

# South African Foreign Policy

## DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

Department of Foreign Affairs

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### **A. INTRODUCTION**

#### **1. DRAFTING AND EDITING PROCEDURE**

This discussion document is a further step in the process of policy review which began in 1993. Paragraphs 3.1 and 3.4 describe the initial steps taken by the Department of Foreign Affairs to review policies with the object of formulating the foreign policy of the democratic Government.

Policy workshops were held within the Department under the chairmanship of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and the 1994 and 1995 Foreign Affairs Parliamentary Budget Debates were used to expand and formulate updated policy papers on specific issues and on general policy directions. Many institutions, organisations and persons were consulted. The Portfolio Committee for Foreign Affairs of the National Assembly and the Portfolio Committee on Trade and Industry, Public Enterprises and Foreign Affairs of the Senate, were among the bodies that were actively engaged in the discussions.

During this period the Department of Foreign Affairs proposed the creation of a South African Council on Foreign Relations. Informal discussions on the role and organisation of an advisory body of this kind were held with prominent persons and organisations. This process of consultation is still expanding.

A Heads of Mission Conference held in September 1995 played an important role in giving the process further momentum. Internal Departmental consultations and preparatory work have since taken place in order to proceed with the drafting of this discussion document. The process took place in parallel with pressing Departmental activities and the rationalisation of the new Department, in itself a comprehensive and demanding undertaking.

This discussion document will be made available to interested parties for written comments and proposals. These should be sent to the Office of the Director-General of Foreign Affairs in Pretoria or in Cape Town. It is intended to arrange

meetings with the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee to discuss the document and new proposals, to be included in the revised draft.

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## **2. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this discussion document is not to formulate fine-tuned foreign policy for the democratic government of South Africa. Neither is it a comprehensive "manual" on the complexities and all the dimensions of foreign policy and South Africa's international relations.

As a working document, the paper provides an overview of the many components of international relations, objectives and priorities which warrant the attention of policy makers and the policy dimensions which Government and all its extensions need to consider.

The proposal is that South Africa's policy initiatives should be modest and not overly ambitious. A reactive policy is inappropriate and the challenge is therefore to shape a pro-active policy in keeping with South Africa's resources and commensurate with its international position. Economic

imperatives and political realities need to be balanced. The risks of oversimplification and dramatisation should not be ignored.

It is hoped that commentators and other interested parties will formulate constructive suggestions and criticisms which can be used by the Ministry and the Department of Foreign Affairs to draft a consensual document for submission to Parliament as a White Paper on South African foreign policy.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1. South Africa's democratisation process**

During the pre-1994 election period when constitutional negotiations were under way, South Africa's foreign policy and international relations were already undergoing a transition.

During the negotiations on the Terms of Reference of the Transitional Executive Council (TEC), the Department of Foreign Affairs formulated the terms of reference of the Sub-council on Foreign Affairs in consultation with the negotiating parties. These were described as follows in the TEC Act:

"Powers and duties in regard to foreign affairs"

The Council shall, for the purpose of attaining its objects, through its Sub-council on Foreign Affairs, in regard to foreign policy liaise, monitor, make recommendations and, where it is considered necessary, assist with a view to -

- (a) achieving progressively the broadest possible consensus on matters affecting South Africa's international interests, particularly its long-term interests;
- (b) securing appropriate agreements with the international community regarding the contribution that community could make to the peaceful transition to democracy in South Africa;
- (c) in consultation with the Subcouncil on Finance,

securing such international assistance as the Subcouncil considers necessary in order to address the socio-economic needs of the people as a whole and not to serve the interests of one or other political party;

(d) ensuring that any foreign policy initiative benefits the country as a whole and not one or other political party; and

(e) promoting such international relations, including trade, finance, culture and sport relations, as in the opinion of the Subcouncil will benefit the country as a whole."

The Subcouncil therefore became actively and effectively involved in the conduct of South Africa's international relations, as regards not only policy matters but also the creation of the new Department of Foreign Affairs, budgetary matters, senior personnel appointments, the opening of new missions abroad and other management matters of medium or long term importance.

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The Subcouncil also participated in a series of policy planning conferences involving all South African ambassadors and other South African foreign representatives of major political organisations. In New York, Geneva, Brussels and Addis Ababa the conferences dealt with South Africa's multilateral interests and the role the country can play in international organisations. During conferences in Washington, Paris, Nairobi and Singapore, the Subcouncil reviewed South Africa's bilateral relations with all areas of the globe. The conferences formulated directives which the Department of Foreign Affairs and its representatives abroad used as policy and operational guidelines during the transition process. At the end of its term, the Subcouncil reported to the TEC and to the Government of National Unity and the preparatory work done by the Subcouncil was of service to the Minister and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in dealing immediately with priority matters after May 1994.

### **3.2. South African transition and the changing world situation.**

During the 1990 to 1994 period while South Africa was in a transition which led to democratic elections (the major focus in the country and an important development for foreign governments and other observers) the world as undergoing its own process of transition. The "bipolar world" of the Cold War era made way for a "multipolar world". New economic and regional groupings came into being, ranging from an expanded EU to NAFTA, Mercosur, ASEAN and a "new" SADC. Security issues were undergoing fundamental changes and peace-keeping, peace-making and other issues such as arms control required revision and redefinition.

President Mandela, in a speech at the UN World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen on 12 March 1995, described South Africa's position in these words:

"The irony of democratic South Africa's late entry into international affairs is that we can reap the fruits of a world redefining itself."

South Africa needs to establish a role for itself in the, as yet undefined, new world order.

### **3.3. The "New World Order"**

The "New World Order", about which much has been written and said, has several dimensions. While it relates to the international relations between sovereign countries or regions, its emergence reaches into the domestic life of individual countries. The democratisation of Eastern Europe and fundamental changes to NATO, the former Soviet Union, Germany and the EU have had an effect on budgets, employment, social welfare, economic growth and many other aspects of the life of the states involved. Contrary to initial expectations, these changes have not brought general peace and prosperity.

From an economic perspective, the end of the old East/West confrontation has brought increased competition for investment funds and markets but also opportunities to forge new economic

partnerships and blocs. The new World Trade Organisation (WTO) is expected to play a more active role in the promotion of global trade and the resolution of trade disputes than was the case under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). But there is the risk that the gap between the "haves" of the North and the "have-nots" of the South may grow and thus give rise to increased friction, particularly with regard to scarce resources.

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The words of President Nelson Mandela to the United States Congress on 6 October 1994 place this issue sharply into focus for South Africa:

"The new age will surely demand that democracy must also mean a life of plenty. As the images of life lived anywhere on our globe become available to all, so will the contrast between the rich and the poor, within and across frontiers and within and across the continents become a motive force impelling the deprived to demand a better life from the powers that be, whatever their location."

South Africa, as a small to medium-sized economic power with an open economy which is dependent on international trade, will have to play a role in the constructive advancement of the new "economic" world order towards a more equitable set of practices.

The political and security dimensions of the developing new order are equally challenging. While democratisation has brought human rights to many citizens all over the globe, the security risks have not decreased dramatically. There has been a shift from the previous risks of super-power nuclear confrontation to other forms of insecurity, often of a more regional or domestic nature. Extremist organisations are a threat to peace and revived nationalist movements in some areas threaten to spill over borders and trigger prolonged conflict. Ethnic conflicts, organised crime, drug trafficking, cross-border migration, refugees and continued arms proliferation are also elements which lead to



friction between neighbouring countries and a heightened state of tension.

The African continent, to whose future South Africa is inextricably linked, cannot escape the impact of the new world order. In the formulation and implementation of South Africa's foreign policy on the continent, particular attention will have to be given to measures to prevent conflict; the monitoring of events; becoming involved in concerted preventive diplomacy; and ways to influence the emergence of a constructive new order on the continent in a positive and significant manner.

The scope and purpose of this document preclude an exhaustive discussion of the current world situation but it is essential to consider South Africa's own policies, priorities and actions in the proper realistic context of the global situation. Minister Alfred Nzo, in September 1995, described the global environment and its impact on South Africa in the following terms:

"Our operational environment has changed dramatically. The end of the Cold War has created a new global situation in which our young democracy must find its feet. The new world order, if it exists at all, is fraught with uncertainties and insecurities. Ideological conflict has to a large extent been replaced by economic competition, the rules for which have not yet been fully agreed upon. The ground beneath our feet is not firm: It is volatile and unpredictable. Yet it is our primary task to secure and promote the sovereign integrity of the South African State, as well as the security and welfare of its citizens. These are the considerations which ultimately determine everything we do in the conduct of our foreign relations."

The discussion of South Africa's foreign policy and the practical aspects of international relations must be seen to take place against the background of the real world and the limitations it imposes on us.

