

# SA CONTINUES TO FLY FLAG HIGH AS A GLOBAL PLAYER

**MAITE NKOANA-MASHABANE**



**SOUTH Africa is an influential player in regional, continental and global political, economic and trade affairs.**

In our capital city, Pretoria, we host the second largest contingent of foreign diplomatic representatives in the world. SA maintains diplomatic relations with countries and organisations through 126 missions in 107 countries.

The result? The image of our country abroad is that of a stable and maturing democracy, supported by strong institutions of political and economic governance.

This positive outlook of SA's image is in no small measure a result of the hard work of our diplomats and other compatriots who fly the flag high on the global stage.

In tandem with our growing footprint in the world, South Africa's international trade has escalated to high proportions, thereby contributing towards job creation and poverty eradication.

SA is the second largest and most dynamic economy on the continent, accounting for 24% of Africa's GDP in terms of purchasing power parity. In 2013, 29% of our exports were destined for Africa.

It is also significant to recognise that despite global Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) falling by 16% in 2014, South Africa was able to attract over R140-billion in the 2013/14 financial year. This is almost double the amount of FDI in 2012. Again FDI inflow to South Africa was registered at \$3.31-billion from January 2015 to July 2015 with 5 037 jobs created.

In addition, and contrary to international trends, gross domestic fixed investment into South Africa has been growing steadily since the global financial crisis.

Multinationals continue to find SA an attractive investment destination. There are about 700 companies from the US operating in SA, 600 from the UK, 600 from Germany, 280 from Japan, 185 from France and 120 from India.

Recently VW committed an additional R4.5-billion to its investment into the South African market.

For a country that was isolated by the international community

## Ubuntu Awards honour ambassadors who do the country proud



**HONOUR:** Agnes Msimang receives the OR Tambo lifetime achievement award from President Jacob Zuma as family members and Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane look on at the Ubuntu Awards held recently in Cape Town to honour people who have made a positive contribution to the transformation of South Africa

PHOTO: DIRCO

just over two decades ago, the role we have played globally since 1994 is nothing short of remarkable.

Our diplomats do the hard work behind the scenes.

South Africans of all walks of life have made our country proud across various fields internationally, and they should be recognised and celebrated.

Accordingly, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation hosted the second annual Ubuntu Awards recently in Cape Town under the theme: "Celebrating Excellence in Diplomacy".

Awards are given to an organisation or individual who have, through excellence, innovation, creativity, social responsibility and patriotism distinguished themselves as true ambassadors of SA and contributed to promoting SA's national interests and values worldwide.

The Ubuntu Awards cut across eight categories - from economic diplomacy to social responsibility diplomacy and the OR Tambo lifetime achievement award.

The initiative is inspired by SA's foreign policy, which is driven by the vision to achieve a united African continent that is peaceful, democratic, nonracial, nonsexist

and prosperous and which contributes to a world that is just and equitable.

South Africa pursues this vision, informed by the values of ubuntu (humanity). The spirit of ubuntu is tightly woven in SA's moral fibre, more especially in our interaction with fellow Africans and the international community in general.

South Africa is implementing its diplomacy of ubuntu towards achieving its national interests within a very complex and dynamic environment.

This requires that we creatively navigate and find opportunities, working with our people at home and friends and partners abroad.

Central to SA's national interest is to address the triple challenge of eradicating poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Economic and political relations remain important vehicles for cooperation and promoting SA's national priorities.

The national priorities of government are also pursued in bilateral relations. Focus is also placed on strengthening economic relations to promote SA's trade, investment and tourism potential and opportunities.

The African continent remains central in our foreign policy. We have been consistent in our support of regional and continental processes to respond to and resolve crises, strengthen regional

integration, significantly increase intra-African trade and champion sustainable development and opportunities in Africa. SA's foreign policy engagement is aligned with Africa's Agenda 2063 to contribute to the socioeconomic development of the African continent.

The strengthening of the African Union and its structures is a strategic priority in deepening the continental integration process.

Closer to home, the integration of the Southern African Development Community remains critical for the economic development of the region and for South Africa's global competitiveness.

In the execution of our foreign policy, taking into account this reality, we shall ensure that we remain an active and responsible global citizen, grounded in our values and principles.

■ Nkoana-Mashabane is minister of international relations and cooperation

“ Multinationals continue to find SA attractive

“ Spirit of ubuntu is tightly woven in SA's moral fibre

# Goodbye seems to be the hardest word