



August 2008

dfa **INow**

Your voice to be heard

28th Ordinary SADC Summit



DEAR COLLEAGUES

With the signs of Spring everywhere to enjoy we welcome you to the August edition of *dfa Now*. Once again thank you to those who contributed to this edition, we hope you will find it an interesting read.

Our lead story for August is the 28th Ordinary SADC Summit that was held in Sandton. We further present you with the report back from Mexico on the Deputy President's visit and her attendance at the International Aids Conference that was held in Mexico City, and the first Africa-Turkey Summit that had the goal to strengthen strategic partnership between Turkey and Africa.

Since Women's Day was celebrated in August we salute women with a contribution from our Mission in Thailand and in the spirit of women reaching new goals, it is also noteworthy to report on Valda van Heerden, our Consular Attaché in Turkey, who summit Kilimanjaro on 31 July this year. Congratulations Valda!

Our missions' reports this month focus on developments in Indonesia giving us a report on their successful cultural evening; and in Cameroon informing us on the National Day celebrations in both Cameroon and Central African Republic.

For our political update, we have our customary media briefing summary by the Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad.

We trust that you enjoy this informative issue. Please don't forget that we rely on your assistance in meeting the printing deadline. Therefore, in future to ensure the *dfa Now* is released on time please assist us by meeting the submission deadline for articles. Please forward your letters and articles to the Editor before the deadline.

Happy reading! ■

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South African Summits Kilimanjaro



Valda van Heerden with co-climbers at the top of Kilimanjaro.

Valda van Heerden, Consular Attaché at the South African Embassy in Turkey reached the highest peak in Africa on 31 July 2008 at approximately 08:00. Uhuru peak on Mount Kilimanjaro is 5 895 metre above sea level. In August 2006 she climbed Kilimanjaro for the first time with a group of friends, she then reached Gilman's Point (5 681m) but was too tired to walk the remaining 200 m to Uhuru. This year she got another chance to climb this mountain, and was able to walk up to the top.

Mountain climbing has never been a passion for Valda (aged 42 and a mother of three), but since climbing Kilimanjaro the first time, she is always on the lookout for another summit to reach and another quest to conquer. She plans to climb Mount Ararat in Turkey next year, and after that – who knows? ■



President Thabo Mbeki with Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma at the SADC Summit in Sandton.

28th Ordinary SADC Summit - South Africa Assumes Chair

"...for many years SADC's strength was its political unity and cohesion. This strength allowed the region effectively to participate as an important player at continental and global forums. In recent times, however, we have had numerous challenges that have tested the very cohesion that acted as a potent weapon against those forces that have an interest in our perpetual weakness and marginalisation," President Thabo Mbeki said at the opening of the 28th Ordinary SADC Summit.

The 28th Ordinary Southern African Development Community (SADC) Summit took place from 16-17 August 2008 in Sandton, South Africa where President Mbeki assumed the Chair of the Organisation for a period of one year. The SADC Troika now comprises of South Africa (chair), Zambia (outgoing chair) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (incoming chair). The Troika of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security consists of Swaziland (chair), Angola (outgoing chair) and Mozambique (incoming chair).

Minister Dlamini Zuma assumed the Chair of the SADC Council of Ministers during its session from 14-15 August 2008, which was also attended by South African Ministers of Trade and Industry, Finance, Health and Agriculture. Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs,

Trade and Industry and Finance were also in attendance. Minister Mphahlele assumed the Chair of the Ministerial Task Force on Regional Economic Integration. South Africa's inclusive and coordinated approach to the SADC common agenda was evident with representatives from the Departments of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Industry, Finance, Agriculture, Communications, Science and Technology, and Environmental Affairs and Tourism constituting the national delegation.

South Africa assumed the chair of SADC against the milieu of a number of important developments, inter alia, pressure on the cohesion within SADC, ongoing discussions on regional economic integration and the global rise in food and energy prices exacerbating food insecurity in the region.

With the Seychelles being welcomed back into the Development Community, SADC now comprises of 15 Member States namely Angola, Botswana, the DRC, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The highlight of the Summit was the launch of the SADC Free Trade Area (FTA).

The FTA agreement is the largest free trade zone agreement in a region which is home to about 250 million people. The Summit recognised that free trade in the region will create a larger market, releasing potential for trade, economic development and employment creation. Only three

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President Thabo Mbeki at the closing day of the SADC Summit.

countries namely Angola, the DRC and Malawi did not sign as they are still addressing challenges in the implementation of the Protocol on Trade.