### **3.4. South Africa's re-entry into the community of nations**

South Africa's return to the international community from 1994 onwards has made a significant contribution to the definition of the general direction of the country's foreign policy.

Shortly after the inauguration of the new government, South Africa:

- gained re-admission to the Commonwealth;
- resumed its seat in the United Nations;
- joined the G77
- joined the Organisation for Africa Unity (OAU);
- joined the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC);
- joined the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM);
- rejoined United Nations Specialised Agencies such as ILO, WHO, FAO, etc; and
- initiated negotiations with the European Union (EU).

Apart from the formal multilateral re-admission of South Africa to the world community, other inter-state and inter-government actions characterised that return. President Nelson Mandela paid formal state visits and many working Presidential visits to African, Asian and European states and to the United States of America. Similar visits by the Executive Deputy Presidents and the Minister of Foreign Affairs also took place.

The number of foreign state and official visits to South Africa also increased significantly.

Diplomatic relations have been concluded with 78 states since 1994, and South Africa's representative offices abroad have increased to 95 from less than 50 in the eighties.

On the economic front the world has opened to South African trade while foreign industrial, trade and financial involvement in South Africa is making a substantial contribution to the reconstruction of the country's economy.

A further element of South Africa's re-admission has been the involvement of foreign donors in the South African Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). Many governmental and nongovernmental donors have given or pledged development assistance for this major government objective. In the process, a further dimension has been added to South Africa's relations with the international community.

It could be claimed with confidence that South Africa's return to the international community as a respected "world citizen" has been welcomed widely and warmly the world over. It would be hazardous, however, to read more into the world's reaction than was intended: support and admiration for South Africa's peaceful democratisation. The world's reaction does not represent an indefinite continuation of the unique relationship or so-called honeymoon which South Africa has experienced since 1994. Many expectations about South Africa's international role have been created, but at the same time many demanding responsibilities have been assumed.

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Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, in his address to South African ambassadors during the September 1995 conference, formulated South Africa's position in the following terms:

"A distinguishing feature of South Africa is the sustained interest of the rest of the world in the future of South Africa. The depth of this interest is not only confined to government, but includes ordinary people and especially those who were involved in the anti-apartheid movement abroad. They have not disengaged themselves from South Africa since the elections. However, the strength and persistence of the international focus on South Africa puts the South African Government of National Unity under pressure to contribute positively and constructively to the global community.

The Southern African region expects a positive contribution from South Africa in terms of their own development. They expect that

we interact with them as a partner and ally, not as a regional super power, so that what we achieve, in terms of political, security and economic relations is balanced and mutually beneficial.

There are also expectations from Africa that South Africa should make a significant contribution towards peace and development on the continent. South Africa's problems cannot be worse than those experienced by other African countries. Despite our own limitations and problems, it is our objective to make a significant contribution to ensuring peace, democracy, respect for human rights and sustained development. These principles are fundamental to our foreign policy."

Another aspect which is a logical result of South Africa's return to normalised international affairs is that of competition. States are often allies and competitors at the same time. They may cooperate at the WTO to reduce tariffs in third countries but their industrialists may be fierce competitors for market access to the same country. In South Africa's case, we function as part of Southern Africa and Africa and therefore share an interest in accessing EU markets for export products. Yet there is also competition, which creates an element of rivalry which is healthy in a market-driven economy, but which must be handled with circumspection at inter-government level.

In the domestic arena, this situation emphasises the need for government, industry and labour, the "tripartite partners", to develop an integrated, harmonised approach to commitments, expectations, competition and other international complexities which affect South Africa's national interest.

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## **B. DEFINING SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN POLICY**

### **4. INTERNATIONAL TRENDS**

As South Africa develops foreign policy principles and practical foreign policy objectives and priorities which meet the needs of

the country and which are in keeping with the means of South Africa, both constant and variable influences from practical trends and events elsewhere can be expected. These will require responsible but flexible reactions from the government departments and others involved in the particular sphere.

It is impractical to discuss all the trends in detail, but an awareness of the phenomena and of the areas in which trends occur must be fostered in South Africa.

#### **4.1. Globalisation of the economy and bloc formation**

For a number of reasons the economies of individual countries have become "the economy of the world". Computer technology has increased the speed of interaction between producers and markets. The lowering of tariffs has removed many of the obstacles which previously affected the location of production facilities. The relative saturation of old markets has forced entrepreneurs to look at markets abroad in order to survive. Labour costs in industrialised markets have compelled foreign companies to relocate to, or to establish facilities in, countries where production costs are lower, in order to survive and prosper.

Regardless of the reasons for this trend, South Africa must take due cognizance of the implications of this important trend for foreign and economic policy, and formulate industrial, investment, labour and political policies which promote the national interest.

The formation of blocs is frequently linked to mutual economic interests. Latin American countries formed Mercosur in the Southern cone of South America while the USA, Canada and Mexico formed NAFTA. The European Union is now one of the oldest surviving and developed economic blocs. ASEAN and others followed. The strength of SADC as a future economic bloc must not be underestimated and must clearly feature prominently in the responses of South Africa and Southern Africa to bloc formation elsewhere. The objective, however, should not be to

force confrontation with other blocs but rather to develop mutually beneficial relationships.

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#### **4.2. Growing importance of multilateralism**

With the growing complexity of international interaction in almost every sphere of human life, the role of multilateral organisations in reconciling and harmonising the frequently conflicting interests of countries, will necessarily increase.

The growing power of the European Union, almost as a supra-state, and the concomitant reduction of the powers of national parliaments to legislate outside EU guidelines is an example of one type of multilateralism. Another more cooperative but not less powerful example is the growing power of a governmental international organisation such as the WTO to regulate, monitor and arbitrate disputes by agreement of the contracting states.

In another category, contracting parties may group together in a loose formation where voluntary adherence is the cornerstone and where the organisation has practically no powers. Yet, as the contracting states have a mutual desire, to cooperate and to benefit from the harmonisation of policies, there is a high degree of multilateral cooperation. The Commonwealth and the Non-Aligned Movement are examples.

A fundamental issue all these organisations have in common is that the national state considers it in its interests to cooperate and therefore voluntarily shapes its domestic policies to comply with the agreed international policy. Toxic waste management, civil aviation, shipping and disease control are only a few of the many areas involved. Of importance in the discussion of foreign policy and the subsequent consideration of policy options is the need to be conscious of a growing need to formulate domestic policies in accordance with international standards, international obligations, international trends and, in the process, still to promote South Africa's own well-being and prosperity. The

process is a complex one requiring frequent and substantive consultation among all the role players, both at home and abroad.

The Department of Foreign Affairs is, by definition, responsible for maintaining regular contact between South African government bodies and the international community. In the multilateral context, the Department and its missions abroad interact with other government representatives on a daily basis. As the natural extension of South Africa's technical departments abroad, the Department is well placed to act as a link between the South African departments and their counterparts abroad. The Department does not usurp the responsibilities of the technical departments but merely acts as an agent on behalf of and at the request of the relevant departments. Furthermore, the Department frequently informs nongovernmental organisations in South Africa on the nature and scope of their counterparts elsewhere, and is prepared to expand this role.

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#### **4.3. Regional and continental cooperation**

Elements of "threat and opportunity" are inherent in the trend towards bloc formation. When policies are formulated in South Africa, role players should consider the manner in which a particular issue presents an opportunity for South Africa to promote the interests of the SADC region or the African continent. Interaction with the international community in the area of agricultural research, for example, should automatically inspire South African role players to consider and pursue the benefits such actions could have for the Continent.

The reverse is also true. South Africa should regularly monitor events elsewhere, on other continents and in other regions, to evaluate how these could potentially threaten or compete with the interests of the African continent. An awareness should be fostered in this regard among South African institutions and private companies.

#### **4.4. The electronics revolution and information super-highway**

Modern electronic communication systems have increased the volume of information available as well as the speed and ease with which government leaders can make contact with each other. The use of the Internet, computers, modems and other devices enables delegations at conferences and ministries to remain in constant contact with principals. While these facilities may not affect the substance of policy, they have had an influence on the speed with which consultations take place as well as on the nature of foreign policy making and the execution of policy.

This technology poses particular challenges in the field of inter-governmental contact and relationships between political leaders. In the African context, a good information and communication system would be a crucial element in preventive diplomacy and the process of peace-making. For SADC countries, the imaginative use of communication systems could bring substantial benefits.

#### **4.5. The growing gap between North and South**

The gap in economic and general wealth between the industrialised countries of the North and the developing nations of the South, has been the subject of many studies and conferences. There is a growing belief that present developments such as the lowering of tariffs and trade barriers are only benefiting the North with its strong industrial base and its wealthy consumers, and that the trend is towards fewer advantages for developing countries and a consequent widening of the North-South gap.

