



**SOUTH AFRICA IN THE UNITED NATIONS
SECURITY COUNCIL (2007-2008)**

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FOREWORD BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

FROM 1 JANUARY 2007 to 31 December 2008, South Africa had the honour of serving as an elected member of the United Nations Security Council. South Africa, together with Italy, secured the highest number of recorded votes (186) in the elections for the Security Council seat and its candidature was endorsed by the African Union.

Our first ever membership of the Security Council is both a yardstick of how far South African society has progressed since the days of apartheid and a testament to South Africa's new standing in the international community. It should be remembered that not so long ago South Africa itself was a conflict-afflicted society that was subject to Security Council sanctions.

South Africa's Council membership was a national project that involved not only a range of government departments, but also the academic community, think-tanks and civil society in general. Moreover, it generated considerable interest and contributions from the wider public, as befitting a democratic society.

This leads me to my first observation that it was in the collective interest to advance fundamental principles and to proceed from the premise that multilateralism and respect for international law are the most appropriate means of achieving global political and economic stability and security. In the process we brought both a uniquely South African identity to our Council interventions, as well as values that are universal.

My second observation is that, flowing from its own national experience in transforming peacefully from apartheid and isolation to democracy, South Africa had to be true to itself in the context of the Security Council's deliberations on its various complex agenda items. This meant the prioritisation of diplomacy, broad consultation and transparency and working to assist parties to a dispute to achieve unity and national reconciliation.

Furthermore, South Africa joined the Security Council after successfully

chairing the Non-Aligned Movement, Commonwealth, African Union and the Group of 77 and China. South Africa also contributed towards norm-setting in the multilateral arena by hosting major international conferences, such as the World Conference against Racism and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It, therefore, brought both multilateral experience and certain expectations from Member States and civil society regarding what South Africa could achieve as a positive force and an agent of change in the Security Council.

South Africa's main objective in the Security Council was to contribute to the resolution of lingering conflicts and stabilisation of post-conflict situations on the African continent. We also engaged on all issues on the Security Council's agenda in accordance with the Council's mandate to maintain international peace and security. During 2007 and 2008, the Security Council was faced with a number of challenging issues outside the African continent, including conflicts in Georgia and Gaza; Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence; the situation in Myanmar; and the Iranian nuclear question.

South Africa, recognising the role of the Security Council and mindful of the obligations associated with membership of this important body, sought to be a constructive and responsible partner in discharging its Council duties. In this context, South Africa in 2007 and 2008 voted in favour of 120 out of 121 Security Council resolutions. Two draft resolutions, on Myanmar and Zimbabwe, were not adopted by the Security Council.

South Africa was particularly instrumental in helping to revitalise the debate on the relationship between the United Nations and regional organisations in terms of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, which was the theme of our Presidency of the Council in March 2007 and again in April 2008. This initiative highlighted the need to coordinate positions between the UN and African Union on African issues, which make up a large part of the Security Council's agenda.

Overall, it is my impression that South Africa has benefited from its membership of the Security Council. We have made a positive contribution, in our own small way, to the maintenance of international peace and security. The outreach activities undertaken by the



Minister Dr NC Dlamini Zuma presiding over the Security Council, April 2008.

Department of Foreign Affairs to other governments and domestically to civil society, the media and the general public alike, reached new heights during South Africa's term in the Security Council. It is my hope that we will improve on this dialogue and that it will be maintained and strengthened in future.

In this, our first membership of the Security Council, we learned valuable lessons regarding the complexity not only of the issues facing the Council, but also of the Council itself - a body with established traditions and vested interests. Elected members participate for a very short period in an environment characterised by power inequalities.

This publication does not seek to be an exhaustive record of South Africa's activities in the Council, but highlights what I regard as significant aspects of our participation.