However, it was stressed that this first step of economic integration should not be viewed as an end in itself but only the beginning of more committed efforts to deepen regional integration, especially at a time when the region's economies are much affected, and threatened by, power shortages, soaring food and oil prices, food security in general and the negative impact of global climate change on our region and its people's development. All of these challenges should be addressed as a matter of urgency since it will not only have a negative impact on the region's economic growth, but also, on achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

In this regard, the Summit called for the acceleration of interventions to further deepen the regional integration agenda through the development of a programme of cooperation aimed at expanding regional production capacity which entails the provision and rehabilitation of regional infrastructure to take advantage of a more open regional economy. In addition, the Summit emphasised the need for the full implementation of the SADC Protocol on Trade in order to ensure that the FTA is sustainable and the envisaged Customs Union in SADC is attainable.

Another significant element of this Summit was a Retreat of SADC Heads of State and Government. The aim of the Retreat was to allow SADC leaders to engage closely and openly on endogenous and exogenous issues presenting key challenges to the region. This was a unique feature of the Summit in that SADC leaders have not had such opportunities to engage informally, outside of the formal sessions before.

A further highlight was the signing of the Protocol on Gender and Development which was particularly timely for South Africans given the fact that South Africa celebrated Women's Month in August. Apart from the overarching objectives of the Protocol, namely, the repeal of all discriminatory laws, the inclusion of gender equality and equity in national constitutions, the most significant provision in the Protocol was the adoption of the goal of 50% representation of women in political and decision making structures in SADC countries by 2015. The implementation of the Protocol will be monitored by the Executive Secretary of SADC.

Other legal instruments signed at the Summit were the Agreement Amending the Treaty, Protocol on Science Technology and Innovation; Agreement Amending Article 20 of the Protocol on Trade; and the Agreement Amending Article 6 of the Protocol on the Tribunal and the Rules of Procedures thereof.

An Extraordinary Summit of the Organ of Heads of State and Government was also convened to discuss the developments in Zimbabwe. During the Extraordinary Summit, President Mbeki was commended for his role as facilitator and he was called upon to continue with the mediation efforts. The meeting noted that the facilitation process is continuing as per the SADC mandate. The Summit further called upon all parties in Zimbabwe to form an inclusive government and urged them to commit to the dialogue aimed at implementing the SADC and African Union resolutions.

President Mbeki, during his opening statement, said that:

The major challenges of SADC and our people can be summarised as:

- The successful implementation of the SADC Free Trade Area and faster economic integration, thus allowing this region to be globally competitive;
- The sustained and sustainable development of the SADC region;
- The consolidation and deepening of democracy, respect for the rule of law and the respect for human and peoples' rights;
- The empowerment of the ordinary working people of our region and freeing them from the scourges of unemployment, poverty and underdevelopment;
- The acceleration of the process of the emancipation and empowerment of women and building on the relevant resolutions of SADC in this regard;
- Creating a firm basis for our region successfully to respond to the challenges of globalisation, including strengthening South-South relations of equitable and mutually beneficial cooperation;
- Contribution to the realisation of the African Renaissance, the successful implementation of NEPAD programmes as well as contributing to the successful outcome of the project of African integration and unity; and
- Enhancing our capacity to contribute to the emergence of a new world order that would fully restore Africa and the African Diaspora to their rightful place among the world community of nations.

None among us can achieve any of these objectives on their own. Even if we were to make progress on any one of the above matters, the achievement will not be sustainable if we fail to make similar progress on the rest of the objectives. ■

The 29th Ordinary SADC Summit will take place in August 2009 in the DRC.

Contributed by Directorate: SADC

Deputy President visits Mexico

Deputy President Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka undertook a successful working visit to Mexico, 3-6 August. She attended the International Aids Conference which took place from 1-9 August 2008 in Mexico City and used the opportunity to pay a working bilateral visit at the invitation of the Mexican Foreign Ministry.

On 4 August the Deputy President met with Dr Pieter Piot, the Executive Director of UNAIDS; Prof. Kazatchkine, Executive Director of the Global Fund; and Dr Julio Montaner, President elect of the International AIDS Society (IAS). She also paid a visit to the South African exhibitors at the International AIDS Conference.