The "Midrand Declaration" which was adopted at the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development on 11 May 1996 referred to this perception. It acknowledged that increased globalisation and economic interdependence is a powerful impetus to liberalisation of trade flows, finance, information and technological change, but warned that the impact



of globalisation is uneven, and that the least developed countries, particularly those in Africa, are unable to benefit from trade because of weak supply capabilities.

The declaration, noting that it was in the interest of all countries that a mutually beneficial multilateral trading system continues to develop, called for the recognition of differential impacts on countries and the solidarity necessary to ensure that all would benefit - a true partnership for development.

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South Africa, as a country firmly placed in the South, geographically and developmentally, has to be aware of the risks of marginalisation in a trade sense. Sound cooperation with other countries of the South and with clients and suppliers in the North, should be an integral part of foreign policy and of economic policy.

Minister Nzo formulated South Africa's position as follows in March 1995:

"... the position in which South Africa finds itself is that it has features both of the developed and the developing world. It is truly at the point of intersection between both worlds - an industrialised state of the South which can communicate with the North on equal terms to articulate the needs, the concerns and the fears of the developing world. Conversely we can interpret the concerns and the fears of the developed world."

(Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs, 14 March 1995)

"Although we believe our future will be closely linked to the development of the South-South concept, there are certain realities that we dare not ignore. The United States of America and the other G7 countries constitute the undeniable economic power base of the world today. These countries are essential to the economic well-being of the developing world, including South and Southern Africa. Furthermore, the G7 countries have been

most supportive of the Government of National Unity and have been generous in their commitment to our economic success. For this we are grateful, and we will continue to build on this sound foundation in the future."

(National Assembly, 18 March 1995)

#### **4.6. Growing complexity of technological issues**

Countries poor in natural resources such as Japan and Switzerland have proved that they can compete in the industrial race because of their early investment in human resources through education and training.

In many developed countries, while there is annual economic growth, a decline in the number of jobs has been experienced. This trend has enormous long-term implications for countries, both economically and socially. The number of unemployed or retired people increases annually and these people will become such a heavy responsibility for national governments that the problem will take on an international dimension.

South Africa will not be able to escape some of these problems and early monitoring of these eventualities and international cooperation will become important. The trend will affect the mobility of labour, especially the categories of highly skilled technicians, scientists, engineers and managers. Within the SADC context, South Africa will have to develop programmes to promote technical and scientific education to cope with the demands of the next few decades. Benefiting from the experience of other countries should be part of the strategy.

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#### **4.7. Focus on good governance, human rights and democratisation: conditionality**

The advancement of human rights and the promotion of democracy are pillars on which South Africa's foreign policy rests.

International organisations and governments all over the world increasingly place a high premium on the performance of countries and governments in these areas. Development assistance is, in many cases, linked to democratisation programmes, the observance of human rights and the exercise of good government. South Africa's own recent experience in this field makes it an example many refer to as a model. Many governments expect South Africa's adherence to these principles and values to be an example to other countries in Africa and elsewhere, inspiring them to democratise and to improve their human rights record.

#### **4.8. Redefining security issues**

Security issues fall within the field of foreign policy and international relations, where they affect relations between states and influence the promotion of the national interests of countries in the international sphere. They extend much farther than defence matters. In recent years new dimensions have become increasingly important in international security; these include regional conflict resolution and peace-keeping, drug trafficking, illegal arms trading, non-proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, migration and refugees. Several aspects of this will be discussed in the rest of this paper. It is important, however, to recognise this as an important international trend which affects, in a very direct sense, the formulation of foreign policy and the promotion of good international relations. It is particularly important for South Africa in the context of the SADC and relations with Africa.

### **5. REDEFINING SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN POLICY**

#### **5.1. Introductory remarks**

The need for a codified foreign policy and an assessment of current foreign policy has been the subject of deliberation for some time. Referring to the principles of South Africa's foreign policy (see 8.2 below), Minister Nzo has said:

"As a set of commitments, those principles constitute the broad aspirational tenets of our approach to foreign policy, and, if consistently adhered to will render our foreign policy predictable and in line with our perception of the kind of nation we seek to be, and the kind of world we wish to live in. They also serve as a yardstick by which the quality of our practical foreign policy decisions may be measured, and are consequently a very useful policy tool.

It is when we move beyond this level of policy consideration that we have to ask ourselves to what extent does South Africa require a codified foreign policy doctrine; and what means do we have to ensure that such a doctrine would be attainable and if necessary, enforceable? This is a complex question which I would encourage you to address during the course of your deliberations this week. In essence we have to answer the question of whether our current foreign policy, in which each decision is made on its merits within a prescribed normative framework, is adequate enough for our circumstances."

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South Africa and more particularly all the arms of government which function in the international arena, such as the President and Deputy Presidents, members of the Cabinet, senior officials and diplomats, operate in the global environment as it is today. That environment has evolved over time and since the recent demise of the Cold-War-driven bipolar world, has started taking on a new shape which is not yet clearly defined. The earlier discussion of trends was an attempt to survey the general nature of the global environment.

The relatively insecure, flexible and still evolving nature of the new global environment provides a favourable climate for South Africa to adopt a more pro-active and assertive foreign policy posture. While South Africa has to maximise political and economic benefits for the country in the existing global environment, opportunities exist (and should be actively pursued) to change those aspects of the present global environment which

are not favourable to South Africa and Southern Africa. This means that South Africa should, in multilateral forums and through bilateral negotiations, aspire to amend the rules formulated in the past by specific interest groups, whether political or institutional. This approach does not imply a confrontational stance towards the major economic powers of the world or towards international organisations such as the WTO, the IMF or the United Nations. Instead, it implies engaging them, with the active participation of other interested nations, in a thorough analysis of the systems and rules created over time. There is a perception arising from OECD, World Bank and other studies that these do not benefit developing nations and new economies of the South but rather tend towards entrenching the dominant position of the North. This approach must not take on the dimensions of an ideological struggle between North and South, but should be an honest search for equitable solutions to the problems of the present-day global situation.

To sum up, South Africa needs to develop a pro-active foreign policy approach, within its means, to achieve strategic objectives which benefit the people and the country in general as much as possible.

## **5.2. Principles and cornerstones**

Foreign policy is a multidimensional set of policies, objectives, principles, strategies and plans which cannot easily be packaged into a neatly described "formula". It is also not always practical to distinguish between aspirations, general objectives and underlying philosophy. Nevertheless, it is important to consider in broad terms the general orientation of South Africa's policies. A broad approach, supported by a range of more detailed and sometimes complex components, forms the policy framework adopted in this discussion document.

Minister Alfred Nzo has spelt out South Africa's foreign policy principles in the following terms (Heads of Mission Conference, September 1995, Pretoria):

"The underlying principles which serve as guidelines in the conduct of our foreign relations include:

- a commitment to the promotion of human rights;
- a commitment to the promotion of democracy;
- a commitment to justice and international law in the conduct of relations between nations;
- a commitment to international peace and to internationally agreed-upon mechanisms for the resolution of conflicts;
- a commitment to the interests of Africa in World Affairs; and
- a commitment to economic development through regional and international cooperation in an interdependent world."

It may be questioned whether these principles are sufficient, whether they go far enough, whether they are achievable, or how far the Government should and can go in imposing them on others. Are there no other principles or cornerstones which should be considered?

Speeches made by President Nelson Mandela, the Deputy Presidents, Minister Alfred Nzo and Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad, have highlighted a number of additional cornerstones and main preoccupations of South Africa's foreign policy.

- The present policy and execution of policy represent a break with the past.
- Foreign policy is an integrated part of government policy aimed at promoting the security and welfare of South Africa's citizens.

- Exercising regular choices between available options in the international arena based on South Africa's interests and means is a part of the foreign policy process.
- South Africa is a democratic country and the formulation of foreign policy should be an open and transparent process. However, South African actions must be in keeping with international practice, including the need for appropriate confidentiality. Diplomacy is by its very nature "quiet diplomacy" and not diplomacy through the media.
- Officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and other officials representing South Africa abroad must be fully acquainted with the policies and strategies of domestic departments in order to pursue the national interest in all spheres.
- South Africa must strive to be a responsible global citizen.
- South Africa supports the global free trade system.
- North-South and South-South cooperation will be promoted.
- South Africa must associate itself with international efforts to develop and implement environmentally friendly policies.
- South Africa adheres to the philosophy of non-alignment and friendly, constructive relations with all nations, that is, universality of relations.
- Multilateral cooperation at all required levels is essential and is supported by South Africa. A holistic approach should be pursued wherever possible.
- The United Nations should be reformed and strengthened to enable it to deal with matters such as global economic and environmental challenges and the achievement of sustainable development.
- Foreign policy objective should seek to promote mutual benefits and mutual respect in bilateral relations.
- South Africa should deal with African partners as equals and avoid all hegemonic ambitions. A narrow, short term approach aimed at promoting self-interest must be avoided.
- Confidence-building and cooperation should be prominent trends of South Africa's African policy. Peace-making and conflict-prevention should receive priority consideration.