Dr NC Dlamini Zuma
Minister of Foreign Affairs

The Role and Mandate of the Security Council

ARTICLE 24 OF THE CHARTER of the United Nations (UN) states that the Security Council bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is the only organ of the United Nations entitled to authorise the use of force in situations not involving self-defence, as defined in Article 51 of the Charter.

In taking action, the Security Council may consider non-coercive measures (diplomacy) or coercive measures (sanctions, use of force). The diplomatic options available to the Security Council include communicating with parties to a conflict situation through press statements or presidential statements, relying on the Good Offices of the UN Secretary-General, or deploying Security Council missions to conflict-afflicted or post-conflict areas. The Security Council may also work with regional organisations to further international peace and security. The Security Council acts on behalf of all UN Member States and its Chapter VII decisions are legally binding.



Former President, Thabo Mbeki and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon during a Security Council summit on the relationship between the UN and regional organisations.

The Security Council in session.



Composition of the Security Council

THE SECURITY COUNCIL is comprised of fifteen UN Member States. China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States hold permanent seats and the remaining ten elected members serve in a non-permanent capacity.

The General Assembly elects five non-permanent members to the Council each year on the basis of considerations such as their contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security, equitable geographical distribution and bilateral relations between States. Africa has three non-permanent seats, Eastern Europe one, and Asia, Western Europe/others and Latin America/Caribbean two seats each. Elected members serve two-year terms on the Council and are not eligible for immediate re-election.

During 2007, the elected membership of the Council was comprised of Belgium, Congo, Ghana, Indonesia, Italy, Panama, Peru, Qatar, Slovakia and South Africa. The 2008 elected membership was Belgium, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Croatia, Indonesia, Italy, Libya, Panama, South Africa and Vietnam.



Minister Dr NC Dlamini Zuma participating in a Security Council debate.



South African peacekeepers with the local population in the DRC.

Vision and Objectives for South Africa's Participation in the Security Council

SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN POLICY aims to help forge an African continent that is prosperous, peaceful, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and united and which contributes to a world that is just and equitable.

Membership of the Security Council was a special opportunity for South Africa to promote stability and security, particularly on the African continent. South Africa advanced African common positions, where relevant, and sought to secure international support for the African Union's peace and security architecture and its peacekeeping missions.

In addition to its engagement on all issues on the Security Council's agenda, South Africa prioritised the promotion and safeguarding of multilateralism and the observance of international law. South Africa joined other countries in attempting to improve the working methods of the Security Council to enhance its legitimacy and effectiveness. For South Africa it was also important to consult countries that were not members of the Council, so as to contribute towards improving the transparency and accountability of the Council to the wider UN membership.

Whilst Government was well aware of the limitations and restrictions for elected members in the Security Council, it was felt that South Africa could make a positive contribution and leave the Council at the end of its two-year term with its reputation as a reliable and constructive international partner in place.



South African troops participating in the UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC.



Council; namely, conflict/post-conflict situations and thematic issues, such as counter-terrorism.

During 2007 and 2008, South Africa participated in the full range of thematic and country specific issues. It was also a participant in the work of the subsidiary bodies of the Security Council, which are designed to enable the Council to explore some issues (such as terrorism and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction) in greater depth, to monitor/facilitate implementation of some of its decisions and to oversee the implementation of sanctions. South Africa had the following leadership positions:

- Co-leadership of the Security Council Mission to the African Union (AU) Headquarters in Addis Ababa and other African countries in 2007;
- Chair of the Somalia Sanctions Committee;
- Chair of the Ad-hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa;
- Appointed as Lead Nation on Timor-Leste; and
- Co-chair of the Ad-Hoc Working Group on Mandate Review

South Africa joined the Council with a positive track record of peacekeeping, mediation and facilitation, especially on the African continent. At the time, progress was being registered with South African

