

South Africa's "African Agenda": Challenges of Policy and Implementation

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1. Introduction

This paper unpacks South Africa's policy agenda for the African continent. We are specifically interested in whether South Africa has been successful in meeting the stated goals of the African Agenda over the course of the past fifteen years, and what the challenges are for the next decade.

What is the African Agenda? The "African Agenda" is based on the "understanding that socio-economic development cannot take place without political peace and stability" and these are prerequisites for socio-economic development".

South Africa's African Agenda goals included:

- *Strengthening the African Union and its structures*, including supporting the harmonization and rationalization of RECs; strengthening the governance capacity of the AU; support the Pan-African Parliament (PAP); establishing AU financial institutions; engage the African Diaspora; facilitate implementation of the AU Gender Declaration; support the implementation of NEPAD, including the operationalisation of NEPAD priority sectors, namely infrastructure, agriculture, environment, tourism, ICT, health, human resources and science and technology, and their integration with AU and SADC processes, and at national level throughout the continent; and operationalising the African Peer Review Mechanism.
- *Contribute towards the SADC Common Agenda*, notably integration of multi- and bi-lateral implementation of the RISDP and SIPO action programmes, aimed at socio-economic development in the region and political, peace and security co-operation.
- *Strengthening the governance and technical decision-making capacities of SADC*, especially the Integrated Committee of Ministers (ICM) and the SADC Secretariat.

- *Contribute to Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) in Africa, especially in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Sudan.*
- *Contribute towards Peace, Security and Stability in Africa through: establishing the African Standby Force; supporting stabilization efforts in Western Sahara; supporting peace operations in Cote d'Ivoire; and strengthening bilateral relations.*

In overall terms, South Africa pursued the right policies, and made the right policy choices. South Africa has pursued an “Africa first” policy now has diplomatic representation in 46 of Africa’s 54 countries. By 2007, Africa received more than any other region of the country’s R3, 282 billion per annum budget, reinforcing the country’s commitment to the continent and the African Agenda.

South Africa’s posture, in the continent, the paper argues, has been non-threatening and non-confrontational, fundamentally different from the aggressive, destabilizing positions of the apartheid state. Policy has thus been firstly pursued in the proper manner. The African Agenda has set out clear values and objectives. Importantly, given the geo-strategic environment South Africa had to contend with, the objectives set by government were reasonable and achievable. South Africa has placed an emphasis on both political integration and economic integration, and pursued both political and economic development goals. South Africa pursued both regional and continental integration goals.

The problem with the African Agenda over the past fifteen years has not been in the area of policy – policy has been clear, measurable, noble and achievable. The problem has instead been in the realm of implementation of policy, and in this regard government has faced challenges located in the political and strategic environment, as well as with macro and micro institutional challenges at home.

2. Context and motive forces and drivers

Since 1994, South Africa has demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting the interests of Africa, and in being the “voice” of the continent internationally¹. Government

based its African Agenda strategies on a review and an understanding of African Geopolitics in the 21st Century, and needs “to be fully cognizant of these forms of exclusion continually reproduced in the current conjuncture by a global environment”. This environment is characterized by: the dominance of one major power (and the absence of a balance of power in the global system); the continuing move towards unilateralism, and the weakening of the multilateral system; and weakening and disregard of international law treaties², all elements which create an environment hostile to the protection and promotion of African interests. Policy has been clear that “the region and the rest of the continent is that Africa is still a site for the advancement of some of the geo-political and strategic interests of the powerful Western countries”³. Powerful Western countries have pursued their strategies and interests “mainly through economic means because there is no longer any rational political reason for direct physical or military intervention. The economic exploitation and marginalization of the continent has not come to an end with the demise of the Cold War”. One way for South Africa to cut the powers of former colonial powers in Africa, and new powers with bad faith and motives is to promote a strategy of Africans speaking with one voice, and for government to build strong coalitions with other African states. Partnership with civil society is also important to highlight the question of external dominance in Africa in the media and other forums.

Policy has been based on the notion that the realisation of the vision requires Africans to develop a more nuanced and adequate response to globalisation; to the reform of the United Nations (and other multilateral institutions; continue to mobilise and press for the realisation of the promises of the failed Doha round of trade talks; work assiduously to at least ensure that all countries in Africa meet the MDGs; and identify ways of restructuring of the global exercise of power⁴.