Later that day Deputy President Mlambo-Ngcuka paid a courtesy call on President Felipe Calderon Hinojosa



Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka meeting with Mexican President Felipe Calderon.

and Mexican Foreign Minister Patricia Espinosa.

It was confirmed at this meeting that the first Joint Bilateral Commission (JBC) between South Africa and Mexico would convene in Mexico early in 2009 and would be chaired respectively by Deputy Foreign Ministers Aziz Pahad and Lourdes Aranda. The meeting further focused on the present economic situation in both countries and it was decided that a group of Mexicans would soon visit South Africa to advise on poverty alleviation projects. Finally, the Mexicans indicated that a formal invitation would be extended to President Mbeki to visit Mexico, while

a mutual convenient time will be found for Foreign Minister Espinosa to take up the invitation extended to her by Foreign Minister Dlamini Zuma to visit South Africa.

Both from a logistical and a substance point of view, the visit can be considered as extremely successful and complied with the purpose that the Deputy President set for the visit. Deputy President Mlambo-Ngcuka was accompanied by Deputy Foreign Minister Pahad and Dr Jacobs, Deputy Minister of Social Development, while Deputy Correctional Services Minister Jacobus led the South African Delegates to the International AIDS Conference. ■

1st Africa-Turkey Cooperation Summit, 18-21 August 2008

The African Union (AU) has in principle decided to establish strategic partnerships with developed and emerging economies, with a view to tackling Africa's developmental challenges. Currently these partners include the European Union, China, India, and South America. For various reasons, a number of countries are now coming forward requesting the African Union to become a strategic

partner resulting in a multiplicity of these partnerships to a point where the AU Commission can no longer manage these partnerships. Turkey is one of the latest countries.

Africa-Turkey cooperation was first explored in 2007 during the first contact meeting held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 4 June 2007. This gave both parties the opportunity to exchange

views with the Turkish government and consider areas of cooperation. Discussions were centred on the proposed Africa-Turkey Cooperation Forum, which was further pursued in the December 2007 discussions held between representatives from the AU Commission, the bureau of the PRC Multilateral Cooperation Sub-Committee and the Turkish government.

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Delegates attending the 1st African - Turkey Cooperation Summit.

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The first Africa-Turkey Cooperation Summit was held in Istanbul, Turkey from 18-21 August 2008. The Summit meetings, namely Senior Officials, Ministerial and Summit, were held under the theme: 'Solidarity and Partnership for a common future'.

The South African delegation was led by Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and included Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad; Ambassador LC Pepani: SA Mission to the AU; Ambassador T Seokolo: SA Embassy to Turkey; Mr Joy Rathebe, Chief Director: Presidency; and Mr Thabo Thage: Director AU. Other African countries' delegations were led at different levels including Heads of State, Vice Presidents, Prime Ministers and Ministers.

The discussions of the Africa-Turkey Summit centred on the two outcome documents, the Istanbul

Declaration and the Framework of Cooperation. The Istanbul Declaration was the key political statement of intent to be adopted by the Summit. The Framework for Cooperation was adopted as a mechanism of actualising the Declaration; it identified nine areas of cooperation, namely:

1. Intergovernmental Cooperation
2. Trade and Investment
3. Health
4. Peace and Security
5. Infrastructure Development in Energy
6. Transport and Telecommunication
7. Culture and Education
8. Media and Communication
9. Environment

The highlight of the first Summit between Africa and Turkey was in the adoption of both the Declaration and Framework for Cooperation by acclamation. It was adopted without major challenges; however, Senegal

proposed including environment and climate change in both outcome documents and this was accepted.

South Africa and Turkey's relations are sound with diplomatic representation in both countries. South Africa is Turkey's largest trade partner in sub-Saharan Africa. Turkey's investments, inter alia, the textile, coal and leather sectors in South Africa amount to US\$ 60 million. In 2007, the top South African export products to Turkey consisted mainly of raw materials and semi-manufactured products, including gold, bituminous hard coal, catalytic converters, motor vehicles and automotive spare parts. For Turkey, in 2007 the top export products to South Africa included fuel, motor vehicles, tractors, sanitary products and household products. South Africa therefore views Africa's partnership with Turkey as one of all round strategic importance. ■

Contributed by Directorate: AU

Culture Evening in Indonesia



Ambassador Memela and Mrs Memela dancing with the Isingqi Sa-Kwantu Cultural Group at the SA - Indonesia Cultural Evening in Jakarta, 6 August 2008.



