structures and processes of the African Union (AU) for the advancement of peace, security and conflict prevention in Africa. South Africa has been nominated to chair the AU in 2020 with a mandate to ensure that there are linkages between development, good governance, peace and stability.

As chair, the department will focus on promoting economic development, trade and investment by seeking ways to foster inclusive growth and sustainable development; enhancing peace and security efforts in Africa; and supporting good governance through the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the AU structure responsible for driving the union's agenda of good governance.

Consolidating global economic, political and social relations

The DIRCO will continue to focus on consolidating economic, political and social relations through structured bilateral mechanisms, high-level engagements and the creation of country-specific strategies to promote national priorities.

South Africa will continue to accelerate its economic diplomacy and grow its regional, continental and global trade and investment partnerships through engagements and activities undertaken by South African missions abroad to promote the country's economic interests, investment opportunities, tourism, skills development and cultural exchange.

Examples of this include foreign missions holding tourism promotion events and meetings to boost South African tourism and promote South Africa as a destination of choice for business and leisure.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which was officially launched at the 12th Extraordinary Summit of the AU in Niamey, Niger on 7 July 2019, responds to the aspirations of Agenda 2063, which is underpinned by the AU's vision to build an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa that is a dynamic force in the international arena.

AfCFTA is one of the flagship projects of the AU's Agenda 2063, and it will help the continent to address challenges of youth unemployment, skills development, industrialisation, women empowerment and infrastructure development.

It will create a single super market for goods and services, which will strengthen trade and inter-African investment. The AfCFTA paves the way for nations to benefit from inter-regional trade within the African continent.

Developing and managing state-owned properties in foreign missions

Over the medium term, the department will seek to reduce its rental portfolio and operational costs associated with the rental of more than 1 000 properties abroad; and ensure the longevity of its 127 state-owned properties by conducting essential maintenance, repairs and renovations.

As such, the department will focus on developing vacant state-owned land in Luanda (Angola), New Delhi (India) and Gaborone (Botswana); and renovating state-owned properties in Mbabane (Eswatini), the Hague (Netherlands), Windhoek and Walvis Bay (Namibia), and Brasilia (Brazil).

This is expected to lead to a decrease in expenditure on leases. The department also plans to assess the conditions of its properties in Europe that are more than 50 years old,

particularly in London (England), Paris (France), Vienna (Austria), Rome (Italy), Brussels (Belgium), Madrid (Spain) and Copenhagen (Denmark) to inform decisions on their future holding and use.

Foreign policy

South Africa's foreign policy outlook is based on its commitment to the values and ideals of Pan-Africanism, solidarity with people of the South and the need to cooperate with all peace-loving people across the globe in pursuit of shared prosperity and a just, equitable and rules-based international order.

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

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

- **Africa** embraces relevant national priorities by strengthening bilateral cooperation with countries in Africa, particularly through focusing on increasing exports of South African goods and services, foreign direct investment (FDI) with technology transfers into value adding industries and mineral beneficiation, and inbound tourism and the skills base. South Africa has foreign representation in 47 diplomatic missions in Africa.
- **Asia and Middle East** embrace relevant national priorities by strengthening bilateral cooperation with countries in Asia and the Middle East, particularly through focusing on increasing exports of South African goods and services, FDI with technology transfers into value adding industries and mineral beneficiation, and inbound tourism and the skills base. South Africa has foreign representation in 32 diplomatic missions in Asia and the Middle East.
- **Americas and Caribbean** embrace relevant national priorities by strengthening bilateral cooperation with countries in the Americas and Caribbean, particularly through focusing on increasing exports of South African goods and services, FDI with technology transfers into value adding industries and mineral beneficiation, and inbound tourism and the skills base. South Africa has foreign representation in 16 diplomatic missions in the Americas and Caribbean.
- **Europe** embraces relevant national priorities by strengthening bilateral cooperation with countries in Europe, particularly through focusing on increasing exports of South African goods and services, FDI with technology transfers into value adding industries and mineral beneficiation, and inbound tourism and the skills base. South Africa has foreign representation in 28 diplomatic missions in Europe.

Strengthening regional integration and the African Agenda

The DIRCO uses the NDP as an overarching vision for guiding South Africa's foreign policy and international relations programme. Chapter 7 of the NDP emphasises the importance of regional integration, specifically in the Southern African Development Community, which is South Africa's largest trade partner in Africa.

The country has also been unrelenting in relation to fostering peace as well as postconflict reconstruction and development in countries like the Democratic Republic of

Congo, Burundi and South Sudan. In essence, whether involved within the UN and/or its specialised agencies or, in bodies like the Group of Twenty (G20), G77, India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) or Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), South Africa steadfastly advances the African Agenda.

The country wholly identifies with the aspirations of Agenda 2063 of the AU and its vision of 'an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena'. South Africa and its fortunes are inextricably linked to those of the continent. Accordingly, South Africa is fully behind the African Agenda 2063 and its Action Plan.

Disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control

A primary goal of South Africa's policy on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control includes reinforcing and promoting the country as a responsible producer, possessor and trader of defence-related products and advanced technologies. In this regard, the 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 Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the importance of non-proliferation is promoted, taking into account that export controls should not become the means whereby developing countries are denied access to advanced technologies required for their development.

South Africa has since submitted its Instrument of Ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) to the UN in New York. The TPNW seeks to establish an international norm, delegitimising and stigmatising the possession of nuclear weapons. It aims to contribute towards achieving the objective set out in the very first resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1946 to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction.

It 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.