South Africa's Participation and Achievements in the Security Council

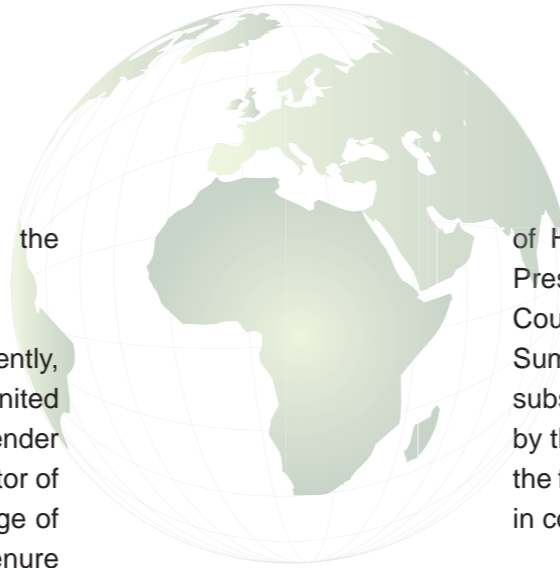
SOUTH AFRICA BENEFITED from good working relations with all other members of the Security Council and formed partnerships on an issue by issue basis.

South Africa's voting record in the Security Council shows that it acted responsibly and independently and contributed towards consensus decision making. During 2007 and 2008 South Africa voted in favour of 120 out of 121 resolutions, abstaining on a resolution on Lebanon. Draft resolutions on Myanmar and Zimbabwe were not adopted due to divisions in the Security Council. South Africa supported 98 presidential statements and dozens of press statements. South Africa also sought to make proposals that would help to bridge differences between other Council members.

There are two types of substantive issues on the agenda of the Security

South Africa is the largest contributor of female peacekeepers to the UN.





facilitation and mediation initiatives in Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Zimbabwe.

South Africa, which entered the field of peacekeeping relatively recently, is currently the 15th largest troop contributing country to the United Nations. Against the context of its constitutional commitment to gender parity, it is also noteworthy that South Africa is the largest contributor of female peacekeepers. This peacekeeping expertise and knowledge of conditions on the ground greatly assisted South Africa during its tenure in the Security Council.

South Africa was active on all issues on the Council's agenda and highlights the following thematic and country-specific issues:

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UN AND REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

One of the key highlights of South Africa's membership of the Council was its contribution to the revitalisation of the debate on the relationship between the UN and regional organisations in terms of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, as well as efforts to enhance the coordination of positions between the UN and the African Union (AU).

Consequently, the theme of South Africa's two Presidencies of the Security Council (March 2007 and April 2008) was on the relationship between the UN and regional organisations, in particular the AU. South Africa also linked the issue of cooperation between the UN and the AU to conflict resolution efforts on the continent of Africa.

The AU and African sub-regional organisations have, in the past, taken the lead in conflict prevention and peacekeeping on the African continent in situations where the UN was not ready or able to do so. Recent examples of these African peacekeeping operations include those in Burundi, Darfur and Somalia. Experience, however, shows that there are still critical areas that need to be addressed if interventions by regional organisations are to succeed. These include shortfalls in logistical capacities and funding.

Two special events related to the Chapter VIII theme took place during South Africa's Presidency of the Council in April 2008, namely a Summit

of Heads of State and Government on 16 April, chaired by former President Thabo Mbeki, and a joint meeting between the UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council on 17 April. The Summit culminated in the adoption of resolution 1809 (2008) and the subsequent establishment of the AU/UN Panel of distinguished persons by the UN Secretary-General. In September 2008 the Panel chaired by the former Italian Prime Minister Dr Romano Prodi, commenced its work in considering how best to support AU peacekeeping operations.

As part of its work, the AU/UN Panel consulted with UN Member States and regional peacekeeping experts. In this context, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms Sue van der Merwe, hosted a roundtable discussion between the Panel and African peacekeeping experts in Pretoria in October 2008, which generated ideas for inclusion in the Panel's report to the UN Secretary-General.