- South Africa will cooperate with all other countries in shaping and defining the new world order and promoting multilateral cooperation in the international community.
- Scientific and technical development and cooperation in Antarctica and globally, will be promoted and environmental protection will be supported.
- As far as South Africa's means allow, all efforts to alleviate the plight of refugees and children in Africa and elsewhere and particularly the work of the UNHCR must be supported.
- South Africa should remain actively engaged in efforts to secure world-wide peace, promote disarmament, prevent genocide, restrict proliferation
- of nuclear and other arms of mass destruction and achieve a new world security regime.

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### **5.3. South Africa's international priorities**

In his address to the Foreign Affairs Portfolio Committee of Parliament on 14 March 1995, Minister Alfred Nzo made the following observations about South Africa's foreign policy objectives and priorities:

"In terms of foreign policy, Africa is clearly to be a priority in the years ahead."

"The promotion of economic development of the Southern African region is of paramount importance as the economies of the countries in the region are intertwined to such an extent that, for South Africa to believe that it could enter a prosperous future in isolation without taking neighbouring countries with her, would be unrealistic and hazardous."

"South Africa will also strive to engage the industrial world in development in Southern Africa with the objective of enhancing the fullest possible development



of its human and natural resources by combining foreign capital with our own expertise."

"South Africa exchanges the equivalent of 64 per cent of its GNP with the outside world ... (and) ... it follows from our broad national interests and governmental policy that the emphasis with all European countries, should fall upon economic, technological and scientific cooperation."

Economic relations are, clearly, a further priority in South Africa's interaction with the international community in both our bilateral and our multilateral relations. Achieving sustainable economic growth in South Africa is a government priority and its international dimension is important for all departments and government agencies involved. To attain the objectives which government departments are expected to achieve, proper coordination at the policy and working levels is essential and it is important to work towards an integrated "economic foreign policy". The global economic environment is a fiercely competitive and complex arena in which South Africa is a relatively small economic power. Policies should therefore be formulated to achieve sound priorities.

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Minister Nzo made the following observation in Parliament on 8 August 1994 about South Africa's international relations:

"Without international interaction such as trade, scientific and technological exchange and cultural exchange, South Africans and South Africa would be much the poorer. In this regard the Department of Foreign Affairs, universities, institutes and the media have a particular responsibility to stimulate a debate on our international relations, to inform the public and

involve the people of South Africa in the promotion of our international relations."

Political and security priorities in this context are inextricably linked. President Mandela and Deputy President Mbeki have referred to South Africa's identification with Africa. Mr Mbeki, at the UN Security Council on 25 May 1994, stated:

"We are also committed to participate to the full extent of our abilities in the efforts spearheaded by the OAU to address the related issues of peace, security, stability, cooperation and development on our continent."

President Mandela, in the UN General Assembly in October 1994, also stated:

"We are part of the region of Southern Africa and of the continent of Africa. As members of the Southern African Development Community and the OAU, and an equal partner with other member states, we will play our role in the struggles of these organisations to build a continent and a region that will help to create for themselves and all humanity a common world of peace and prosperity."

South Africa's security and political priorities are in Africa and the above statements summarise the Government's position clearly. It should be added that much of the action suggested above will take place against the background of the United Nations' own political objectives and operations, including peace, prosperity, economic well-being and respect for human rights. Peace-making and conflict prevention are two essential elements of the strategy which is under review, also in the OAU.

#### **5.4. Interface with economic and defence policies**

The discussion on South Africa's priorities clearly highlights the integrated nature of the challenges facing South Africa in the global and African contexts. To be effective, South Africa must progressively harmonise the policies and strategic objectives which are formulated and pursued by government departments. In paragraph 4.3, reference was made to the nature of South Africa's economic priorities in the international arena and to the need for integrated policy and priority formulation. The private sector and labour also have roles to play in certain areas and in this regard NEDLAC and several other existing coordination forums play important roles.

Foreign policy and defence policy are two components of a country's approach to the global environment. In the introductory parts of this discussion paper, reference was made to the new world order, to important trends in security-related issues and to the changing dimensions of the multipolar world. Proper coordination of a country's policies on security matters is therefore an obvious necessity. In the African context South Africa's involvement in conflict prevention and peace-keeping requires harmonised foreign and defence policies. International arms sales by South Africa and the country's commitment to the prevention of the proliferation of conventional and nuclear arms, also require the harmonising of the defence and foreign policies of South Africa. This is achieved through committees, at ministerial and official level, which have been created by Government to oversee policies and actions in this regard.

#### **5.5. Relative importance of technical disciplines**

In the SADC, in the OAU context, and in a host of international organisations the major subjects of discussion are water, civil aviation, health, weights and measures, intellectual property, shipping, nuclear research and many

other technical and scientific topics. Wherever a governmental or nongovernmental representative of South Africa participates in an international activity, conference or project, he or she becomes involved in the execution of some aspect of foreign policy. Minister Alfred Nzo, in his speech to ambassadors in September 1995 emphasized that ...

"Foreign Affairs will play a coordinating and facilitating role to further that single most basic goal of helping to create a better life for South Africa's people."

The Department of Foreign Affairs is in a position to assist government departments and NGOs to monitor, prepare and pursue their international objectives and to maximise benefits for South Africa in the international arena.

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#### **5.6. Interaction with civil society and interest groups**

In the preceding paragraphs reference was made to the many role players in South Africa's international interaction. On the domestic front, civil society, local authorities, special interest groups and many others have some role to play in enabling the Department of Foreign Affairs to give the Government comprehensive, well-considered and practical advice. The process of policy formulation must be as transparent as possible to ensure maximum support for the Government's international activities. In addition to its ever-increasing interaction with Parliament, universities and institutions, the Department of Foreign Affairs should actively stimulate debate on international affairs and foreign policy. Expanded interaction with interested parties can be achieved by means of domestic seminars and conferences, as well as through interaction with foreign organisations and governments in the context of international conferences held in South Africa. Further mechanisms can be explored.

#### **5.7. South Africa's limitations and strengths**

Minister Alfred Nzo and Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad have often stated in parliamentary and other speeches that South Africa's initiatives in Africa in particular and internationally in general should take place within the realistic parameters of South Africa's capacity to implement decisions. They have also stated that foreign policy should be formulated against the background of what South Africa can realistically hope to achieve. Apart from global constraints, budgetary restrictions placed on the Department of Foreign Affairs and other departments also play a role. This limits South Africa's membership of international organisations, the number of embassies the Department is able to establish abroad and the number of personnel assigned abroad, to mention a few areas. Active participation in those forums where South Africa can play a meaningful role and where the country has real interests should therefore be a priority.

Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad, in a speech to the Senate on 25 May 1995, formulated the relative priorities of South Africa's international initiatives within the context of limited resources as follows:

"Although South Africa's capacity may be limited, the Government of National Unity (GNU), will do whatever it can to assist in efforts aimed at the furtherance, worldwide, of peace and of democracy, of human rights, of sustainable development, of protection of the environment, of disarmament, and of making our world a more agreeable and friendly place to live in."

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## **6. MULTILATERAL RELATIONS**

### **6.1. The challenge of multilateralism**

Earlier the growing role of multilateralism was discussed as a trend. It also constitutes a challenge to develop expertise in a specialised and highly technical area. The Minister of

Foreign Affairs made the following observation to the Foreign Affairs Portfolio Committee on 14 March 1995:

"The Government's foreign policy objectives in the multilateral field are to ensure that South Africa plays a role commensurate with its status and abilities in respect of the global issues which preoccupy the world today and which are at the same time of major national concern. Such global issues include economic and social development, human rights, disarmament, environmental issues, control of illicit drug trafficking, refugees and migration, peacekeeping and global security.

There is also an interplay of bilateral relations between two countries and their actions towards each other in a multilateral context. Support of a candidate in one organisation may result in a favourable bilateral action, more trade credits or more development assistance. Countries and especially delegates are often faced with a barrage of requests for a vote of support for issues or candidates 'in the interest of bilateral relations'. Trade-offs are not uncommon. Sensible handling of these situations requires early consultation and the developing of practical criteria to facilitate and justify decisions."