Policy has been clear that Africa must not accept globalization in the era of “neo-liberalism as hegemonic” and “need to posit a new economic paradigm that incorporates both democratic governance and an accountable and responsible market place; the paradigm needs to go beyond the “anti” in anti-globalization”. It has to be a paradigm that addresses the challenges of underdevelopment, the restructured global division of

labour, the increasing iniquitous distribution of global wealth, global poverty, the growing power of trans-nationals and the implications for progressive governance and administration⁵.

2.1 Contextual Challenge

While these are lofty ideals articulated by policy makers, government has often found it difficult to implement the African Agenda doctrine successfully. For example, while government has regarded its domestic and foreign economic policies as a challenge to neo-liberalism, critics, including civil society at home and in the continent have often labeled the strategy as neo-imperialist.

3. Strengthening Regional and Continental Institutions

3.1 The “Grand Debate” and the “African agenda”

As the “Grand Debate” about what integration trajectory the continent should follow continues to unfold, the Pan-Africanist United States of Africa (USAf) concept continues to be pitted against a Continental-Africanist paradigm, and an African Union Government (AUG) perspective⁶.

While Libyan president Muammar Ghadaffi notion of a United States of Africa (USAf) places emphasis on moving towards a single continental entity based on an eventual federalist model, and creating a supra-national state of states, or nation of nations, South Africa’s “African Agenda” subscribes to the Continental-Africanist, or Union of African States perspective⁷. President Thabo Mbeki’s has been in favour of an institutionalist perspective through which Africa should pursue a twin-track approach of consolidation of continental institutions and norms and values, while moving towards an eventual AU Government, not USAf. President Mbeki and the Continentalists has correctly placed emphasis on norms development, building political and economic governance institutions, and consolidating Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as the building

blocks of African integration, the importance of a development paradigm, gradually transcending sovereignty while using it as a basis for political order formation, and “strict adherence” to such normative framework. South Africa is committed to the idea of establishing an AU Government as a transitory project, and supports the policy of “strict adherence” to norms and standards, and to negotiate common positions on behalf of the continent.

3.2 African Union (AU)

South Africa’s policies vis-à-vis the African Union and its institutions have been clear and have been the correct ones. The policy position that African states and continental institutions should not rush into a United States of Africa (USAf) project, but instead go about establishing order in a measured fashion by building and consolidating institutions on the basis of common norms and principles, has been a sound one. South Africa has pursued a sober statecraft as it attempted cajole fellow African states into living by commonly defined rules, and to execute this project with the objective of strengthening of the AU and its structures and in line with the Constitutive Act⁸. Since 1999, South Africa has been a key actor in establishing the AU, and in 2002 became the first African state to chair the AU, the successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The AU makes provision the establishment of some 18 new organs entrusted with maintaining order in African politics⁹. These key institutions include executive organs, accountability structures, and representative institutions. South Africa is firm that all these organs should be established and strengthened. Government insisted that executive, accountability and representative institutions should all enjoy priority. These include the Assembly of the Union; the Pan-African Parliament (PAP); the Commission, which has some executive power and own authority of initiative; and the Court of Justice and the African Court of People’s and Human Rights¹⁰.

With South Africa’s influence, the AU moved to place an emphasis on the need to strengthen capacities and actions in conflict prevention, management and resolution, and governance. South Africa wishes in particular for institutions like PAP, ECOSOCC, the

African Union Commission, and the African Court of Human and People's Rights to be strengthened and their legal status and competencies should be clarified as a matter of urgency¹¹.

South Africa has correctly pursued a strategy that the legal instruments governing AU organs should be reviewed and addressed in order to avoid duplications and overlaps. During the course of the past six years, government has placed a huge emphasis on the need to adequately finance AU organs and institutions, and it supports the idea of the amendment of the Constitutive Act to achieve all the above reforms; South Africa was instrumental for example in pushing for a new scales of assessment for paying dues to the AU, pays an annual contribution of 15% together with Libya, Egypt, Algeria and Nigeria who also pay 15% of the AU's annual budget.