The Pelangi Nusantara Dance Group performing various traditional dances during the evening.

The South African mission in Indonesia keeps with its commitment to promote people to people contact. It was in this light that the mission hosted the SA-Indonesia Cultural Evening on 6 August 2008. The event featured the Isingqi Sa-Kwantu cultural group from the Walter Sisulu University as well as two Indonesian groups, namely the internationally renowned Trisakti University Choir, which recently won an award in Austria, and the Pelangi Nusantara cultural group.

The Isingqi Sa-Kwantu group rendered traditional Xhosa songs and dance in full complementary traditional wear. This group distinguished

the event from all other groups who previously performed in Indonesia, because it managed to communicate and showcase the rich culture of the Xhosa people.

The Pelangi Nusantara group performed dance infused by poems and spiritual music of the Moslem coastline communities. They danced with dynamic and uniform movements which reflected the spirit of 'gotong-royong' or 'working together' among the Acehnese people.

In his opening address Ambassador Memela noted that the cultural evening is a catalyst in the consoli-

dation of bilateral relations between South Africa and Indonesia. He noted that in the African context, there is a Xhosa expression of humaneness or Ubuntu: 'Umntu ngumntu ngabantu' which means 'I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am'. Ubuntu recognises and respects diversity, the rich and varied traditions and cultures, and commitment to act together. This philosophy calls for collective human effort in a spirit of solidarity and a holistic involvement in the quest for love and peace.

He stated that the Cultural Evening is one of many cultural exchanges that have been organised between South

Women's Day celebrated in Thailand

To mark South Africa's Women's Day on 9 August 2008, Douglas Gibson, South African Ambassador to Thailand, hosted a luncheon for 50 guests at the Conrad Hotel, Bangkok. The focus of the luncheon was on the problem of human trafficking.

Ambassador Gibson stated that while countless women were involved in human trafficking as helpless victims, no one could say that their human rights were being protected or preserved. Both South Africa and Thailand have huge problems with women being forced into prostitution and drug abuse through heartless traffickers.

The function was attended by some of Thailand's top experts on human trafficking. These included former

Thai Cabinet Minister Ms Pavana Hongsakul; Senator Ms Trungjai Buranasomphob; Chairperson of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Ms Pikulkaew Krairiksh; and women ambassadors in Thailand from India, Israel, Cuba and Norway. The function was addressed by Mr Willem Pretorius, Team Leader of the Asia Regional Trafficking in Persons Project (ARTIP), who stated that trafficking is made up of three phases which include recruitment, often being force or deception; movement by air, land or sea; and exploitation, which could take the form of prostitution, domestic work and illegal adoption.

Mr Pretorius said that victims often do not escape because exploitation is maintained through a range of coercive

methods. He noted that victims often cannot escape due to economic coercion, isolation, addiction, threat of violence, exposure and shame and dependence of their loved ones.

Ambassador Gibson stated that the theme of South African Women's Day this year is *Business Unusual: All Power to Women*. The event aimed at highlighting the scourge of human trafficking where women and children are the main victims. ■

National Day in Cameroon and Central African Republic

Cameroon

The South African High Commission in Cameroon celebrated National Day at the official residence with the theme '*Business Unusual: all hands on deck*'. The event was considered highly successful with approximately 400 guests attending. They included ministers, representatives of the diplomatic and consular community, international organisations, government officials, business people, media, South African expatriates in Cameroon and High Commission staff. The High Commissioner's speech in English and French as well as the traditional South African food, music and dances were highly appreciated.

Central African Republic

The first ever National Day celebration in Central African Republic (CAR) was launched by Ambassador Ripinga on 7 June 2008. The event was attended by 300 guests, including six ministers and members of the Diplomatic Corps. The High Commissioner's speech was well received and the event ended with a handover of 28 million francs CFA from the South African Government to the CAR for humanitarian projects. ■



The Trisakti University Student Choir performing traditional Indonesian songs.



Ambassador Imron Cotan handing over a certificate of appreciation to the leader of the Isingqi Sa-Kwantu Cultural Group.

'Umntu ngumntu ngabantu'

'I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am'

Africa and Indonesia. 'In the past we have presented choral music and quasi-choral and dance traditional fusion but today we had something different. Isingqi Sa-Kwantu, from the Walter Sisulu University in the Eastern Cape, rendered traditional Xhosa songs, which reflected varying patterns of response to social situations. The name of the group Isingqi Sa-Kwantu means the rhythm of the people, and will be presented by their expression of music and dance.'