The Panel's report brings a range of UN processes together in a more coordinated and coherent way, making a strong case for the role of regional organisations in the maintenance of international peace and security. The report highlights the role that has been played by regional organisations and acknowledges that these efforts support the UN's broader goals of peace and security. The Panel stresses the need for a more effective strategic partnership between the Security Council and the AU's Peace and Security Council, as well as between the

Dr Romano Prodi, Deputy Minister Sue van de Merwe and Ambassador George Nene in a workshop with African peacekeeping experts, Pretoria, 2008.



UN Secretariat and AU Commission. This will reduce the likelihood of duplication of efforts and organisations working at cross purposes. The Panel also makes recommendations regarding funding mechanisms to support AU peacekeeping operations. The Security Council is expected to discuss this report during 2009.

Another significant outcome in support of strengthening the relationship between the UN and regional organisations was the Security Council visit to the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in June 2007. This visit led to an agreement on the framework for annual meetings between the Security Council and the African Union's Peace and Security Council. A second joint meeting took place in New York in 2008.

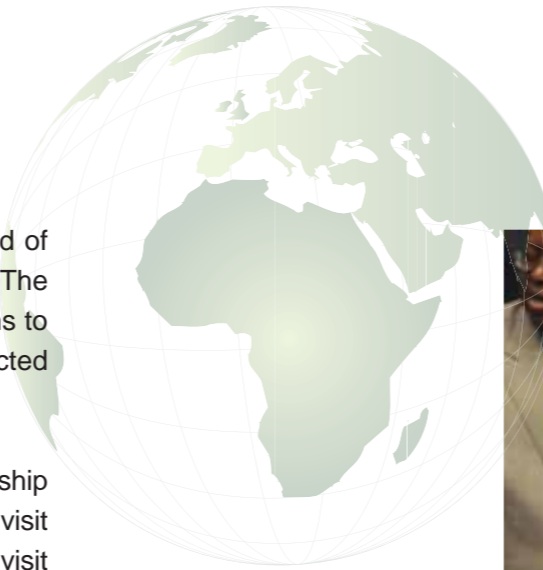
"Preventing and resolving conflict peacefully must remain high on the shared agenda of the AU and the United Nations...I am heartened at the deepening cooperation between this Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union".

– President Thabo Mbeki, Security Council, 16 April 2008

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

South Africa's role in promoting the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security was

Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo addressing the media at the Security Council.



Minister Dr NC Dlamini Zuma and US Secretary of State Dr C Rice, at the Security Council meeting on Women, Peace and Security.

welcomed by the international community. South Africa is one of the few countries in the process of developing a National Action Plan, as called for in resolution 1325 (2000).

South Africa's Council membership offered an opportunity, in partnership with other countries and advocacy groups, to address the role of women in armed conflict in a more comprehensive manner. During its Presidency of the Council in March 2007, South Africa secured the adoption of a presidential statement on the role of women in the maintenance of international peace and security to mark the occasion of International Women's Day. In the statement, the Council reaffirmed the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding; stressed the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security; and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, participated in a ministerial level Security Council debate in June 2008,

stating that women are important in bringing about change and play a meaningful role in the recovery and reintegration of their families and communities in post-conflict situations. The Minister reiterated the importance of Member States adopting measures to strengthen full and effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), particularly by forming partnerships with civil society, the private sector and community-based organisations.

This ministerial debate followed the General Assembly's adoption in 2007 of a resolution, supported by South Africa, condemning rape and sexual violence in all its manifestations. After this reaffirmation of the international community's determination to address sexual violence holistically, the Security Council, acting within its mandate, addressed the issue more specifically by focusing on the systematic use of rape and sexual violence committed by armed groups and armed forces as a method of warfare. South Africa co-sponsored and supported this important initiative in the Security Council.

“Sexual violence in conflict situations is inextricably linked to gender inequality, and we therefore need to advocate more strongly for the equal participation and full involvement of women in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security”.