Within the area of multilateral relations, clearly discernible themes or issues have become predominant at present. Issues relating to the protection of the environment as well as issues relating to the quality of life, have become justifiably all-important. Linked to this are issues such as refugees, children, women, human rights and migration. South Africa has become actively involved in these areas and will continue to be faced with the need to develop capacities to interact at an international level.

Conflict prevention and peace-making are of substantial concern to South Africa in the African context, just as peace-keeping and peace-making in Bosnia are to the UN and to the Europeans. Preventive diplomacy has become an essential and fundamental consideration in the international context for political leaders and diplomats. Once conflict occurs, diplomacy is faced with a new challenge, which is more difficult, traumatic and costly - both materially and in terms of human life - namely devising appropriate peace-making and peace-keeping operations. The regional group to which a country belongs often plays a fundamental role in multilateral diplomacy. On many issues, such as on tariffs and on trade and industrial policy, South Africa consults with SA Customs Union member states before making commitments in negotiations with the EU. SADC countries as a regional group should also be consulted on broader policy issues.

On security issues, South Africa should consult the SADC countries and the OAU in order to develop common positions at the UN or other forums. It is sometimes a time consuming procedure with mixed results. African partners may even be in conflict with South Africa's other international commitments or fundamental policies, for example on arms control or the control of advanced technologies. These aspects require extensive and regular consultation and are a multilateral challenge.

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## **6.2. Multilateral policy and objectives**

Multilateral relations focus on global issues. South Africa's participation in and interaction with the organisations which deal with such issues are the substance of multilateral diplomacy.

Global issues have domestic relevance and the role that South Africa seeks to play in the development of

international thinking in these areas must be related not only to our international objectives but also to domestic policies.

Some of the issues which need to be further analysed and developed are referred to below:

- The foreign policy of a democratic South Africa is characterised by rapid change. South Africa's new membership of the SADC, the OAU, the NAM and the G77, as well as its return to the Commonwealth and the UN General Assembly and various specialised agencies, underline the substantial change which has already occurred.
- The concept of the traditional nation state is changing, with most countries constantly losing some degree of sovereignty, especially in the multilateral context. The example of European countries losing sovereignty to the EU was cited earlier in the document. South Africa is, to some extent, also affected.
- There is a need to increase the awareness of the importance of multilateralism as a major facet of both South Africa's international relations and policy planning. Bilateral missions abroad should also focus on multilateral issues in formulating their objectives and should forge a link between bilateral and multilateral relations.
- The international community is expecting South Africa to assume an important role in some organisations and there is the perception that South Africa has the necessary power, capacity and prestige to fulfil this role. The country is expected to play a bridging role in ensuring that North/South relations are non-antagonistic and more equitable.
- Opportunities must be identified where South Africa can play a role in the development of thinking on international issues.



- Regular analyses of South Africa's relations and cooperation with regional groupings and blocs should be made to achieve policy consistency.
- South Africa should apply the criteria of national interest, capabilities and feasibility in deciding on the country's participation in UN peace-keeping, peace-making and peace-enforcement operations in a regional or global context. This issue will require wider discussion with other government departments and with OAU partners.
- The SADC's Council of Ministers has recommended that an Organ on Politics, Defence and Security should be created. South Africa should wholeheartedly support this recommendation and commit itself to its approval by the SADC summit in August 1996. The Organ will provide an important forum within which issues such as political dialogue, the strengthening of democracy and threats to the peace and stability of the sub-region can be addressed.
- South Africa should engage in the debate on the various aspects of the reform and financing of the UN.
- The Government has committed itself to a policy of non-proliferation and arms control which covers all weapons of mass destruction and extends to concerns relating to the proliferation of conventional weapons. A primary goal of this policy is to reinforce and promote South Africa as a responsible producer, possessor and trader of advanced technologies in the nuclear, biological, chemical and conventional arms fields. To this end, a new conventional arms control system has been established; participation in the various non-proliferation regimes and suppliers' groups is actively being pursued; and positions which publicly support the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction have been adopted.
- The new global situation, more than ever before, requires South African foreign and defence policy to be harmonised in a comprehensive security policy.

- Involvement in more political international forums such as the UN, the NAM, the G77 and the Commonwealth, however, requires preparations and deliberations of a different nature. Consistent and comprehensive policies linked to priorities will have to be developed as South Africa experiences more high-level involvement.
- South Africa must recognise that it has limited experience at the OAU and that it should develop an understanding of the functioning of that organisation. A number of power centres exist in the OAU and on the Continent. South Africa will have to work within the SADC to coordinate its positions on global issues at the UN and elsewhere in the process of developing OAU positions.
- A matter of future importance will be the reform of multilateral organisations such as the UN and the OAU. A clear strategy on this must be developed and South Africa will need to interact with our OAU partners. Many member nations are appreciative of South Africa's growing contribution to this debate. Solidarity with the hopes and aspirations of Africa should be the watchword.
- South Africa has a leadership role to play in the SADC and in the NAM and a clear vision as well as a set of objectives for that role should be developed.
- South Africa has a role to play in the debate on the issue of economic growth and development in a world economy which is becoming increasingly liberalised and globalised.
- South Africa's position as host of UNCTAD IX and President of UNCTAD for the next four years creates important opportunities for enhancing its role in multilateral diplomacy and in the efforts to arrest the process of marginalisation of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), most of which are in Africa.
- South Africa will have to develop consistent policy positions on UNCTAD and the WTO which address trade and development issues. This will require coordination

between the various government departments, and joint committees should be established to develop expertise on technical aspects of international trade and development.

- South Africa's current negotiations with the European Union (EU) and the mandate of the negotiating team are of prime importance and are being followed closely by economic stakeholders at home and abroad. The outcome of these negotiations will have an important effect on the South African economy, since the degree of market access to EU countries and the relevant tariffs will influence production and employment in this country. Interdepartmental cooperation and regular liaison with the private sector and labour organisations will continue to be the cornerstone of these negotiations.
- The involvement of South Africa's Customs Union partners in the planning of the negotiations with the EU is essential, and the member states of the Lom harming their interests.
- South Africa will progressively need to develop an understanding and constructive relationship with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).
- The implications of the issue of human rights as a cornerstone of South African foreign policy must be fully explored.
- The establishment of a regional disaster centre to deal with natural disasters in the Southern African region should be considered, as should practical measures to facilitate the rendering of humanitarian assistance.
- As a country with marine borders on three oceans, the Indian, Atlantic and Southern, South Africa should protect and advance its significant marine and maritime interests in the multilateral arena.
- South Africa's involvement in South Atlantic and Indian Ocean regional groupings merits special attention.

- Environmental and conservation issues are of great importance to South Africa. These should be dealt with within the context of sustainable development.

As indicated in the introductory paragraph, this discussion has not focused on individual multilateral issues, since those issues that warrant more detailed analysis will be dealt with in separate papers which will be published by the Department for comment.

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## **7. BILATERAL RELATIONS**

Later in this document, the different regions of the world are discussed within the context of bilateral relations. The underlying philosophy of South Africa's relations with individual countries, however, needs closer scrutiny.

### **7.1. Point of departure**

In order to ensure that prejudice or bias is not a factor when discussing the nature of South Africa's bilateral relations, it is important to approach the discussion within the framework of United Nations and other international resolutions and initiatives. Useful criteria in the identification and analysis of special issues are United Nations resolutions or special initiatives as well as other multilateral international procedures and projects.

The Government has adopted the view that South Africa's relations with countries should be a matter of bilateral concern between the particular country and South Africa. In applying the principle of universality, South Africa as a sovereign state should consider its national interests when conducting relations with other states.

Two related aspects should be clearly understood. By trading or concluding diplomatic relations with a particular country South Africa is not expressing approval of the domestic

policies of that country's present government. The President and the Minister of Foreign Affairs have often stated that South Africa will promote human rights and democracy as fundamental principles in the conduct of foreign relations. It could be argued that the most basic reason for establishing diplomatic relations is to create a channel of communication, which, in fact, is then used to convey to the government of that country the values which South Africa promotes and propagates. In essence, the approach followed is that communication and persuasion could be more constructive than isolation.

The second aspect relates to the perceived implications of relations South Africa may have with other states. South Africa fully adheres to the United Nations resolutions for which it has expressed support and does not contravene those agreed decisions. South Africa, and specifically the Government and the Department of Foreign Affairs is fully aware of the often complex and sensitive nature of international relations and would not engage in actions in the context of relations with these states which threaten or affect the national interest of third states, especially contiguous states with whom South Africa also maintains friendly, constructive diplomatic relations.

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In concrete terms, South Africa is and should be free to maintain diplomatic and trade relations with any state which is not subject to a United Nations embargo, where this is to the mutual benefit of both countries. Such relations should not pose a real threat to the interests of other states.