Secretary-General of the Indonesian Department of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Imran Cotan, commended the Embassy on once again consolidating people to people contact by bringing together South Africans and Indonesians. The organisation of any celebratory event by the mission continues to serve as a platform to showcase South Africa, its people and the melting pot of cultures it has to offer.

The SA-Indonesia Cultural Evening attracted distinguished audiences primarily characterised by the presence of prominent figures in the domestic and diplomatic corps. ■

DEPUTY MINISTER AZIZ PAHAD'S MEDIA BRIEFING

President Thabo Mbeki extends condolences on the death of President Levy Mwanawasa

Let me again reiterate the heartfelt condolences of President Thabo Mbeki on behalf of the Government and people of South Africa, the SADC Region and on his own behalf to the government and people of Zambia on the death of President Levy Mwanawasa. In this regard, President Mbeki said 'The Government and people of South Africa and indeed the entire SADC region are deeply saddened to learn of the untimely death of our brother and leader, and recent Chairperson of SADC, President Levy.'

He concluded by saying 'The people of South Africa and indeed the entire SADC region, accordingly, extend their heartfelt condolences to the government and people of Zambia and to his widow Maureen Mwanawasa and the children'.



The funeral of the late Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa.

President Thabo Mbeki to host Venezuelan President on Historic State Visit

President Thabo Mbeki will on Tuesday 2 September 2008 host his Venezuelan counterpart President Hugo Chavez for bilateral political,

economic and trade discussions at the Union Buildings during his first State Visit to South Africa scheduled for 2-3 September 2008. President Mbeki will host President Chavez for discussions within the context of South Africa's priority to consolidate relations with Latin America with a view to fast

Mission activities

South African Golf Day hosted by the Embassy, Amman



Participants in the South African Golf Day, hosted by the Embassy in Amman.

diplomatic corps as well as former South African Ambassador to Jordan, Dr Vincent Zulu. An Iraqi player Amer al Hassan won the tournament, the Brit Spencer Bragg was second and Waleed Abu al Sameed, a Jordanian player, third. South African Ambassador to Jordan, Dr Boy Geldenhuys, presented the awards to the winners.

While the event itself was an international social gathering, it enabled the Embassy to raise its profile and promote South Africa in general and specific matters such as Mr Mandela's legacy, the 2010 World Cup and golf tourism to South Africa. The event received wide radio and press coverage and was sponsored by local and South African companies. ■

On 11 July 2008 the Embassy hosted a South African Golf Day at the local Bisharat golf club in Amman. The event offered the opportunity to promote South Africa by distributing brochures about the country and

servicing South African wines at the luncheon after the tournament.

The tournament was attended by prominent Jordanian and expatriate business people and members of the

tracking the developmental agenda of the South. It is South Africa's declared intention to expand its relations with Venezuela in particular and Latin America and the Caribbean in general. Bilateral relations between the two countries will be reviewed against this background. Discussions would focus on opportunities that exist in the areas of Energy, Mining, Trade and the Armament Industry. In addition, areas for possible future engagements with Venezuela in the fields of Agriculture and Public Works would be explored.

Preparations for the 3rd IBSA Summit, 10-15 October 2008

In preparation for the 3rd IBSA Summit that will be taking place in New Delhi from 10-15 October 2008, India has invited most Sectoral Working Groups to meet their trilateral counterparts during September 2008 in India. The purpose of these meetings immediately prior to the Summit will be to reflect on the progress made in terms of sectoral cooperation since the 2nd IBSA Summit. In this regard, it is expected that Agreements/ MOUs in the following areas may be ready for signature at the 3rd IBSA Summit: Human Settlement Development; Science and Technology; Climate Change; Tourism; Intellectual Property Rights; Trade Facilitation; Maritime Transport; and Civil Aviation.

In addition to the government-to-government cooperation and preparations, civil society will once again be participating in the 3rd IBSA Summit. India's preliminary programme for the forthcoming 3rd IBSA Summit includes side events from 13-14 October 2008, including an Academic Seminar; a Women's Forum; Parliamentary Forum; 2nd IBSA Editors Conference; and a meeting of the Business Council. An IBSA Cultural Event will also take place at the Summit. The 13th Focal Points meeting will be held in New Delhi on 10 October 2008.