– Minister Dr NC Dlamini Zuma, Security Council, 19 June 2008

SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

In 2007 South Africa and Slovakia formed a partnership to help advance the collective understanding of the concept of Security Sector Reform. There has long been international recognition that reforming the armed forces, police, judiciary and other security structures of countries emerging from conflict is a key element in the process of deepening and sustaining democracy and preventing a slide back into conflict.

Building on successful workshops hosted by Slovakia and its thematic debate in the Security Council in February 2007, South Africa and Slovakia co-hosted an international workshop on Security Sector Reform in Cape Town in November 2007. This initiative received support from a number of countries including the United Kingdom, Canada, Norway and Sweden.



Minister Dr NC Dlamini Zuma with the Foreign Minister of Slovakia Mr J Kubiš, during an international workshop on Security Sector Reform, Cape Town 2007.

The workshop, attended by experts from over thirty countries and regional organisations, helped initiate a process through which Africa could make its contribution towards the development of a United Nations concept on Security Sector Reform. It provided an opportunity for the sharing of experiences and discussion on the role the UN could and should play in supporting these efforts. In particular, the workshop identified a vision for Africa on Security Sector Reform, as well as the needs, concerns and perspectives of African countries in both post-conflict and non-conflict situations. This initiative provided a unique opportunity for an exchange of views and experiences between policymakers and practitioners from African countries, on the one hand, and regional and international organisations and donor countries on the other.

RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT

The 2005 World Summit agreed that States have the primary responsibility to protect their own populations and that the international community has a responsibility to act when governments fail to protect the most vulnerable from genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity. It has, however, proved difficult to reach agreement between States on when the concept of Responsibility to Protect ought to be invoked in practice. The problem is compounded by the perception that this concept can only be exercised through military means.

South Africa, in its capacity as Chair of the Security Council's Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, organised a meeting on 1 December 2008, which sought to provide a forum for discussions aimed at forging a broader understanding of the concept. Participants discussed the practical application of the Responsibility to Protect in support of preventing and resolving conflicts in Africa. The ideas generated during this debate will contribute to the wider discussion on the Responsibility to Protect that is to be held in the General Assembly in 2009, upon the receipt of a report from the UN Secretary-General.

PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Due to the importance for the African continent of curbing the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which according to the UN Secretary-General is responsible for over half a million deaths each year, South Africa took the lead during the Council's consideration of this threat.

South Africa hosted debates on this theme during both its Presidencies of the Council, attracting a large number of participants, including non-members of the Security Council. The debates focused on the importance of finding multilateral solutions to the problem. South Africa secured the adoption of a rare presidential statement, which succeeded in reviving the small arms debate on the Council agenda. This reversed years of Council inactivity on the issue.

TERRORISM

South Africa acknowledges the central role of the UN in addressing the threat of terrorism. This multilateral approach is premised on the view that international cooperation is a prerequisite for countering terrorism and other forms of transnational crime. In this regard, South Africa stresses the need for States to fully respect human rights and to uphold international and national law in their counter-terrorism efforts.

In the Security Council South Africa, therefore, joined the consensus in condemning specific terrorist attacks, working to improve safeguards for human rights and legal due process and renewing the mandates of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, Al-Qaeda and Taliban Sanctions Committee and the 1540 Committee on proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by non-State terrorist actors.



Ambassador Mike Smith, Mr Seif El - Dawla and Mr Trevor Rajah from CTED during their visit to South Africa, June 2008.

In June 2008, South Africa hosted a multilateral delegation of counter-terrorism experts, headed by the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), which assessed South Africa's national systems to implement South Africa's anti-terrorism obligations in terms of UN resolutions and international conventions. CTED reports to the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee and carries out visits to UN Member States as part of its mandate.

Following the visit, CTED issued a constructive report on South Africa's anti-terrorism systems highlighting areas where South African laws and structures constitute international best practices. Improvements in other areas were recommended that the Government is currently attending to. South Africa set a positive precedent by becoming the first country to agree to the inclusion of a human rights expert in a CTED country visit.