3.2.1 AU Implementation challenges

As we prepare for the next decade 2009-2019, there are serious challenges for government in AU institutional building. Some smaller African states might continue to play the roles of bargainers as they will challenge South Africa, Nigeria and others' perceptions of perceived "dominance" of AU institutions. Many states are poor payers of their AU dues, and this has often bundled the AU into serious financial crises. The AU will continue to grapple with serious human resource constraints and the understaffing situation within AU institutions will continue, and it would be prudent for policy during the next decade to prioritise addressing these challenges.

While South Africa is one of the largest contributors to the AU's budget, and pays as much as R30 million to NEPAD and the APRM, we remain probably the most underrepresented country in AU multilateral institutions, a serious situation that needs addressing as a matter of urgency. Out of a quota of 17 in the AU, South Africa has only filled 3 positions in the AU Secretariat; and there is not a single South African serving in the APRM Secretariat.

There will be need for urgent AU institutional revamping given the “internal institutional incoherence and disarray” amongst AU institutions. There is need to strengthen the Assembly, the Executive Council, the PRC, the PAP, and the leadership of the AU Commission itself. Change should be designed to strengthen and improve coordination among the Organs and Institutions of the Union, and the effectiveness and efficiency of the structures and processes that have been put in place. The establishment of technical and economic institutions has also been largely avoided by AU members, and this could have serious implications for continental integration and development.

3.3 RECs as the “Building Blocks”

Given its commitment to ending Africa’s international marginalisation, the “African agenda” of government has built on the Mandela government’s approach of a “step-by-step” approach to regional integration and development. Policy has promoted Regional Economic Communities (REC’s) as the “building blocks” and implementing agents of the AU¹². Such an approach was prudent given the need for South Africa over the past fifteen years to reassure its neighbours that its intentions were noble and in stark contrast to those of the aggressive apartheid state.

South Africa was also doing the right thing in supporting the position of the Abuja Treaty of 1991, which makes the case for African integration first at sub-regional level, and then at continental market level. South Africa has supported the “harmonization and rationalization of RECs, as well as for the regional integration process”.

South Africa signed the Abuja Treaty in 1997, and parliament ratified the Treaty in 2000. Policy under the Mbeki government openly stated that sub-regional bodies like ECOWAS, SADC, IGAD, ECASS, the Maghreb Union and others should be strengthened to promote the goals of regional integration, democratisation, peace and security, and accelerated economic growth. As such, and as a REC, a commitment to achieve regional economic development, and to building the Southern African Development Community (SADC) forms key pillars of South Africa’s “African agenda”¹³. By late-2007 South

African policy-formulators were of the view that “it is necessary to consider FTAs between the regional economic groupings in Eastern and Southern Africa at Free Trade Area level”. For the Republic, an FTA should be consolidated before the region embarks on negotiating a regional Customs Union. This will require making progress on key issues such as standards, customs procedures, transport permits, rules of origin, and enhanced sectoral co-operation and policy harmonisation should be prioritized.

Given the destructive and ruffian-like role South Africa used to play in the region during the apartheid years, post-1994 policy has become sensitive to regional anxieties, and pursued the correct policy which is based “on the principles of equity and mutual benefit”, a denunciation of domineering and bossy postures towards the region and the belief that an emphasis on partnership and fairness would more effectively realise foreign policy goals. Over the past seven years, much effort and energy went into restructuring SADC, and Pretoria pushed for the articulation of protocols, but also stressed the implementation and operationalisation of protocols, particularly those on free trade, Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation¹⁴.

South Africa regional strategies places major emphasis on strengthening of governance and capacity in SADC, especially at the Secretariat, and commits to drive the integration agenda in order to ensure that South Africa meets the SADC timeframes¹⁵.

On the question of the proposed African Monetary Union, policy states that South Africa should ensure:

- Macro-economic convergence;
- Push for an intermediate mechanism, such as the African Exchange Rate Mechanism, to pave the way for a common currency;
- An African Central Bank with sound governance structures and sound reputation;
- Management of the process by the Association of African Central Banks, rather than by politicians and a sound reputation; and

- Relatively free movement of labour, which will increase the effectiveness of labour costs as an adjustment mechanism, in the absence of interest rates.

