



International Relations and Cooperation



The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) focuses, among other things, on consolidating South Africa's global economic, political and social relations, strengthening the African Agenda and regional integration.

South Africa continues to engage with strategic formations of the North, while advancing mutually beneficial South-South cooperation through structured bilateral mechanisms and multilateral agreements.

The department also planned to use the United States' African Growth and Opportunity Act as a platform for industrialisation and regional integration, and relations with the European Union (EU) on the establishment of joint infrastructure projects were at the advanced stages by mid-2016.

These engagements are complementary with ongoing participation in United Nations (UN) structures and multilateral organisations and forums. The department will strengthen and consolidate South-South relations, reflecting the shift in the balance of the global distribution of power and the increasing influence of emerging economies in the multilateral trading system.

The department continues to use its membership and engagements with groupings of the South, such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), the Group of 77, the People's Republic of China (PRC), and the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS), to advance South Africa's foreign policy objectives.

The adoption of the strategy for the BRICS economic partnership was expected to facilitate trade and investment, enhance market access opportunities and facilitate market interlinkages between the countries. The BRICS' New Development Bank is expected to serve as an instrument for financing infrastructure investment and sustainable development projects in the BRICS and other developing countries and emerging market economies.

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 strategic objectives are to:

- protect and promote South African national interests and values through bilateral and multilateral interactions
- conduct and coordinate South Africa's international relations and promote its foreign policy objectives
- monitor international developments and advise government on foreign policy and related domestic matters
- contribute to the formulation of international law and enhance respect for its provisions
- promote multilateralism to secure a rules-based international system
- maintain a modern, effective department driven to pursue excellence provide a world-class and uniquely South African state protocol service.

African Union (AU)

South Africa's future is inherently linked to that of the rest of the African continent. The DIRCO continues to support regional and continental processes, responding to and resolving crises, strengthening regional integration, contributing to an enabling trade environment, increasing intra-Africa trade, and championing sustainable development and opportunities. Strengthening the AU and its structures is a key priority for deepening continental integration.



The department continues to make contributions to: operationalising the tripartite agreement between South Africa, Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in support of the peace and security framework agreement for the Great Lakes region; deploying the Southern African Development Community (SADC) intervention brigade; and, working with the Department of Defence, operationalising the AU Peace and Security Architecture and the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises, which is the multinational African interventionist standby force set up in November 2013.

The AU's Agenda 2063, under the theme "The Africa We Want", seeks to chart a new development trajectory for Africa towards self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity. The first 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063 identifies the key outcomes by 2023. The DIRCO will be involved in rationalising regional economic communities towards a Continental Free Trade Area, revitalising the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) on infrastructure development, and promoting good governance systems through the African Peer Review Mechanism.

Among others, Agenda 2063 aspires to a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development. It also seeks an integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance.

The AU Agenda includes the commitments to support railway and road infrastructure, power generation and distribution networks, industrial and technology parks and human resources development,

South Africa hosted the 25th AU Summit in Johannesburg from 7 to 15 June 2015. The primary objective of the summit was to review progress made in the attainment of continental objectives, with a particular focus on the 2015 theme, the “Year of Women Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063”. The last time South Africa hosted this important gathering was in 2002 in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, where the then Organisation of African Unity was transformed into the AU.

Africa Day

The 2015 Africa Day celebrations under the theme: “We are Africa – Opening the doors of learning and culture from Cape to Cairo”, were held in Mamelodi, east of Pretoria, on 24 May 2015.

The annual Africa Day is a platform to promote unity amongst African nations and foreign nationals residing in South Africa. The unity of the continent is driven through the AU’s programmes to attain its vision as articulated in the Agenda 2063. The continent, guided by its citizens, strives for an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa.

Africa Day also presents an opportunity for South Africans to reconnect and recommit themselves in support of all government interventions to develop a better Africa and a better world.

The inaugural South African Migrants Awards, which honour outstanding migrants in South Africa and South Africans working in African countries who embody the spirit of Ubuntu and are dedicated to the development of the African continent, took place in May 2015. One of the categories recognises a South African community that has succeeded in integrating foreign nationals within itself and live together peacefully.