CLIMATE CHANGE

An initiative by a Security Council Member to hold a thematic debate on the possible link between climate change and threats to international peace and security, brought to the fore the ongoing debate about the definition of security in the modern world. Although there was recognition that the full UN membership would need to agree on any expanded

definition of peace and security, South Africa joined other Council members in supporting a meeting on climate change.

The discussion generated interesting and diverse views on the topic, with a general sense emerging that other appropriate multilateral fora should intensify their efforts to counter climate change.

BURUNDI

The AU and South Africa's involvement in the Burundi Peace Process predated that of the UN. South Africa, therefore, brought the experience derived from the African Union's engagement and its role as the Facilitator of the Burundi Peace Process to the Security Council and the UN Peacebuilding Commission.

During its interventions in the Council, South Africa called for the full implementation of the Comprehensive Cease-fire Agreement and encouraged the Council to support regional initiatives. The South African facilitation, which worked closely with the UN Mission in Burundi (BINUB), kept the Security Council updated on progress made and challenges experienced. In December 2008, the Facilitator of the Burundi Peace Process, Minister Charles Nqakula, briefed the Security Council for the

Minister Charles Nqakula briefing the Security Council on the Burundi Peace Process.



last time during South Africa's term. The Security Council, once again lent its full support to these facilitation efforts.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

South Africa supported the peace process and post-conflict reconstruction and development in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), prior to joining the Security Council. It also provided personnel and logistical support to the UN peacekeeping mission in that country (MONUC). South Africa's support for these processes will extend beyond South Africa's Council membership.

South Africa's first action in the Security Council was to work with other lead countries in keeping the Security Council fully engaged in maintaining the UN's commitment to post-conflict support operations in the DRC. When the security and humanitarian situation deteriorated in Eastern Congo, threatening to reverse the gains that had been made, attention turned to petitioning the UN to increase its troop deployments in order to protect the local civilian population and prevent further destabilisation of the region. The result of these lobby efforts was to secure a temporary increase of up to 3082 additional MONUC personnel.

RWANDA

In 2007 South Africa took the initiative and successfully persuaded the Security Council to lift the residual sanctions that were still in place against Rwanda since 1994. The closure of the Security Council file was a key objective of the Government of Rwanda, which sought to normalise Rwanda's position in the international community following the tragic events of its past.

SOMALIA

In the context of ongoing insecurity and instability in Somalia, South Africa worked with Council members to secure international support for regional political and peacekeeping initiatives.

South Africa and others called for the deployment of a UN peacekeeping mission in Somalia. Progress was made in early January 2009, when the Council adopted a resolution committing, in-principle, to a UN deployment as soon as the security and political situation in Somalia improves.

South Africa urged the Council to adopt a comprehensive approach to dealing with the Somali situation. Consequently, in addition to supporting a political process in Somalia and encouraging the deployment of UN peacekeepers, South Africa also joined the consensus in adopting resolutions to address the threat of piracy off the coast of Somalia.

SUDAN

The Security Council simultaneously addressed the complex questions regarding the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between North and South Sudan, the Darfur political process and the deployment of the AU-UN peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID). Whilst there was general support in the Security Council for the political processes in Sudan, tactics differed over the deployment of the UN-AU Hybrid Force (UNAMID) and the referral of the Sudanese



President to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity.

South Africa played a major role with other Council members in keeping attention focused on the CPA and worked with others to secure agreement on the deployment of the hybrid AU/UN peacekeeping force in Darfur. South Africa sought to create a cooperative environment in which agreement over the modalities for the deployment of this force could be reached between the Government of Sudan and the UN. This was also informed by South Africa's concern about the humanitarian crisis in Darfur.

South Africa supported the AU and Arab League decisions that the possible indictment of the Sudanese President be deferred since it could hinder the political process. In doing so, the intention was not to block the referral, but rather to defer it in line with Article 16 of the Rome Statute.

