



Speech by South African Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Mr Luwellyn Landers, at the Elcano Royal Institute in Madrid, Spain on 09 April 2015 entitled: “*South Africa’s foreign policy priorities for the 21st century*”.

Your Excellencies

The Director of the Royal Elcano Institute

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Members of Civil Society and business

Government Officials

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Firstly, let me thank the leadership of this prestigious Elcano Royal Institute for organizing this event and providing us with an opportunity to share with this special audience some of South Africa’s key foreign priorities for the 21st Century.

The evolution of the modern South Africa’s foreign policy can be traced to the period of our fierce international campaign to isolate the Apartheid South African state, which as we know had institutionalized the policy of degrading the majority of the South African population through implementing laws after laws that were designed to protect interests of the few. Our current foreign policy is shaped by the domestic values that all South Africans share, among them being, our steadfastness in defending human rights, our determination to creating a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society. These values are captured in our Constitution, which is regarded as one of the most contemporary and progressive in the world.

As such, I can further confirm that the development of South Africa’s post-apartheid foreign policy was guided by amongst other interdependent principles:

- A belief in Human Rights which extends beyond the political, embracing the economic, social and environmental issues;

- A belief that just and lasting solutions to the problems of human kind can only come through the promotion of Democracy, worldwide; and
- A belief that Justice and International Law should guide the relations between nations.

One of the guiding philosophies of our modern foreign policy is the concept of Ubuntu, which speaks particularly about the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation, but we are all interconnected. As such, our Diplomacy of Ubuntu recognizes our common humanity thereby championing collaboration, cooperation and co-existence over conflict.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Our Foreign Policy is also articulated in our commitment to focus our international relations and cooperation towards building a better Africa and a better world.

Allow me to share with you our immediate and long term priorities as we seek to operationalize our stated vision and commitment towards building a better Africa and a better world.

- **Africa and African Union**

Our economic and political efforts as a country, while also recognizing the internal challenges we face as a country, are deployed with the recognition that we are first an African country and that we should support all efforts aimed at the attainment of prosperity to Africa. We cannot talk about the realization of prosperity in Africa without peace and stability. It is South Africa's stated intention, working together with other African countries, regional organisations and the African Union, that there should be no African child who should not realize their dreams because of circumstances of war or insecurity in their country. As such, we aim to be part of the African countries that positively strengthen the African institutions so that we can reach the targets outlined in the Agenda 2063 framework document.

- **Enhancement of our strategic partnerships**

Our National Development Plan Vision 2030 informs us that for South Africa to achieve its foreign policy objectives we have to continue

establishing geostrategic partnerships through strengthening South-South relations while also advancing strategic relations with the formations of the North. With the changing global trends, it is important for South Africa to diversify its relations particularly with other emerging economies in order to open up new ways of finding sustainable solutions to global challenges.

Our participation in formations such as G20, BRICS, IBSA, G-77 and others is guided by our desire for a World that is fair and equitable, despite the evident differences in stages of development among countries. With our BRICS partners we are forging ahead creating credible institutions, such as New Development Bank (NDB), that are aimed at achieving credible results through use of instruments that are understandable and acceptable to the developing countries.

Europe and North America also remain South Africa's strategic regions and we are encouraged to see that in both regions there is widespread recovery following the crippling economic crisis that started in 2008. In the case of Euro-zone, Spain is at the forefront of this recovery, and we congratulate the Spanish Government and people for the strides they have taken in putting formidable building blocks to this recovery.

The European Union is our primary trading and investment partner in the world and we have focused our bilateral engagements with this region in the areas defined by our five national priorities, the African Agenda, and our global governance priorities. Furthermore, Europe is a Continent that Africa should continue to share important experiences especially that this is a region that continues to be in the forefront of ground-breaking innovations and inventions.

Our structured bilateral relations with both countries of the South and the North also provide us with a platform to engage in sustainable partnerships for development, including through the promotion of trade and investment; the establishment of joint projects for infrastructure development; and the sharing of technical skills that can help upscale delivery to our stated five national priority areas.

- **Creation of a fair Global Governance system**

One of the foundations of South Africa's foreign policy is our firm belief in multilateralism and collective solutions for shared challenges.

Former President Nelson Mandela once said, “It always seems impossible until it’s done”. While this was in reference to our struggle against apartheid regime, this saying also provides an instructive lesson for the current global governance structures. These remain imbalanced and not reflective of the current global realities. With reference the United Nations Security Council, despite the apparent dragging of feet by key partners, we remain resolute in our call for the reformation of this important institution that is tasked with global security matters.

The current composition of this institution makes it difficult for the UNSC to respond to global crises in a responsible manner, hence South Africa’s belief that the 70th anniversary of the U.N. in 2015 provides an opportunity to make a meaningful progress on the reform the UNSC. We shall not rest until this important institution and others are reformed because we believe that transforming these is not only good for the institutions themselves, but will also provide testimony to the stated principle of sovereign nations participating in foreign relations as equal partners.

South Africa is of the view that multilateral cooperation is more relevant than ever before in seeking lasting solutions to global problems. That is why we will continue to ensure that the voice of the South is heard in such fora as G20, while also enhancing our constructive engagement with partners on such issues relating to an equitable global trade regime as well as on issues of global climate change.

The world has an immense capacity to collaborate in resolving global challenges. This was displayed in 2000 when we launched the Millennium Development Goals at the United Nations. It is therefore our objective that the ongoing discussions on the development agenda beyond 2015 should also address the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental) in an inclusive, balanced and integrated manner. South Africa’s membership of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) also provides an opportunity for us to advance the above position. It is our view that non-governmental organizations have an important strategic role to play in international relations as they contribute the type of skills and practical experience that are valuable to resolving global challenges.

- **Strengthening South Africa’s participation in Economic Diplomacy**

Economic Diplomacy has become the central pillar of relations among nations and as a country we are forging ahead utilizing the resources we already have while also developing new skills in this area. In this Century we aspire for a South Africa that continues to attract international trade and investments while also able to participate in the ongoing initiatives aimed at positioning Africa as major economic continent that should upscale trade and investments within itself. One of the key objectives is to expand Africa's industrial base. We know very well that Spain is one of the countries that are highly organized in this area and we have been following the country's *Marca España* (Brand Spain) policy, which has been credited as one of the strategies that has allowed the country to advance its economic relations with various countries in a focused manner.

Ladies and gentlemen

All the above-mentioned foreign policy objectives that we seek to pursue will not be realized unless they are also premised in ensuring that they contribute towards our five key national priorities, being: (a) Job creation, (b) Health, (c) Education, (d) Fighting Corruption and Crime, and (e) Rural Development, Land Reform and Food Security.

I thank you for your attention.