



# Recommendations: Improving South Africa's Image in the World

## THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS:

### Communicating Internationally

The development of a more effective communications strategy at the international level depends heavily on the day-to-day efforts of the overseas missions and South African representatives from other departments engaged in international work. We believe that there is scope for major improvements in the area which could result from better deployment of existing resources.

These cannot be achieved by the Department of Foreign Affairs alone. However, it is necessary, given the specialised nature of the international community, and the need for co-ordination within government as a whole, that the leadership in this area be with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

It is important that the DFA give higher priority to the management and delivery of information, and the improvement of its overall communications strategy. This should be reflected in a reorganisation of the department, within the framework of the GCIS. The need for co-ordination and rationalisation of resources is paramount, and the planning and management of this function must be centralised if it is to succeed.

The Task Group's international visits, and the views of representatives, underlined the need for missions to be allowed to develop locally tuned information and marketing campaigns. This local autonomy will only be possible if the department upgrades communication and information and develops the capacity to deliver a first-class information system to missions on a daily basis. This should provide not only crude information on government decisions, but the background and motivations for these. The proposed new system of government-wide communications will be vital for this, but the Communications personnel in the DFA will need to edit and adapt material for missions.

The Department should work within the GCIS so as to link and assist with the government home page, and so establish an international data base on South Africa available through the Internet system. This will give missions access to information and also enable them to elicit speedy responses to specific enquiries.

It is also recommended that standard budgets be set for missions to allow them to produce materials for local consumption, and arrange special events. A departmental-wide norm should be established to set these budgets, together with guidelines for appropriate expenditure.

The lack of co-ordination of the activities of different levels of government, and of individual departments within the national government is a source of real concern. Several Provincial representatives made clear their determination to "do their own thing" in marketing their provinces, and this issue of provincial autonomy is a delicate one.

There is a clear need for national, provincial and local governments to co-ordinate their individual marketing operations to avoid clashing.

There is also a need for greater co-ordination with agencies or departments that have major international responsibilities - Trade and Industry, Environment and Tourism, SATOUR and Finance are the most obvious. The current foreign policy document released in July should address the integrated marketing of South Africa.

It therefore recommended that:

**Recommendation 59**

DFA lead an integrated information system for missions through upgrading overall communications within the department

**Recommendation 60**

There be greater integration between Trade and Industry, Environment and Tourism, SATOUR and other departments /bodies with international representation to market South Africa.

**Recommendation 61**

DTI/DFA/SATOUR and others should work with the CSA to set up an international information service on South Africa, via Internet and other means.

**Recommendation 62**

Ministers be apprised of the importance of working through DFA for overseas visits, and that a formal approval process for overseas travel be established by the Presidency.

**Recommendation 63**

A co-operative mechanism be created to co-ordinate the overseas visits of provincial government representatives and statutory bodies. Utilisation of this mechanism should be a requirement if provinces are to obtain the practical involvement and support of SA missions abroad.

It was also noted that there is a need in large strategic missions for attachés who are specialists, especially in communications.