South Africa has correctly supported the idea that SADC should endorse the AU's position on Gender Equality which endorsed a target of 50% of women representation in all political and decision-making positions. This goal was realized in 2005 when the SADC Summit endorsed the AU's Gender Declaration.

3.3.1 RECs and Implementation Challenges

The decade 2008-2019 will raise huge challenges for consolidating RECs as the "building blocks" of African integration, and will in fact force itself onto the policy agenda as probably the cornerstone of the African Agenda in the years to come. As such, the rife perception that, in latter years South Africa has not been visible enough in SADC multi-lateralism, and placed too much focus on continentalism rather than regionalism, is something that policy-makers will have to address. REC and SADC multi-lateralism should not be sacrificed for continental multilateralism, and the challenge is in fact to find a healthy balance between regionalism and continentalism as policy approaches. These approaches should not be mutually exclusive, they reinforce each other and balance is what is called for. Policy should realize the importance of institution building at sub-regional as well as continental levels.

The all-important 2007-2008 AU Audit Commission, headed up by Prof Adebajo Adedeji called urgently for the rationalisation of RECs. The rationalisation of the RECs has been on the agenda of the African continent over the last few years, including most recently at the Banjul Summit of 2006. The extent of attention that this issue has generated is a clear indicator of the necessity and urgency of the rationalisation exercise; the slow progress registered to date suggests that sufficient and concerted energies are not being devoted to the task. The Panel has recommended that the existing eight RECs recognised by the Union should be maintained with a rationalisation of mandates along the lines detailed in this report. Benchmarking the rationalisation of the RECs has, therefore, become an issue

of the elimination of unnecessary overlaps and duplication that have proved to be as diversionary as they have been energy-sapping.

The acceleration of the rationalisation exercise should be pursued on the understanding that progress in this domain will be critical to Africa's quest for a deepened integration in the shortest time possible. Concrete steps in this direction would include the serious, operationalisation of the mechanism for regular consultation and dialogue between the AU Commission and the existing RECs, as well as the immediate signing of the 2007 Accra Protocol on relations between the AU and the RECs, both with a view to ensuring a greater streamlining of their work and the achievement of synergies among them towards the ultimate goal of an economically integrated Africa. Immediate action in this area will allow for a consciously structured process of interaction and exchange among the RECs themselves with a view to overcoming existing problems of competence and achieving a greater focus.

South Africa has fittingly expressed concern that the process of monetary union at the continental level is "very vague and unformed" and "also risks undermining the positive and practical initiatives underway at the SADC level". By late 2007, it was stated policy that South Africa "should rather channel its energies towards achieving a common currency in SADC".

3.4 NEPAD as the African Development Blueprint

South Africa made tremendous progress in helping the continent to articulate NEPAD as the continent's development blueprint. The "African agenda" posited a pivotal role for South Africa in crafting a socio-economic development plan for the continent, and it was a particular developmental project at that: the modernisation of African states and regions. In 1999, South Africa, Nigeria and Algeria articulated the Millennium Development Recovery Programme (MAP), and later on, together with Senegal, these countries developed the New African Initiative (NAI). In 2001, these countries developed the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). With MAP, NAI and NEPAD,

South Africa and its continental partners have viewed themselves as interlocutors with the industrialised powers and the Republic took the lead role in negotiating a new “strategic partnership” between Africa and the outside world. NEPAD hopes to spur Africa’s development after decades of failures as a result of the legacies of colonialism, the Cold War, bad governance, unsound economic policies and management and destructive conflicts¹⁶.

As a modernisation development plan, NEPAD is based on democratic values and principles, including democracy, governance and peace and security; economic and corporate governance; infrastructure and information technology; human resource development (notably health and education); and agriculture and market access¹⁷. NEPAD has placed a huge premium on economic growth as a goal and the past four years saw Africa making tremendous progress in meeting this goal. While the overall aim is to see the continent growing at 7% per annum across the board, many states in the continent has grown at 5% per annum, albeit that in many instances, such growth occurred from a low base.

Through NEPAD, South Africa and its continental partners introduced the notion of “mutual accountability and mutual responsibility” between the continent and its overseas development interlocutors. Within this paradigm, Western powers commit to: greater and more predictable levels of ODA; market access for Africa’s trading goods; debt relief; more free and fair trade, and successfully concluding the Doha development round; and more serious levels of resources for Africa’s peace support operations capacities. African’s in turn committed to take greater responsibility for promoting governance and democratization in the continent; peacemaking; fighting corruption; creating conditions for economic growth; and respecting rule of law.

