

The South Africa-European Union Strategic Partnership

Joint Action Plan

Relations between South Africa and the European Union have flourished since the birth of democracy in South Africa in 1994. Building on shared values and common interests, South Africa and the EU have developed, in just twelve years, a comprehensive partnership, of which one important pillar is the Trade, Development and Co-operation Agreement (TDCA). This partnership underlines the depth and sincerity of our bilateral relations, which have developed into a mutually beneficial true partnership based on equality.

South Africa and the EU consider each other as true strategic partners. South Africa and the EU share many common values and beliefs, making them natural partners to promote development, socio-economic and political progress, as well as stability in a globalising world. Both partners support the struggle against poverty and underdevelopment, racism and xenophobia, as well as the promotion of equal distribution of power, influence and opportunity in the global political and economic systems. South Africa and the EU strongly believe in the primacy of liberty, peace and security, equality, democracy, human rights, good governance, tolerance and respect for the rule of law, and are committed to advancing these values in Africa and globally. Both partners believe in rules-based multilateralism, the primacy of the UN in global security matters, sustainable development, the basic economic principles of a social market economy, free and fair trade and an equitable international economic order. South Africa and the EU further share a concern for the environment in general, and climate change in particular. Both partners recognize the fundamental role of science and technology innovation for development and are committed to closer cooperation in this regard.

South Africa and the EU are both fully committed to a vision of an African Continent which is prosperous, peaceful, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and united, and which contributes to a world that is just and equitable. The EU fully supports South Africa's commitment to the African Agenda, including the African Union and its socio-economic programme, NEPAD. Both partners are also committed to ensuring that the interests of developing and emerging countries are addressed. Both partners agree that the Strategic Partnership will be supportive of regional integration in SADC and the proposed Joint EU-Africa Strategy.

A key element of the Strategic Partnership is the common commitment to promoting an agenda of liberty, peace, security and stability in the world, and in Africa in particular. South Africa and the EU share the understanding that security and development are inter-dependent, and that both parties play key global roles in this regard. South Africa and the European Union recognize the importance of regional cooperation and integration.

The Strategic Partnership shall be built on the existing relations between the EU and South Africa, with the objective to strengthen and to bring added value to these relations while being fully consistent with international human rights obligations as well as with the EU Strategy for Africa and the EU consensus on development.

The TDCA provides an important legal basis for relations between South Africa and the European Union. Furthermore, South Africa and the European Union's common interests provide a natural foundation for a strategic partnership that significantly enhances existing cooperation by moving from mere political dialogue to active political cooperation on issues of mutual interest, at bilateral, regional, continental or global level.

The Partners therefore agree to establish a new overarching umbrella structure for all existing fora of cooperation, the Mogôbagôba¹ Dialogue. A tree in traditional African culture symbolises a place where people engage in dialogue and resolve common challenges. The Mogôbagôba Dialogue is composed of all relevant meetings overseeing all forms of cooperation between the two partners: including the Joint Cooperation Council, Ministerial Troika meetings as well as regular Summits.

¹ The Mogôbagôba is the national tree of South Africa (*Podocarpus latifolius* or Real Yellowwood)

Both parties recognize that the strategic partnership is an evolutionary process that will develop at all levels, both public and private.

Whereas, the European Union has its own internal consultation mechanisms, South Africa equally values the opinions of its regional and continental partners based on a deep commitment to the African Agenda and multilateralism.

I. Enhanced high-level political dialogue at Summit level

South Africa and the EU have, through the TDCA, a mechanism for dialogue up to Ministerial level. However, the partners agree it is necessary to intensify dialogue at all levels of cooperation. This enhanced political dialogue forms the very cornerstone of the Strategic Partnership.

Therefore, South Africa and the European Union will

- Hold high-level political talks twice a year in Troika format. This forms the core of political dialogue between the European Union and South Africa. The meetings will take place in South Africa and the European Union. The dialogue should take place at Summit level on a regular basis.
- Effect high-level ad hoc meetings on issues of common interest whenever necessary;
- The JCC will meet at Senior Officials' and/or Ministerial level alternately in South Africa and the EU.
- Make full use of opportunities for contacts between South African Ministers and their EU counterparts on issues of mutual interest;
- Periodically meet at the level of senior officials and experts to exchange views on regional, continental and global issues;
- Maintain and strengthen regular dialogue at the level of Heads of Mission's meetings with the South African Department of Foreign Affairs;
- Review at the Summit, Ministerial Troika and JCC-level meetings the effective implementation of decisions taken, and jointly decide on future actions.

The partners, in line with their strong democratic values, recognize the importance of regular and institutionalised parliamentary interaction. It is essential to enhance understanding of each other's points of view on matters of mutual interest, and also to encourage greater understanding of each other's democratic systems and areas of responsibility. In this regard we will:

- Encourage the formalisation of SA-EU Parliamentary bilateral relations;
- Encourage regular exchanges of visits by parliamentary delegations;
- Encourage greater interaction by subject-specific Parliamentary committees on both sides.

The Strategic Partnership is based on the recognition of the mutual interests of both partners in many areas of common concern that may require joint positions, actions and/or policy coordination. These interests and global actions can be reinforced by a frank, open and uninhibited discussion and exchange of information between the partners on domestic, regional, continental and global issues.

II. Cooperation Fora

The Mogôbagôba Dialogue will serve as an umbrella for sectoral cooperation fora to which all existing or new cooperation fora should report. In this context, South Africa and the European Union are committed to the full implementation of the TDCA. The Mogôbagôba Dialogue will bring together existing fields of cooperation as specified in the TDCA, including the political dialogue embedded therein, and incorporate other areas that the partners deem useful. It will neither limit nor restrain existing and envisaged cooperation and dialogue.