Foreign policy principles and the broad policy approach of the Government need to be implemented in the practical arena of South Africa's international relations. This process and the reverse process of interpreting the practical environment in order to be able to identify policy alternatives for the Government to consider are the

responsibility and constant concern of the Department of Foreign Affairs and its missions abroad. The changing nature of the international environment requires a regular assessment of the many practical elements of the Department's operations in the multilateral and bilateral fields and this is routinely done by the Department.

As observed by Minister Alfred Nzo (Heads of Mission Conference, September 1995, Pretoria):

"A policy review is a perfectly normal and routine matter after a change of government. What happened last April of course, was much more than simply another change of government in South Africa. It marked a profound and fundamental break with our past, and opened the way for the building of a new nation, a new country, based on democracy, justice and the rule of law."

## **7.2. Key aspects of South Africa's interaction with the international community**

A number of indeterminate considerations have a bearing on the successful implementation of policy; these include international expectations and domestic aspirations.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki has made the following observations about South Africa's relations with Africa and about interaction with the rest of the world (Heads of Mission Conference, September 1995, Pretoria):

- The Southern African region expects a positive contribution from South Africa in terms of their own development. They expect that we interact with them as a partner and an ally, not as a regional superpower, so that what we achieve, in terms of political, security and economic relations, may be balanced and mutually beneficial.

- There is also an expectation from Africa that South Africa should make a significant contribution towards peace and development on the Continent. Despite our own limitations and problems, it is our objective to make a significant contribution in ensuring peace, democracy, respect for human rights and sustainable development. These principles are fundamental to our foreign policy.
- It remains a challenge to achieve higher rates of trade and investment in South Africa. It is a major challenge for the Department of Foreign Affairs to engage the international community in South Africa and increase their involvement.
- Embassies should advise the Department on what the Government needs to do to remove obstacles at the international level with a view to sustained growth and development.

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Minister Alfred Nzo also identified some key aspects on the same occasion:

- Primarily the GNU wishes to create a better life for all South Africa's people. All the Department's activities should be geared to achieving this objective.
- Another primary task is to secure the integrity and sovereignty of the South African state and its citizens.
- South Africa lacks the capacity to operate at all levels and in all spheres and therefore has to make important choices, constituting foreign policy.
- South Africa is committed to the interests of Southern Africa and the African continent and wishes to be part of the African renaissance.
- It is imperative to make an ongoing analysis of important international matters to enable South

Africa to take independent positions consistent with the country's commitments. This includes issues such as the restructuring of the UN Security Council and South Africa's future role in peace-keeping operations. South Africa strongly supports South-South cooperation and the objectives of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Some key economic aspects which play a role in the practical side of South Africa's foreign relations, as mentioned by Minister Trevor Manuel, should also be considered (Heads of Mission Conference, September 1995):

- Incentives for foreign investment and measures to create an investor-friendly climate are accorded high priority by the Government and must be a focus of embassy activities.
- Missions have a special role to play in ensuring that foreign investors are better informed about opportunities in South Africa.
- With the signing of the Marrakesh Agreement, South Africa was fully reintegrated into the (trade) world and the Government has embarked on a programme to make South African industry more competitive internationally.
- There is a range of opportunities for foreign investors in South Africa in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and this should be brought to the attention of foreign industrialists and development assistance donor governments.
- The sequencing of the lifting of exchange controls is very important considering the far-reaching implications it has for the South African economy. Missions play a role in conveying this to interested parties in the proper context.



## **C. PRACTICAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT**

### **8. STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVES, PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES: AN OVERVIEW OF BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH REGIONS**

The Department of Foreign Affairs is responsible for implementing Government policy in the international context in each region and in respect of each country in an appropriate manner, commensurate with South Africa's capabilities and interests in that particular area. Complex relations between countries where South Africa is an interested third party require a carefully considered approach and measured actions. In the multilateral sphere where bilateral relations and broader international issues are involved, well-planned initiatives and specific objectives are required. In addition to the discussion of major issues, in respect of which separate papers will be published by the Department for comment, bilateral relations are highlighted in the regional context in the following paragraphs. The focus in this part is on achievable objectives, priorities and plans of action.

#### **8.1. Southern Africa (SADC member countries)**

- Relations with SADC member countries are of primary importance and each embassy/High Commission must handle SADC issues in an integrated manner, as a matter of priority.
- The South African RDP should be regionalised to promote development projects in the whole sub-continent. Investment in neighbouring countries by the private sector should be encouraged.
- Countries in the Region have dissimilar requirements and agreements affecting the Region should take this into account.
- Mission objectives should focus on coordinating mechanisms, promotion of trade and investment,

regional development and interaction with South African provinces bordering SADC states.

- Following consultation with the respective member countries, future cooperation on a region-to-region basis between SADC and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman) is envisaged.

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## **8.2. Equatorial Africa and the (non-SADC) Indian Ocean Islands**

- The creation of new employment opportunities in South Africa is being actively pursued by encouraging and facilitating increased South African trade with the region. For this purpose, the establishment of a diplomatic network, in the entire region, comprising both residential and nonresidential representation will be finalised as soon as possible.
- The participation of South African enterprises in development and infrastructure projects in the region is being actively promoted. This will boost the economic development of the region, and at the same time, create additional employment opportunities for South Africans. An ancillary effect would be to reduce illegal immigration into South Africa.
- For the same reasons, substantial and ongoing foreign investment from the industrialised countries of the world to the region is being actively encouraged. In order to achieve this goal, South Africa has to play an effective role in improving foreign investor perceptions of the region, inter alia through substantial participation in the prevention, management and resolution of conflict on the continent. The OAU, as the principal regional organisation and spokes body for the continent, is being strengthened and encouraged by South Africa to play a more important role in this regard.

- The economic development of the region is being promoted by demonstrating, through South Africa's moral leadership, that good governance and democracy are essential prerequisites for development.
- Ongoing cooperation between South Africa and the region for the purpose of disease control and the combatting of crime, such as drug trafficking, is being pursued and expanded.

### **8.3. North Africa**

- The Department is busy consolidating its presence in North Africa through residential and nonresidential accreditation which will assist in dealing with relations in a more direct manner.
- South Africa's policy on the Western Sahara is based on respect for the wishes of the inhabitants of the territory and it has launched certain initiatives in an effort to find a solution to the deadlock that persists.
- Economic relations with the region are receiving priority attention as it can contribute significantly to the development of the RAP.
- South Africa is acting in line with UN and OAU resolutions regarding certain states in the area, whilst also playing an important role in attempting to address issues of international concern;
- Attention is being given to religious radicalism, its threat to the region and the effects which it may have on the relations between South Africa and the region.

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### **8.4. The Middle East**

- The principle of universality and even-handedness should be applied and good relations pursued with all states in the area.
- South Africa remains committed to supporting the Middle East peace process in an even-handed manner,

- in the belief that it is only through negotiation that a just and lasting solution can be achieved in that region.
- As a responsible member of the international community, South Africa supports UN Resolutions pertaining to countries in the area (eg. Palestine, Israel, Iran and Iraq).
  - South Africa should strive to realize the full potential of export markets, including the sale of technology, in the Middle East and as a source of funding for the RAP. Economic relations in general and South Africa's energy requirements in particular, should receive priority attention.
  - A further objective is to expand knowledge and understanding of the area in South Africa and promote the acquisition of the required language skills and expertise in the Department.
  - Religious radicalism is a threat to some governments in the area and may affect South Africa's relations with those countries. South Africa will remain vigilant in the monitoring of any radical movements, be they religious or political, which could impact on our relations with the countries in the area.

#### **8.5. Asia**

- Asia as currently dealt with by the Department of Foreign Affairs, stretches from Afghanistan, southwards along the western coastline of the Indian sub-continent and Sri Lanka, along the coastline of the Indonesian archipelago and Western Australia to New Zealand in the south, eastwards to include the islands of the Pacific Ocean, and in a northeastern curving arc, to Japan, the People's Republic of China and Mongolia. Asia, as defined above, includes the world's most populous countries and fastest growing economies. It is predicted that by the year 2000 forty per cent of all buying power will be located in East Asia.