South Africa's involvement in Sudan extended beyond the Security Council, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs chairing the AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in Sudan Committee, which focuses on capacity-building, reconstruction and development in Southern Sudan.

WESTERN SAHARA

South Africa joined other Council members in regularly renewing the mandate of the UN Mission for a Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and encouraged both parties to the dispute, Morocco and the Frente Polisario, to participate in the four rounds of negotiations that were held during 2007 and 2008.

South Africa consistently referred to the UN's positions on self-determination, as enshrined in the UN Charter in dealing with Western Sahara. South Africa also called for the public release of the report by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights and humanitarian situation in Western Sahara.

ZIMBABWE

During South Africa's two-year term, the Council received several briefings from the UN Secretariat on the humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe. South Africa also joined Council consensus on presidential statements

The UN Security Council meets with community leaders during a visit to Zam Zam Internally Displaced Persons Camp outside of El Fasher, Darfur.



expressing concern regarding developments in that country, especially the grave humanitarian situation and political violence. The statements also welcomed the efforts of the African Union (AU) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) facilitation process.

South Africa's approach is to support the Zimbabwean parties and people to resolve their differences through political dialogue. In the Security Council context, South Africa emphasised the importance of ongoing sub-regional and regional efforts, including the South African facilitation mandated by SADC.

The Security Council was divided over the central question of whether the humanitarian, economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe poses a threat to international peace and security and, as such, should become a Council agenda item. A draft resolution to impose sanctions was not successful.

MYANMAR

Myanmar was another agenda item that South Africa dealt with in the Security Council in 2007 and 2008. As with Zimbabwe, the Security Council was divided over whether the internal human rights and humanitarian situation in Myanmar constituted a threat to international peace and security. A draft resolution to impose sanctions against Myanmar was not successful due to divisions in the Security Council.

South Africa consulted widely on the Myanmar issue and its position in the Council was also informed by the views of Myanmar's neighbours in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), who did not regard Myanmar as a threat to regional or international peace and security.

TIMOR-LESTE

South Africa was appointed lead nation in the Council on Timor-Leste. As the lead nation, South Africa was responsible for drafting all Council outcomes on this issue in consultation with other countries and the affected parties.

South Africa initiated a Security Council mission to Timor-Leste to gain a firsthand impression of the situation on the ground. South Africa also secured the immediate adoption of a presidential statement following the



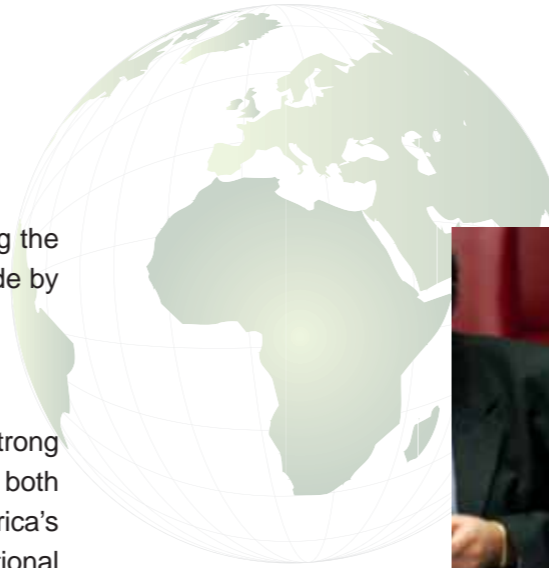
Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo as leader of the Security Council mission to Timor-Leste meets with its Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão, November 2007.

attempted assassination of Timor-Leste's President and Prime Minister and added its voice to those pressing the Security Council to "stay the course" and to remain committed to assisting the Timorese people until the situation in that country is fully stabilised.

MIDDLE EAST

The Security Council has been dealing with the crisis in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine, since the founding of the UN over 60 years ago. In response to the Security Council's request to be kept informed of developments in the Middle East, the UN Secretary-General briefs the Security Council on a monthly basis.