Besides the expanded political dialogue outlined in Part I of the Action Plan, the political dialogue based on the guiding principles of Article 4 of the TDCA will be continued. In addition to this and the other fora existing under the TDCA, it is envisaged to create additional fora for in-depth dialogue in other areas of mutual interest. The fora will be composed of relevant actors from both sides who will determine their own schedule and structure. The fora should report regularly and in a progress and future oriented manner to the JCC.

The Mogôbagôba Dialogue allows for expansion and synergetic effects between different fields of cooperation, creates the setting for an open, concrete and transparent dialogue and ensures mutual ownership of the strategic partnership.

1. Existing areas of cooperation

- **Development Cooperation**

The TDCA provides the basis for a comprehensive development cooperation programme between South Africa and the EU in response to the unusual circumstance in which South Africa finds itself as being a middle-income country with a solid macro-economic base and considerable financial resources, whilst at the same time also experiencing one of the highest inequalities in the world. The Joint Country Strategy reflects critically on what value-added development cooperation can bring to South African government-led poverty reduction and development programmes, such as the Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGISA), the Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) and Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE).

In view of the special circumstances in South Africa, the real value added by ODA is not only the finance itself, but what comes from it, namely best practice, innovation, risk-taking, pilot programmes, systems development, capacity building, and above all skills and knowledge.

The Strategic Partnership will add value to the existing cooperation, including the Joint Country Strategy, with a view to developing a stronger and sustainable cooperation.

A key objective of the development partnership between South Africa and the EU is to develop the Second Economy and to closer link it to the First Economy, taking into account South Africa's specific/particular challenges and circumstances.

- **Trade and Investment, Economic Cooperation**

Both Parties recognize that the TDCA revision and the launch of SADC EPA negotiations offers an opportunity to strengthen the trade relations between the region and the EU. Both Parties welcome the inclusion of South Africa in the SADC EPA negotiations. Both Parties are firmly committed to the development objectives of the EPAs and that regional integration will foster sustainable development in the whole region.

Science and Technology

Science and Technology is another important area of cooperation between South Africa and the EU under a separate agreement which came into force in November 1997. Both Parties recognise the important contribution of science and technology for development, including harnessing the contribution of knowledge generation and innovation to support the European Development Cooperation Programme. The Parties also agree to strengthen the existing science and technology policy dialogue between South Africa and the EU. Both Parties are firmly committed to supporting African science and technology initiatives, including in areas of capacity building and infrastructure development, within the context of the African Union / NEPAD science and technology programmes, as well as those of the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States.

2. Areas of cooperation to be developed

Both Parties agree on the need to deepen and broaden co-operation in all areas, including the environment and climate change, macro-economic policy, peace and security, migration, transport, housing, education and training, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and social matters. Both Parties agree to explore cooperation in trade-related areas, such as cooperation in customs matters and Sanitary and Phyto Sanitary matters (SPS), on both bilateral and regional levels, where appropriate.

- **Environmental Cooperation/Climate change**

South Africa and the EU agree to establish a high-level dialogue on the environment as part of the Mogôbagôba Dialogue. Possible areas to be covered include climate change, biodiversity, waste management, air pollution, renewable energy, support for South-South cooperation and environmental governance.

- **Sharing of experiences on EU Regional Policy**

One of the major challenges facing South Africa remains wide-spread poverty coupled with high unemployment and wide income inequality, as well as substantial regional variations. South Africa has a clear dual economy, the one being modern and relatively well developed, the other characterised by underdevelopment and an entrenched crisis of poverty. Europe's experience gained in addressing regional inequalities, in particular through in the implementation of the Structural and Cohesion Funds could serve to inform South Africa's efforts to address the challenge of the dual economy. Further cooperation in this field could be developed.

- **Information and Communication Technology**

Both Parties agree that potential exists for stronger cooperation in the field of ICT. A bilateral dialogue on the Information Society has been initiated in May 2006, which has already identified areas of mutual interest for future cooperation. This includes exchange of information and technical activities related to ICT policies and regulatory frameworks, promotion of industrial and scientific partnerships, research and education networks and related technologies and applications, promotion of applications of high societal impact.

- **Employment and Social Affairs**

A dialogue between South Africa and the EU could be initiated in the area of employment and social policy, particularly with regard to gender mainstreaming, youth and the Decent Work for All Agenda. This could take the form of exchange of information, regular meetings and jointly organised seminars on areas of common interest.

- **Combating Crime**

A dialogue could be developed around the issue of jointly combating international crime. This would include cooperation on combating organised crime, illicit drugs, money laundering, human trafficking and counter terrorism.

- **Macro-economic dialogue**

Regular and high level dialogue on macro-economic issues could be developed as part of the Mogôbagôba Dialogue.

- **Education and training**

South African universities already participate in several international partnerships funded under the EU's Erasmus Mundus programme. A small number of SA students have received grants to study in Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses in Europe, but this aspect of cooperation has potential for further development. The possibility could be explored for opening up a "South Africa" window for the programme, funding of additional grants for SA students and faculties.

- **Cultural cooperation**

A dialogue on cultural cooperation could be developed on the basis of the UNESCO Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions, adopted on 20 October 2005.

- **Sport and recreation**

As in the dual economy, sport and recreation in South Africa is characterised by a large historically disadvantaged community. Increased cooperation and dialogue in terms of best practice in social inclusion particularly with reference to gender, the youth and persons with a disability could be explored for mutual benefit.

- **Other Fora**

Both Parties agree on the need to deepen and broaden co-operation in all areas. New fora will be created by mutual agreement by the competent South African and European authorities.

Done at Brussels on this fourteenth day of May 2007.

NC Zuma

**For the Government
of the Republic of
South Africa**

Stinner

For the European Union