- This region presents a range of opportunities for South Africa in the fields of human resources development, service sector development, mutual technology transfers, as well as bilateral tourism, trade and investment.
- Increased involvement by the South African private sector will be supported by the South African Department of Foreign Affairs to unlock the vast opportunities in this region.
- Politically, the region offers several bilateral and multilateral opportunities for cooperation, ie in terms of South-South cooperation, the Commonwealth, the Non-Aligned Movement and lastly in terms of defining a New International Economic Order; this region has, in large measure, successfully managed to overcome economic and structural backlogs to compete successfully on the international stage.
- It is the intention of the Department of Foreign Affairs to develop bilateral relations with all countries in this region to the optimum and in accordance with South Africa's national interests, also by furthering top-level Government contact at the highest level.
- Asia is a cradle of ancient civilisations which have evolved their own present-day sociopolitical characteristics. South Africa, in line with its own commitment to achieving human rights objectives, will pursue this question with diligence where required, but also with sensitivity within the framework of the totality of issues which make up bilateral relations

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## **8.6. Europe**

- Relations with the European Union, in both the economic and political areas, dominate South Africa's relations with the European continent. Economic relations with the Continent represent more than half of South Africa's international economic relations.

- These relations are well-developed and there is more scope for expanding relations with Central and Eastern Europe.
- Owing to the peculiar bilateral/multilateral nature of relations with the EU, the progressive development of a comprehensive strategy to deal with relations involving all departments and organs is a standing objective.
- Domestic issues which negatively affect European perceptions of South Africa as an economic partner and of the country's future should be identified by embassies and brought to the Government's attention.

### **8.7. North America**

- The dramatic size of the economy of the United States compared with those of other countries is a factor which cannot be ignored when formulating policy and objectives. This must be seen in the context of the tremendous influence the USA can exercise in the world. South Africa and the South African economy, cannot escape this influence. (With 260 million people, the USA has a GDP of some R25 trillion compared to the South African GDP of R480 billion. The South African budget is R160 billion compared to the New York City budget of R105 billion.)
- The South African Embassy in Washington and other Missions in the USA should pursue the promotion of South Africa's economic relations with the USA as a priority and take steps to revitalise and restructure those relations.
- The negotiating of a special trade agreement and cooperation in the matter of intellectual property rights should receive priority attention. A double taxation agreement and a bilateral investment treaty are also receiving attention.
- The Binational Commission exemplifies the good political relations that South Africa enjoys with the USA. The work of the Commission remains a priority.

- The promotion of human rights and democracy in all parts of the world is a shared objective of the two governments.
- South Africa is guided by its own strategic national interest where relations with third countries are concerned and this is done in a nonconfrontational, nonideological and rational manner. Full account is and must be taken of the fact that the USA is the strongest economic and military power and that, in some cases, US legislation has an extra-territorial impact.
- South Africa's relations with Canada, a G7 country, are mature and stable at the political level. There is scope for the expansion of economic relations and the missions in Canada should pursue this as a priority.
- Canadian development assistance to South Africa will be encouraged.
- Canada and the USA as major members of NAFTA represent a major market for South Africa and a future agreement with NAFTA will be explored.

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### **8.8. Latin America**

Although Mexico and Central American countries are geographically part of North America, the Department of Foreign Affairs includes them among Latin American countries and pursues a coherent strategy towards these countries as a group.

- South Africa has had missions in Latin America for a long time but the extent of relations with that region has recently increased substantially. Trade with Brazil exceeded R1 billion per annum and trade with Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Cuba, Colombia and Peru is following the same pattern. Tourism to South Africa is also increasing.
- Economic and social reconstruction programmes in Mexico, Chile, Cuba and Argentina have made much

progress and South Africa could benefit from the experience of those countries.

- Relations with Latin America should receive a higher priority and representation, including nonresidential and honorary consuls, should be considered.
- Other aspects of relations with the region which warrant more attention are the arrangement of high-level visits to and from these countries and the negotiation of agreements on combatting drug trafficking.

## **9. ORGANISATIONAL DIMENSIONS: THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Several organisational matters, such as the available budget, the location of missions abroad, the availability of staff and administrative effectiveness, play a role in the degree of success the Department of Foreign Affairs can achieve in representing South Africa abroad, in promoting South Africa's interests and in playing the role discussed above (para 3.4).

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### **9.1. Budget**

The Department's budget and the relative priority ratings accorded to the various components of the budget, should be analysed. In the present budget, fixed personnel and administrative expenses and membership fees of international organisations account for some 69 percent of the total budget. Approximately 31 percent of the budget remains for initiatives specifically aimed at promoting South Africa's interests abroad in the form of travel, attendance at conferences, seminars, publications and shows.

Some embassies abroad are relatively expensive to operate. However, these missions are situated in countries which are South Africa's major trading partners and which also contribute substantially to South Africa's RDP in the form of



development assistance. Similarly, international organisations like the UN, which deal with issues of interest to Africa and the South and even the Non-Aligned Movement, are based in expensive cities of the North: New York and Geneva. The cost structure, cost of living and similar factors in host countries, as well as the exchange rate between the Rand and the relevant currency, determine the operating costs of a mission. It is important to consider all the relevant factors when evaluating these components of the Department's budget and the related statistics reflecting South Africa's relations with the countries in question.

In one case study, the annual budget of a medium embassy in an expensive West European capital was compared with the development assistance given to South Africa by that country. It was found that the embassy could operate for 22 years on an amount equivalent to the grant-in-aid provided by that government. The known new fixed capital investment in 1995 from the private sector of that country in South Africa was equivalent to the embassy's budget for some 80 years. The budget of the Department of Foreign Affairs (R1,146 bn per annum) should be seen in this context.

The Department of Foreign Affairs identifies with the Government's objective of reducing government expenditure. During the annual process of drafting the budget of the Department, missions and the Head Office of the Department adopt a "zero basis" for compiling draft estimates. Fixed compulsory expenses are reviewed and all planned new expenditures must be fully motivated. The Department exercises monthly and quarterly control over expenses. Furthermore, the Department has embarked on a review of the Head Office post establishment and its representation abroad with the specific objective of right sizing the missions in order to achieve savings. This is an ongoing process.

## **9.2. New Missions**

It is neither possible nor practicable to have embassies in all the countries with which South Africa maintains diplomatic relations. The Department therefore adopts a strategic approach to ensure representation in selected regions while nonresidential accreditation in other countries is pursued. This ensures a global network of diplomatic relations. Owing to the expansion of South Africa's relations with the international community since April 1994, the Department has been under pressure from many countries and from within South Africa to expand the number of embassies and consular missions abroad in order to facilitate trade, render consular services and improve political relations in areas where no South African representation existed. In view of the budgetary and personnel implications, the Department considers proposals for the opening of new embassies carefully before submitting a request to Cabinet for the approval of new missions.

Economic, political and other criteria are used to evaluate the need for new missions, in order to ensure a consistent and practical policy and to determine relative priorities. In some cases, countries may be politically influential, in areas that include multilateral forums and may be strategically located but nevertheless present limited scope for South African exports. In other cases, economic criteria substantially outweigh political factors. In all cases long-term prospects are important. Recommendations are considered on the basis of coherent global and regional analyses.

## **9.3. Department of Foreign Affairs Personnel**

The establishment of the new Department of Foreign Affairs incorporating the old DFA, the TBVC departments and former representatives of the ANC and of other political parties abroad has been accomplished. Five new (four functional and one administrative) Deputy Directors General

have been appointed to the Top Management of the Department.

The Department has also, under the supervision of the Minister and the Deputy Minister and in consultation with the Deputy President and the President, completed a full review of South Africa's ambassadors and consuls-general abroad. The majority of South Africa's foreign representatives (ie Heads of Mission) are already appointees of the GNU. Affirmative action is also under way to appoint other staff members at embassies with the object of promoting broad representativity at all levels as training and orientation courses are completed. Since the availability of posts and budgetary restrictions are limiting factors in the speed of implementation, changes are made systematically as part of the process of staff transfers.

The Department places a high premium on its training. It has established a training institute (the Foreign Service Institute) which is utilised to the maximum extent to achieve the objective of a highly skilled foreign service. In this regard, Deputy Minister Pahad's remarks to the Senate on 25 May 1995, are of importance:

"To help us to improve our expertise, we are giving serious consideration to our diplomatic training programme. The inception of the Government of National Unity opened up many fields of opportunity for the provision of diplomatic training to new and serving South African diplomats."

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#### **9.4. The nature of South Africa's foreign representation**

South Africa welcomes the establishment of embassies and consular missions by countries with which formal relations have been established. These offices function in terms of the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic Relations and on Consular

Relations. They also function in accordance with South African legislation on diplomatic immunities and privileges. Over 100 countries are represented in South Africa.

South Africa has established diplomatic relations with 165 of the more than 180 members of the United Nations. It is beyond South Africa's means, and also impractical, to open embassies or consular missions in all countries. South Africa maintains missions at embassy level in 74 countries and another 21 additional consular and other missions in important cities, particularly in regard to trade promotion. Permanent Missions to the United Nations and other international organisations have been established in New York and Geneva while embassies in Vienna, Addis Ababa and Nairobi also function as multilateral missions to international organisations. Missions in Paris, Rome, Washington, The Hague and Montreal have additional multilateral monitoring functions. Brussels is the site of South Africa's Permanent Mission to the European Union and other European institutions.