President Thabo Mbeki welcoming Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez at the Union Buildings.

15th Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement Tehran, 27-30 July 2008

NAM Ministerial on Iran's Nuclear Issue

The South African delegation to the 15th Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement was led by Foreign Minister Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma.

The Ministers reaffirmed the basic and inalienable right of all states to develop research, production and use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, without any discrimination and in conformity with their respective legal obligations. Therefore, nothing should be interpreted in a way as inhibiting or restricting the right of states to develop atomic energy for peaceful purposes. They furthermore reaffirmed that States' choices and decisions, including those of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear technology and its fuel cycle policies must be respected.

The Ministers recognised the IAEA as the sole competent authority for verification of the respective safeguards obligations of Member States and stressed that there should be no undue pressure or interference in the Agency's activities, especially its verification process, which would jeopardise the efficiency and credibility of the Agency.

NAM Ministerial on the Middle East Peace Process

The Ministers reaffirmed their support for the Middle East peace process based on Security Council resolutions 242, 338, 425, 1397 and 1515; the Madrid terms of reference; and the principle of land for peace. They rejected attempts to alter the terms of reference of the peace process and further rejected the imposition of unilateral measures and schemes by Israel, the occupying power, aimed at forcibly and illegally imposing a unilateral solution. In this regard, they stressed the need for intensified and coordinated efforts by the international community to support the peace process as well as to ensure respect for international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, the key to a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole.

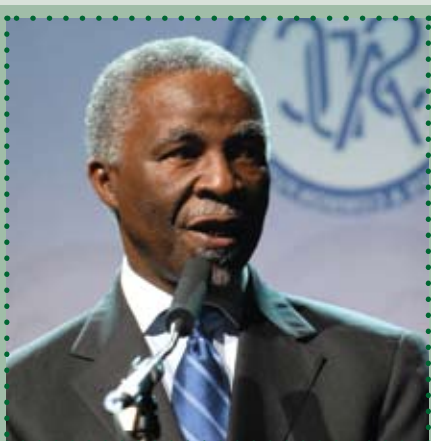
The Ministers stressed the need for the advancement and resumption of substantial negotiations between the parties on all tracks of the peace process for the achievement of a comprehensive, just, lasting and peaceful settlement, based on the relevant UN resolutions and in accordance with the rules and principles of international law enshrined therein. ■

STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF SADC AND PRESIDENT OF SOUTH AFRICA

ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE SADC FREE TRADE AREA, SANDTON, SOUTH AFRICA, 17 AUGUST 2008.

Twenty-six years ago, on this day, 17 August, one of the committed activists of the ANC was killed by a letter bomb in Maputo, Mozambique. Ruth First was assassinated immediately after hosting a seminar on mobilising research support for the then SADCC. Your Majesty and Your Excellencies, on this important day in the calendar of SADC we remember her, also because the month of August is a women's month here in South Africa, during which we honour of the courage and sacrifices of the many heroines of our struggle, such as Ruth First, who laid down their lives for our freedom.

Indeed, today, we reach an extraordinary milestone in our collective and ongoing integration programme in SADC. As you know, we embarked on this path when, in 1996, we adopted the Maseru Trade Protocol, which initiated negotiations towards a SADC free trade area. After four years of complex and sometimes difficult engagement, we concluded the negotiations, and the Trade Protocol entered into force in January 2000. Implementation commenced in September 2000, in terms of which, according to the Protocol, we agreed that we would achieve a Free Trade Area over a period of eight years.



President Thabo Mbeki launching the FTA at the SADC Summit.

The SADC FTA was officially notified to the WTO in 2006, and a multi-lateral examination of the Agreement was undertaken under the auspices of the WTO Committee on Regional Trade Agreements in May 2007 in Geneva. The Factual Presentation of the Protocol prepared by the WTO Secretariat was considered by the Committee which, in its conclusion, expressed satisfaction that the SADC FTA had indeed met the conditions for regional agreements as set out in the WTO rules. Your Majesty and Your Excellencies, today, we can say with pride that our collective efforts have borne fruit, and that we have successfully met the objective we set ourselves. Indeed, it required hard work, dedication, resolve, and an unswerving commitment to mobilise our limited resources so as to meet our objective.