New Partnership for Africa’s Development

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

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

- agriculture and food security
- climate change and national resource management
- regional integration and infrastructure

- human development
- economic and corporate governance
- cross-cutting issues, including gender, capacity development and information and communication technology (ICT).

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

South Africa and the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

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

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

South Africa and Africa

Africa has taken steps to find African solutions to end conflicts and instability.



The continent has committed to Silencing the Guns in the continent by 2020, in alignment with commitments to Agenda 2063.

The African Standby Force and its Rapid Deployment Capability was expected to respond quickly in conflict situations to save lives and bring stability.

Africa is the second fastest growing region in the world after Asia, growing steadily at a rate of 5% per year over most of the last decade.

This growth has been attributed to the increasingly sound macro-economic environment with low government debt, rising domestic resource mobilisation and reduced inflation rates. President Zuma attended the 40th Anniversary of the Independence of Angola in November 2015.

South Africa increased its presence on the continent from seven diplomatic and consular missions in 1994 to 47 in 2015. The country's trade on the continent increased 39 times from R11,4 billion in 1994 to R385 billion in 2015.

North Africa and The Horn

This region comprises 14 countries, of which nine are defined as North Africa and five as Horn of Africa. These countries stretch from Mauritania in the West through to Somalia in the East.

South African enjoys a special relationship with the countries of the region. This is epitomised by joint commissions held annually with three countries at Ministerial level (Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia), and an annual Binational Commission at Presidential level with Algeria. North African countries represent the largest economies in Africa apart from South Africa and Nigeria.

Asia and Australasia

The PRC has become Africa's largest trade partner, and Africa is now one of the PRC's major import sources and fourth largest investment destination.

The Johannesburg Summit and the 6th Ministerial Conference of the FOCAC were held in Johannesburg from 3 to 5 December 2015. Heads of State and Government, Heads of Delegation, the Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission and Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Ministers in charge of economic cooperation from China and 50 African countries attended the summit and ministerial conference respectively. The theme of the summit, which took place in Africa for the first time, was: "Africa-China Progressing Together: Win-Win Cooperation for Common Development".

The PRC announced 10 priority programmes aimed at addressing three of the primary bottlenecks hindering Africa's development, namely the lack of infrastructure, skilled personnel and funding.

Interventions to address these bottlenecks include industrialisation; agricultural modernisation; infrastructure; finance; green development; trade and investment facilitation; poverty eradication and people's well-being, public health; people-to-people and cultural exchanges, and peace and security.

China pledged US\$60 billion, of which South Africa will receive US\$10 billion, for Africa's infrastructure, industrialisation and skills development. The forum is one of the most strategic partnerships between Africa and its development partners.

The 7th Ministerial Conference of FOCAC will be held in the PRC in 2018.

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

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

The Middle East

South Africa's relationship with the Arab States remains cordial, with ongoing engagements at various political and economic levels that are anchored by the strategic objective of strengthening South-South relations.

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

The Americas

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

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

The AGOA was re-authorised in June 2015 for 10 years until 2025, with South Africa's inclusion. This will secure continued market access for South African products, including in value-added generating sectors such as agriculture and automobiles.

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

The USA is an important supporter of South Africa's domestic priorities and has made an effort to align its assis-

tance programmes and projects with these. The USA is a major source of official development assistance (ODA) to South Africa, contributing approximately US\$541 million in ODA per year.

The Caribbean

South Africa enjoys cordial relations with the countries of the Caribbean. The majority of inhabitants of the Caribbean are of African descent and have strong historical and cultural links to the continent.

South Africa's endeavour in conjunction with the AU and Caricom to strengthen cooperation between Africa and the African Diaspora in the Caribbean has given added impetus to bilateral and multilateral relations.

South Africa attaches importance to strengthening its relations with the Caribbean and developing common positions on global issues such as access to the markets of the industrial north, reform of international institutions and promoting the development agenda and protection of small island states.