As a unique contribution to international development discourse, South Africa and its continental partners have introduced a direct link between economic development on the one hand, and politics and peace and security on the other hand.

South Africa took almost exclusive responsibility for promoting NEPAD internationally as Africa's socio-economic development plan; it has done so with members of the G-8, the Nordic countries, the United Nations, and took it to South-South forums like IBSA, NAASP, and the G-77 Plus China.

3.4.1 NEPADs Implementation Challenges

The decade 2009-2019 will undoubtedly throw up huge challenges for the future of NEPAD. Government will have to work hard to turn around NEPAD's negative interpretation in some parts of the continent. Many African observers, including some governments, have gone as far as questioning whether NEPAD was an authentic programme of the AU, and instead branded NEPAD the Africanisation of South Africa's macro-economic policy of GEAR¹⁸. South Africa had to invest a lot of resources into countering this perception. The country also faced a major struggle in getting Africa's states to integrate NEPAD into domestic policy regimes as committed by states.

South Africa also had to counter perceptions that with the hosting of the NEPAD Secretariat in Midrand, was dominating NEPAD activities and policy directions. This has triggered a call by many, notably Senegal, and even one of South Africa's key partners, Nigeria, to thicken their voices for the headquarters of NEPAD to be relocated to the AU centre in Addis Ababa.

Many NGOs have dubbed NEPAD a bottom-down scheme controlled by leaders and governments while they excluded civil society actors from NEPAD processes.

The Adedeji AU Audit Panel was of the view that NEPAD's activities are too widely spread and not focused on the integration process as initially intended. The Panel recommended that NEPAD should be one of the main instruments of the Commission in the injection of accelerators into the integration process, particularly the development of trans-continental and inter-regional infrastructure and the promotion of multinational

companies. This paper endorses this recommendation, and NEPAD should thus move away from a national focus, and do more work on regional and continental projects.

There is need to establish appropriate linkages between the NEPAD Steering Committee with the relevant Organs of the African Union, including the Permanent Representatives Committee and the Executive Council.

As a matter of urgency, the working relations between the AU Commission and the NEPAD Secretariat, especially for programme co-ordination and harmonisation, should be finalised. There is also need to developing a sustainable funding mechanism for NEPAD after its complete integration into the AU structures and processes, and member states should meet their commitments towards the operational costs of NEPAD.

The emergence of China and India as major powers on the continent will throw up challenges for the African Agenda in general, NEPAD in particular, and South Africa will have to navigate its relations with these powers in ways that bolsters NEPAD, not undermine it.

3.5 The African Peer Review Mechanism

South Africa has been instrumental in setting up an African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and many observers, including the members of the High-level Panel of the APRM, recognizes that it is mainly through South African efforts that the continent now boasts its own governance promotion and monitoring instrument in the form of the APRM.

The APRM has made huge advances in promoting democratic conduct in Africa. Given its commitment to democratisation as part of its Africa policy strategies, South Africa and its NEPAD allies introduced the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The APRM is an instrument to which African member states sign up voluntarily and commit to comply with the principles, priorities and objectives of the AU Constitutive Act and other

decisions of the AU and NEPAD¹⁹. It is a mechanism for mutual learning and socialisation. It promotes democracy and good governance as “hot political issues”, and the APRM openly encourages adherence to these. South Africa is firm in the view that the APRM should make a link between governance, democracy, peace and security and development. For Tshwane-Pretoria, African member states should comply with the APRM’s provisions, and all African states should ideally sign up to the APRM²⁰. Even though the APRM is a voluntary mechanism, to date 29 countries signed up, which represents more than 50% of AU members, thereby showing that the APRM has reached a critical mass of support amongst APRM members.

