

QUOTE

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR ORAL REPLY

QUESTION NO: 384 (NO3796E)

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**Mrs W.S. NEWHOUDT-DRUCHEN (ANC) TO ASK THE MINISTER OF
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION:**

In light of the new African Union Commission Chair, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, what are the proposals that the Government intends to continue to drive with other member states to strengthen the African Union further in pursuit of a better Africa?

REPLY:

Africa is the cornerstone of South Africa's foreign policy. The strengthening of the African Union (AU) and its structures remains a strategic priority, especially in deepening the continental integration process. In this regard, our government will continue to seek harmonization of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and promote social and economic cohesion on the continent.

The African continent still faces challenges of peace and security requiring more efforts from the AU towards conflict resolution. South Africa will support Dr. Dlamini Zuma in her efforts through providing support where necessary.

Our Government's support to the AU will also continue to focus on the promotion of democracy; good governance; human rights and sustainable development on the African continent through identified processes in the AU. In this regard, the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSSOC) the vehicle through which civil society engages the AU will have to be strengthened.

The election of Dr. Dlamini Zuma as the new Chairperson of the African Union Commission provides an opportunity to accelerate the implementation of the aforementioned targets. In addition, Dr. Dlamini Zuma will be the first candidate from Southern Africa to lead the Commission. She has also made history of being the first woman at the helm of Africa's premier organisation. Her assumption of the leadership position coincides with the proclaimed AU 2010-2020 Women's Decade.

Accordingly, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Honourable Minister Dlamini Zuma on her election and assure her that Africans, both on the Continent and in the Diaspora are fully behind her as she takes on her new responsibilities.

As the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma will be guided in her work by the statutes of the African Union, its programmes, as well as decisions of the Policy Organs (especially the Assembly and Executive Council). South Africa, as a Member State of the AU, will continue to participate in these activities and programmes as well as continue to fulfil its obligations through the AUC's annual assessed contribution.

It is also important to note that the Commission is an organ that must provide leadership in areas within its jurisdiction, including implementing strategic decisions, programmes and activities of the AU. To this end, South Africa will avail human resources to capacitate the African Union enabling the AU to function effectively and efficiently in carrying out its mandate.

Further to this, as a Member of the African Union family, we will continue to act as a collective for the betterment of the Continent and will work with the Commission to create a better life for all Africans.

The Republic of South Africa would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Ping for his leadership of the Commission.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The election of Dr. Dlamini Zuma was a clear signal that the African Union wanted change and that Member States were united in their call for transformation. Her victory not only heralded a victory for the region but also for all African women as she is the first woman to be at the helm of the African Union Commission. As a woman, Dr Dlamini Zuma will contribute to addressing the gender imbalance that has existed in the AU/OAU since its formation.

The theme for her candidacy was: *Historic Vision – New Strategies for Unity, Peace and Prosperity*, emphasising that it was imperative that we continue with the vision set out by our forbearers while at the same time devising, on a continuous basis, new strategies to tackle new challenges. In her Pledge, she states that “Africa’s success in this century lies in enhanced integration and overcoming the dialectically interrelated challenges of development, democracy, and peace and security”.

To this end, Dr. Dlamini Zuma identified the following as priorities for our continent.

- The eradication of poverty;
- Eradicating conflicts on our continent;
- Building sustainable economies and enhance continental interconnectivity through infrastructure to promote intra-Africa trade, among others;
- Consolidating democracy and good governance in our respective countries;
- Providing for our people, notably in the spheres of education, health, shelter and job creation;
- Accelerating our integration in all spheres with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as the building blocks; and
- Advancing and defending the interests of Africa in global affairs.

Flowing from the above, Dr. Dlamini Zuma stated that the Commission should consider, among others, to strategically place the continent on a footing to achieve the following:

- Use advantageously the current challenges in the global economy and resulting demand for Africa’s resources.
- Manage existing Strategic Partnerships for development, peace and security co-operation while forging new ones.
- Ensure that sustainable social and human development programmes target youth development, gender equality, particularly focusing on the welfare and protection of Vulnerable Groups.
- Develop sustainable programmes to mitigate the impact of climate change on the poor and vulnerable with specific reference to women and children, in line with global trends.
- Focus on civic registration and patterns of migration in Africa since the maintenance of proper records of citizens will ensure states are able to plan and allocate resources more accurately to its citizenry. Simultaneously, monitoring of migration patterns will also enhance effective responses to genuine asylum seekers while channelling other migration flows to relevant systems that would best cater for their needs.
- Develop clear programmes to ensure the emancipation of women in line with the AU’s declaration of 2010-2020 as the Decade for Women.

South Africa as a collective of the African Union family has a vested interest in supporting Dr. Dlamini Zuma in her efforts to transform the Commission and ensure that it takes its rightful place in the international community. To this end, Government will seek to capacitate the Commission with committed and competent Pan-Africans. South Africa will seek to meet its quota by deploying officials to the African Union and its structures.

The African continent still faces challenges of peace and security requiring more efforts from the AU towards conflict resolution. South Africa will support Dr. Dlamini Zuma in her efforts through providing support where necessary.

Our Government's support to the AU will also continue to focus on the promotion of democracy; good governance; human rights and sustainable development on the African continent through identified processes in the AU. In this regard, the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSSOC) the vehicle through which civil society engages the AU will have to be strengthened.