Europe

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

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

The EU is South Africa's main development assistance partner. The third South Africa-EU dialogue took place on 11 December 2015 in Pretoria. Among other things, the parties agreed to work in partnership and organise joint side events in areas of mutual concern and interest.

The 4th South Africa-Ireland Partnership took place in Ireland-Dublin on 26 November 2015. The partnership is the structured mechanism to manage and monitor bilateral relations between the two countries. In 2015, South African exports to the EU amounted to more than R216 billion, of which half were manufactured goods.

Benelux countries

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

There has been important trilateral cooperation with the Netherlands and Belgium in the past in support of peace and security in Africa, inter alia on capacity building in the Great



Lakes Region. Such trilateral cooperation can be further expanded in the future.

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

South Africa participated in the 14th Session of the Assembly of States Parties of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which took place in The Hague Kingdom of the Netherlands from 18 to 26 November 2015.

The Assembly of States Parties is the management oversight and legislative body of the ICC.

German-speaking countries

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

Nordic countries

South Africa enjoys good relations with all the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Flowing from the strong grassroots support in these countries for democratisation in South Africa, relations have been established in virtually every field at both public and



official levels. The scope of Nordic development cooperation is broad and has benefited civil society and government.

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

International bodies

Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa

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

India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA)

IBSA is a coalition of the south that has facilitated dialogue at a level previously unimaginable. Development cooperation, along with the views on tackling socio-economic distress and trading among the three nations distinguishes IBSA from BRICS. All the IBSA members are democracies and can discuss issues which cannot be discussed in BRICS summits.

The forum provides the three countries with a platform to engage in discussions for cooperation in fields such as agriculture, trade, culture and defence. South Africa participated in the India-Africa Summit held in New Delhi, India, from 26 to 30 October 2015.

United Nations

The year 2015 marked the 70th Anniversary of the formation of the UN and the deadline for the UN Millennium Development Goals.

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

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

After being suspended in 1974, owing to international opposition to the policy of apartheid, South Africa was readmitted to the UN in 1994 following its transition to democracy. South Africa participated in the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 11th Session of the Conference of Parties serving as the Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol held from 30 November to 11 December 2015 in Paris, France.

In line with South Africa's national interest as an African and developing country that will require post-2020 support, South Africa continues to defend the UNFCCC's core principles of equity and differentiation.

Commonwealth

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

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

Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane led the South African delegation at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM 2015) held in Malta from 25-29 November 2015 under the theme: "The Commonwealth – Adding Global Value".

CHOGM 2015 took place in the context of several prominent international developments and events, namely the commemoration on the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the establishment of the UN.

Non-Aligned Movement

The NAM, with its 120 member states, is the largest political grouping of countries outside the UN, making it an important lobby group of developing countries in global affairs.

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

Group of Twenty (G20)

South Africa is a member of the G20, which consists of 19 countries, including the EU. G20 members have been meeting regularly since 1999 to discuss global economic policy coordination.

The G20 was conceptualised to stabilise and strengthen the global economy, by bringing together the major advanced and emerging market economies. These economies together represent around 85% of global GDP, 80% of global trade and two-thirds of the world's population.

South Africa's participation in the G20 is aimed at advancing the national agenda to create a better South Africa and contribute to a better and safer Africa and a better world.

The country's participation in the G20 is to provide strategic foresight in establishing an economic and international policy platform that will drive and negotiate the best possible outcomes for South Africa, Africa and the developing world.

South Africa participated in the G20 Leaders Summit in Antalya, Turkey from 15 to 16 November 2015. The theme of the summit was "Inclusiveness, Investment and Implementation".

World Health Organisation (WHO)

South Africa is a member of the WHO, whose goal is to build a better, healthier future for people all over the world.

New Development Bank (NDB)

The BRICS NDB opened its headquarters in Shanghai, China, on 21 July 2015, together with its regional office in South Africa, the African Regional Centre, and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement, constitute the first formal BRICS financial institutions.

The purpose of the NDB is to mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging market economies, and developing countries to complement the existing efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global growth and development.