South Africa is of the view that the Security Council has a responsibility to take action to address the rapidly deteriorating situation in the Occupied Territories and to acknowledge the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people. The Council's inability to take decisive action to address the situation in the Middle East, as well as its peripheral role, has in South Africa's view undermined its credibility.



In December 2008, South Africa supported a resolution reaffirming the vision of a two-State solution, in which Israel and Palestine live side by side and within secure and internationally recognised borders.

NON-PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

South Africa approached the Iranian issue from its position as a strong advocate for complete nuclear disarmament and the prevention of both the horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons. South Africa’s interventions in the Security Council were informed by its own national experience as the first country to have voluntarily dismantled its nuclear weapons and related programmes. South Africa is also an active member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors, where it has worked consistently to promote consensus on key issues.

South Africa’s general view is that there should be neither a nuclear-weaponised Iran, nor an outbreak of war over the nuclear programme in Iran.

South Africa and other Council members were faced with a challenging decision on how to respond to the situation concerning Iran’s nuclear programme. Members of the Security Council had to reconcile different elements, including the need to respect the right of all countries to exploit the peaceful uses of nuclear technology and to ensure that diversion from peaceful uses to a nuclear weapons programme does not take place.

South Africa emphasised the importance and mandate of the IAEA, as the only internationally recognised body responsible for the verification of safeguards agreements and for providing assurances regarding the non-diversion of material for non-peaceful purposes.

It was in the spirit of promoting consensus in the Security Council, that South Africa proposed a number of constructive amendments to the draft versions of resolutions 1747 (2007) and 1803 (2008). These amendments included recognition of the role of the IAEA and a provision that would terminate the sanctions upon receipt of a report to the Security Council from the IAEA Director-General that Iran has complied with the resolutions of the IAEA. Having secured these and other amendments, including placing emphasis on the negotiations track, South Africa voted in favour of both resolutions.



Ambassador Baso Sangqu, Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, addresses a meeting of the Security Council.

South Africa also joined the consensus in the Council in adopting resolution 1835 (2008), which reaffirmed the Council’s earlier decisions.

SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM

The changed geo-political realities since the establishment of the Security Council have highlighted the need for a comprehensive reform of that body. An international consensus has emerged, strengthened by the 2005 World Summit outcome, that there is an urgent need to redress imbalances in power and representation in the Security Council and to improve its working methods.

South Africa, proceeding from its firm commitment to multilateralism and its practical experience of the Security Council, continues to support calls for Council reform. In this regard, South Africa played an important role during the 62nd session of the General Assembly where agreement was reached to take the issue of Council reform from the consultation phase to one of inter-governmental negotiations. In 2009 South Africa will participate in these negotiations aimed at making the Council more representative, transparent and effective in the discharge of its important mandate.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

In the assessment of the Department of Foreign Affairs, South Africa with its limited resources played an important role in the Security Council in 2007 and 2008. It was influential on a wide range of issues, even as a first time member unfamiliar with the dynamics and unique inner workings of the Council.

South Africa consulted widely with foreign interlocutors to enrich its knowledge and inform its positions in the Council. Domestically, dialogue between Government and non-governmental organisations, academia and civil society also positively contributed to South Africa's Council membership.

These consultations also highlighted the need to continuously improve public diplomacy through ongoing outreach activities.

Our tenure of the Security Council occurred at a time when the international community still operated on the basis of the traditional conception of peace and security, as derived from the UN Charter. As we note in the report, this at times led to different interpretations by members of the Council.

Through its actions in the Council, South Africa demonstrated that there is some scope for developing countries to successfully take the initiative and to achieve leadership positions within the Security Council.

South Africa's experience in the Security Council has provided new insights and knowledge and has strengthened the country's commitment to building the architecture of multilateral systems of governance, in the interests of all.





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