During 1994 and 1995, the Department of Foreign Affairs, under the direction of the Minister and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, undertook a thorough review of South Africa's representation abroad. One objective was to rectify imbalances which were remnants of the country's international relations before democratisation. A second objective was to determine whether the existence of certain established missions abroad was justified and to evaluate the reasons for establishing new missions. In motivating the opening of new missions to Cabinet, economic, political, security, cultural and other criteria were used. The existing substance of relations such as trade and potential for expansion in economic relations as well as the political importance of a country are taken into consideration. South Africa's real interests must be served before the establishment of offices is considered justifiable. These are the criteria utilised when representation is re-assessed

annually, normally in the course of compiling the annual budget.

A full list of South Africa's international representation is attached as an annexure.

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### **9.5. Foreign representation: responsibilities**

Possibly because ambassadors are functionally attached to, or are members of, the Department of Foreign Affairs, the erroneous perception exists that embassies and consulates are the "offices of the Department of Foreign Affairs". While Foreign Affairs is the department with functional and budgetary responsibility for the management of offices abroad, ambassadors are appointed by the President and represent the whole Government and all government departments abroad. In some cases the Departments of Trade and Industry, Defence, Home Affairs and other departments attach officials to embassies to fulfil specialist functions. While stationed at embassies, they form part of the staff of the ambassador, who is ultimately responsible to the President for conducting relations with the respective country of accreditation.

This has an important practical value in that all government departments can use

the services of the ambassador and his staff on an "agency" basis to act on their behalf. There is a need for a better understanding by government agencies and especially provincial governments of the role of the Department of Foreign Affairs at missions abroad.

## **10. INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COOPERATION**

### **10.1. Introduction: Interfacing with other departments and organisations**

In the discussion of global trends and the nature of the new world order and of multilateral relations, the complexity and multidimensional nature of international relations were highlighted. Many government departments and nongovernmental organisations maintain international relations to some degree, not to mention the extensive private sector international network. No country can prosper in isolation: the degree of international cooperation often has a direct bearing on a country's relative level of political, economic, scientific and technological development. The extent to which domestic interaction and cooperation takes place in the process of expanding international relations also has an influence in this regard. South Africa cannot escape this reality and it is in the country's interest to pay constant attention to this growing requirement.

The Department regularly interacts, both structurally through interdepartmental committees and on a day-to-day basis, with all those departments with some international involvement. Frequent consultations take place with the Departments of Finance, Trade and Industry, Home Affairs, Agriculture, Health, Defence and with the SA Secret Service, all of which have representatives attached to some missions abroad and with which (policy and operational) interfacing is essential. To a lesser extent the Departments of Labour, Water and Forestry Affairs, Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Environment Affairs and Tourism, and certain others, also interact with the Department of Foreign Affairs concerning their specific responsibilities.

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The Department cooperates closely with the officials responsible for the RDP in respect of a wide range of foreign donors and on related inter-governmental initiatives. For this purpose an official of the Department has been seconded to the RDP since its inception.

Interaction also takes place with the Reserve Bank, NEDLAC, SACOB, labour organisations, universities, the FRD, the CSIR and numerous para-statal bodies when matters of mutual concern are dealt with.

Organs of state with which expanding interaction takes place are Parliament and the provincial legislatures. The Department is eager to facilitate the international contacts of the provinces and has created a special Directorate within the Department to develop this relationship and liaison system.

### **10.2. Economic and development coordination**

A major focus of the activities of South African missions abroad is the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RAP). Particular attention is given to the international dimension and to the role of the Department of Foreign Affairs in meeting the challenges presented by the RAP.

An important role of the Department lies in the field of information. For example, the Department can convey information on the RDP to governments, non-governmental organisations and the private sector abroad. Proper information assists these actors in identifying elements of the RDP in which they could become involved, whether as donors or as project contractors. Missions are also in a position to convey information to the RDP on similar programmes, for example in Asia and Latin America, to enable the RDP to benefit from the experience of other countries. The Department can also play a helpful role in explaining the sensitivities and difficulties surrounding the implementation of the RAP.

The RDP presents many long-term opportunities and the Department should bring these to the attention of appropriate foreign organisations. In conjunction with the representatives of the Department of Trade and Industry, private industry should also be briefed.

Closer liaison with provincial governments, especially in the context of the RAP, is also a priority. The interaction with appropriate line function departments of central government is important as these departments are in a good position to identify viable projects in the provinces in cooperation with the RAP. This is of use to foreign donors.

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The Interdepartmental Development Coordination Committee (IDCC) has hitherto acted as a link between donors and line function departments. It assessed the extent to which donor assistance could be integrated into the general budget and whether projects were sustainable. Now that this committee has been dissolved, new mechanisms will be devised to provide effective and streamlined ways of ensuring sound interactive partnerships. The Department of Foreign Affairs will also continue to facilitate regular contact between foreign donors and the Government.

The relationship between international economic relations and the RDP was explained in clear terms by Deputy Minister Pahad in the Senate on 25 May 1995:

"South Africa is critically dependent on its business and economic relations with the outside world, particularly the industrialised world, to meet the growing demands of our people for a better life, and to ensure the successful implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme."

The Departments of Foreign Affairs and of Trade and Industry have also coordinated their activities. A special committee was established to study how more regular and formalised liaison could be implemented. The Directors-General of the two departments have taken the lead and the nature and extent of cooperation have been expanded. Integrated trade and investment activities at missions abroad are also being promoted. While good liaison exists at



the working level, a major challenge is coordination at the policy level. Interdepartmental policy-coordinating mechanisms, such as the External Trade Relations Committee which already exists, are to be used more frequently and new areas of responsibility will be developed.

### **10.3. Defence and Intelligence**

The Department of Defence (South African National Defence Force) maintains international liaison. The primary reason for this is to enable the Defence Force to assess any international military threat that may exist or develop. This goes hand in hand with liaison with "friendly" defence forces in other countries. The South African Secret Service maintains similar international liaison and monitoring services in order to fulfil its function, namely to take overall responsibility for assessing (intelligence and security related) threats to national security. Cooperation between these two Services is provided for in terms of legislation and government policy. The international roles of these two departments are precisely determined and they may not encroach on the responsibilities of the Minister and the Department of Foreign Affairs. Close liaison is important.

There is a new challenge for these two Services, especially in the African context. South Africa, as mentioned earlier in this document, is expected to play a role in OAU and UN peace-keeping and peace-making efforts in Africa. These Departments will, together with the Department of Foreign Affairs, have to play an increasingly important part in drafting and executing the Government's policy in this regard. Interdepartmental cooperation in this area already exists.

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### **10.4. Key responsibilities**

The President is ultimately responsible for the international relations of the country. It is the prerogative of the President

to appoint ambassadors and receive foreign ambassadors. In the execution of his other international functions, he is assisted by the Deputy Presidents.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, in accordance with his Cabinet portfolio responsibilities, is charged with the formulation and execution of South Africa's foreign policy and with the daily conduct of South Africa's international relations. He assumes overall responsibility for all aspects of South Africa's international relations in consultation with the President. In practice, he consults the Cabinet and individual Cabinet colleagues on aspects of major importance as well as aspects which overlap or link up with the activities of other government departments and Ministers.

In view of his overall responsibility, the Minister advises the President and the Deputy Presidents on those international matters in which they should be involved and other Cabinet Ministers are required to consult the Minister of Foreign Affairs on their international role, where applicable. From this practice at Cabinet level, which is a Presidential instruction, it also follows that there must be similar interaction between departments.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

A number of characteristics and crucial elements of South Africa's foreign policy and international relations may be summarised as follows:

- South Africa must consistently endeavour to pursue a coherent foreign policy, which includes economic, security and political components.
- Preventive diplomacy and pro-active initiatives should be the approach, rather than reaction to events. A monitoring network with African partners is essential.
- South Africa should assume a leadership role in Africa in all those areas where a constructive contribution

could be made without politically antagonising the Country's African partners.

- The Government should continue to pursue a non-aligned approach, with due regard for South Africa's SADC, OAU, NAM and other membership commitments.
- A diplomacy of bridge-building between the "North" and the "South" should be pursued.
- In multilateral forums, South Africa should strive to promote its interests in regard to the major global issues such as respect for human rights, democracy, global peace, security and the protection of the environment.
- South Africa should constantly endeavour to positively influence and change the direction of events and developments internationally, to the extent that they affect South Africa.
- Diplomatic relations and all related aspects should be a means to an end, namely to promote the well-being of the country and its citizens.