African Union

The AU is a continental body consisting of the 55 member states that make up the countries of the African Continent. It was officially launched in Durban in 2002 as a successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). At the 2019 AU Summit, South Africa was elected to chair the AU in 2020.

In February 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa assumed the Chairship for the AU during the first day of the 33rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

South Africa was elected in February 2019 as the incoming chair of the AU. The AU, then, agreed that the assumption of the rotational Chairship shall take place on the occasion of the 33rd Ordinary Session.

South Africa first chaired the African Union 18 years ago in 2002, at the seminal session of the official launch of the Union in Durban, South Africa. President Ramaphosa took over the Chairship of the AU from President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Convened under the theme “Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for African’s Development”, South Africa’s 2020 Chairship of the AU coincides with its Chairship of the APRM and the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change.

Africa Day

Africa Day is celebrated annually on 25 May within the African continent to mark the formation of the OAU on 25 May 1963 and the AU in 2002, as well as chart the progress made by the continent since then to advance democracy, peace, stability and socio-economic development.

South Africa marked Africa Month 2020 under the theme “Silencing The Guns by 2020: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa’s Development and Intensifying the Fight Against Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic”.

New Partnership for Africa’s Development

NEPAD is a socio-economic flagship programme of the AU. NEPAD’s four primary objectives are to eradicate poverty, promote sustainable growth and development, integrate Africa in the world economy and accelerate the empowerment of women. NEPAD facilitates and coordinates the development of continent-wide programmes and projects, mobilises resources and engages the global community, Regional Economic Communities and member states in the implementation of these programmes and projects.

International bodies

Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa

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

India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA)

The IBSA Dialogue Forum brings together three large pluralistic, multicultural and multiracial societies from three continents as a purely South-South grouping of like-minded countries committed to inclusive sustainable development, in pursuit of the well-being of their peoples and those of the developing world.

The principles, norms and values underpinning the IBSA Dialogue Forum are participatory democracy, respect for human rights, the Rule of Law and the strengthening of multilateralism.

UN General Assembly

Established in 1945 under the Charter of the UN, the UNGA occupies a central position as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN. Comprised of all 193 members of the UN, it provides a unique forum for multilateral discussion of the full spectrum of international issues covered by the Charter. It also plays a significant role in the process of standard-setting and the codification of international law. The UNGA meets from September to December each year.

UN Security Council (UNSC)

The UNSC has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has 15 members, and each member has one vote. Under the Charter of the UN, all member states are obligated to comply with UNSC decisions.

The UNSC takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement. In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security.

South Africa was elected to serve on the UNSC from January 2019 to December 2020. This is South Africa's third term on the UNSC, having previously served in 2007 to 2008 and 2011 to 2012.

South Africa's tenure on the UNSC was dedicated to the legacy of former President Nelson Mandela and his commitment to peace. South Africa also used its experience in the prioritisation of diplomacy, mediation, the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict resolution and peacebuilding through inclusive dialogue and negotiations with the ultimate aim of supporting parties to achieve sustainable peace, national unity and reconciliation.

It also actively contributed to achieving a Africa at peace by 2063 by pursuing and promoting Africa's goal of "Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020", but also promoting and achieving peace in all the regions of the world. In continuing its legacy from the two previous terms on the UNSC, South Africa advocated for closer cooperation between the UNSC and the AU Peace and Security Council.

Commonwealth

The modern Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 53 independent member countries. Membership is diverse and includes both developed and developing countries in Africa, Asia, the Americas, the Caribbean, Europe and the South Pacific.

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

Non-Aligned Movement

The NAM, consisting of 120 members, is the largest political grouping of countries outside the UN, making it an important lobby group of developing countries in global affairs. South Africa formally joined the movement in 1994 and has played a leading role in NAM deliberations and meetings ever since.

In May 2020, President Ramaphosa participated in a virtual Summit of the NAM entitled: "United against COVID-19".

Group of Twenty

South Africa has been a permanent member of the G20 since its inception in 1999 following the Asian financial crises. The G20 was established to increase multilateral cooperation for the recovery of the global economy, to bring stability to the global financial system, to promote long-term sustainable growth and to strengthen global economic governance.

The G20 economies account for 85% of the global Gross Domestic Product, 80% of world trade and two-thirds of the world's population.

South Africa also works together closely with the following international bodies and organisations to ensure that it benefits from trade, investment, industrialisation and innovation to address the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment, as espoused in the NDP:

- World Trade Organisation.
- World Economic Forum.
- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.
- International Labour Organisation.
- World Intellectual Property Organisation.

World Health Organisation (WHO)

South Africa is one of the 194 member states that constitute the WHO. The country takes part in the annual World Health Assembly (WHA), which is the WHO's supreme decision-making body. South Africa also participates in the WHO's annual Regional Committee for Africa, which reflects on the decisions taken at the WHA, particularly those relevant to the continent.

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

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

In April 2020, President Ramaphosa participated in the WHO virtual launch of a global collaboration to accelerate the development, production and equitable global access to new COVID-19 essential health technologies.

New Development Bank (NDB)

The NDB was established in 2014 to strengthen cooperation among the BRICS group of countries, and complements the efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global development.

By the end of December 2019, the bank had approved almost US\$2 billion to fund South Africa's development initiatives in the energy, transport and logistics sectors. In addition, an estimated US\$1.5 billion per year is available for funding South Africa's infrastructure build programme over the medium term.

As at 17 January 2020, South Africa had made capital contributions to the bank amounting to R18.5 billion, with further capital contributions amounting to R9.2 billion expected over the medium term.