At the same time, however, this achievement must not be taken for granted. I raise this because we will need to resuscitate that shared vision and commitment, the unity and cohesion that have characterised SADC from its inception, as we consider the next steps that will be required further to advance our regional integration efforts in Southern Africa. As we consider our next steps, we will need to be cognisant of the changing global economic landscape. It seems clear to us that the pressures emanating from the global economy have intensified and shifted in important ways.

Your Majesty and Your Excellencies, we are now witnessing the growing presence and role of developing country regions in promoting global economic growth. China, Brazil and India among others, are increasingly important players in the global economy. This, of course, does not suggest

that developed economies are no longer important. Indeed, their role remains central to the global economy and they remain critical sources for goods, investment and technology. The point is that with the steady rise of the South, competition for markets and investment, for trade and technology, continues to intensify. In this regard, we need to ask ourselves: how do we position SADC in this emerging global landscape? How do we ensure that the region becomes a full and effective participant in this changing global economy where competition continues to intensify?

Your Majesty and Your Excellencies, it seems unavoidable that we must reaffirm the importance of regional integration for at least two reasons. Firstly, none of us will be able to assure political and social stability, security and economic development in our countries if the region as a whole continues to grapple with underdevelopment, instability, poverty and marginalisation. Regional economic cooperation and integration offer us the opportunity to pool our limited resources and build an economic base to address the challenges of economic growth and development. Secondly, regional economic integration can create the basis for regional markets and industries to overcome the limits of small national markets, to achieve economies of scale, and enhance competitiveness as a platform to participate more effectively in the world economy.

Our next steps should therefore be deliberate and well considered and should also combine a shared vision with, measurable steps based on our capacities and capabilities. We need a thorough assessment of our strengths and weaknesses as we



President Thabo Mbeki and Minister Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma at the SADC Summit.

consider the challenges and opportunities that now present themselves to the region. Recent self-assessments that we have undertaken set out clear guidance in this regard.

The Mid-Term Review of the Trade Protocol specified priority areas of work we need to undertake. This includes further work to improve regional rules of origin, to ease and reduce the costs of cross border trade through a range of trade facilitation measures and it requires progress on harmonising regional technical and safety standards. All these constitute a large area of work which is administratively complex, requiring greater capacities at national and regional levels. It is vital that we focus on these matters as they will deliver enormous benefits for regional trade.

While 85% of all intra-SADC trade is duty-free in 2008, we must acknowledge that the work is not complete. The remaining 15% of trade is still to be liberalised fully by 2012 and we need to ensure that all Members are able jointly to meet that milestone.

As we consider this extensive work programme, we also need to recognise that regional economic integration is not only about the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers. Part of our assessment of how best to advance the integration effort, must be to con-

sider whether the region's trade performance has shifted in any discernible manner. The assessment is not particularly positive.

Your Majesty and Your Excellencies, over the course of the implementation of the SADC Trade Protocol there has been no significant increase in intra-SADC trade. Indeed, the central policy issue that we must confront is that the countries in the SADC region have not been able to take advantage of an increasingly open regional trading environment. Undoubtedly, the most serious constraint to growing and more balanced trade flows in the region remains undeveloped production structures and supply capacity constraints. This should set out a central plank for our future work: We must intensify our collective efforts to build and diversify the region's productive capacity to expand the range of products that can be traded.

As we do this, we should continually strive to increase the value addition of those exports. In this context, our sectoral work at harmonising regional industrial, agricultural and competition policy should be prioritised as we move forward. Cross border infrastructure development will continue to play an essential role in advancing the integration agenda. We have no choice but to continue prioritising this

work. As we consider the path ahead, we will need to assess the impact of the Economic Partnership Agreements with the European Union on our integration efforts in SADC.

As we know, all SADC countries are participating in the EPAs, but these are occurring in four separate configurations. On our current trajectory, different members of SADC will have different trade regimes with the EU and, in future, we will have differing obligations to the EU with respect to a host of new trade policy areas including investment, competition, government procurement and services. Certainly, the EPAs will have a profound – and even limiting – impact on the process of deepening integration at the regional level.

I raise all these issues as a contribution to building a collective agenda and work programme designed to further advance the integration efforts in SADC. This should not detract from celebrating the milestone we have reached today.

On that note, let me officially declare that SADC has achieved the status of a free trade area, which is an achievement of great significance. I therefore declare the SADC FTA, under the theme, "SADC FTA for Growth, Development and Wealth Creation," formally launched. ■

Where were you..?