To date, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Kenya and South Africa have completed APRM assessments. The processes in Uganda, Nigeria, Lesotho and Zambia are well underway,

3.5.1 Challenges facing the APRM

Given how instrumental South Africa had been in the establishment of the APRM, it was ironic our own APRM was marred in controversy²¹. In the years to come there will be need to restore the image of the APRM in the country, as well as the image of South Africa as a key player in the process. In its response to its own APRM assessment report, South Africa argued that the panel was ill-informed about developments in the country. It was particularly critical of the high-level panel’s findings on crime and its assertion that South Africa was but an aspirant, not real, developmental state. The relationship between the governing council of South Africa’s APRM, and civil society actors verged on a love-hate tense affair throughout the process. Government tried to dominate the process while civil society saw it as their role to keep government in check. Both sectors failed to appreciate that the APRM called for mutual responsibility and a joint assessment of problems and achievements with the APRM to date.

While it was encouraging that some 29 African states had voluntarily acceded to the APRM by 2008, it is vital that all Member States of the AU follow suit. In addition, countries that have acceded to the mechanism should take measures to undertake the

necessary processes to facilitate their reviews. All countries concerned should ensure that the national processes are conducted with the required full autonomy and participation of as many stakeholders as is possible.

The follow-up actions after country reviews should be conducted in an all-inclusive and transparent manner. There is the enormous challenge of seeing to it that states integrate the finding and recommendations stemming from APRM processes, especially the APRM National Action Plans, being integrated into domestic policy and governance.

4. Peace, Stability and Security

It is probable that no other country in the continent has made the huge political and financial and military resource investments in peace and security as South Africa. During the Mandela years, the “African agenda” stressed “good neighbourliness” and “non-hegemonic” relations with fellow African states; under the Mbeki presidency, policy continued to emphasise a non-hegemonic posture²².

The Mbeki government did not hesitate to spend economic largesse and engage in expansive peacekeeping operations so as to win confidence in, and support for, the African agenda.

The Mbeki government encouraged the establishment of “strategic partnerships” with African states in order to promote peace, stability and development. South Africa makes use essentially of diplomatic means and suasion to achieve its African agenda objectives, and the Lesotho military intervention in September 1998 was an exception from this policy stance. Whereas the Mandela placed the emphasis on peacemaking and negotiating peace agreements, the Mbeki government placed as much an emphasis on peacekeeping as it did on peacemaking.

A key goal of the African Agenda is to achieve “sustained and sustainable peace in the Continent”. South African negotiators, both governmental and non-governmental, have

played important mediation and facilitation roles in Burundi, the DRC, Sudan, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Côte d'Ivoire, Zimbabwe and others. Pretoria-Tshwane has adopted the view that the Republic's own experience of emerging from a seemingly intractable apartheid conflict situation and out of that creating a progressive democratic state makes it well placed to assist others in similar conflict situations; it is determined to apply the negotiation settlement solution as a means of addressing conflicts.

A dominant mode of South Africa's African Agenda strategy has been to push for Negotiated Solutions and Inclusive Governments – read: the Government of National Unity (GNU) option²³. So, South Africa's African Agenda is heavily influenced by the experience of its transition from apartheid to democracy, and its agenda remains predisposed towards quiet diplomacy and preventive diplomacy, notably the settlement of disputes through negotiations. Both the Mandela and Mbeki governments emphasised the need for regional reconciliation following decades of tension and destabilisation by the apartheid state.

As early as 1994, Pretoria sought to promote peace in Angola by seeking an “accommodation” with the rebel leader and declared warlord, Jonas Savimbi, from UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola).

The African Agenda has displayed a preference for the peaceful settlement of disputes, as it sought an end to the rebellion against Zairian dictator, Mobutu sese Seko in 1997-98 through the application of inducement strategies – a combination of carrots and sticks – a to try and nudge the parties to a settlement. Inclination towards negotiated solutions to conflicts, and a denunciation of military options saw Pretoria refusing to getting involved militarily or to side with any of the two blocs in the conflict and instead opted for a peacemaker role.

South Africa's missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi bolstered its image as African peacemaker²⁴. Since 1999, Pretoria was instrumental in efforts to try and end the violent conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC),

and invested in an Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD), which commenced at Sun City in February 2002, a mini-version of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa, which convened in South African from 1991-1994. Instead of military action and peace enforcement, South Africa instead contributed troops to the United Nations Mission in Congo (MONUC). It has continuously called on the international community to help implement and bolster the peace process, and has co-ordinated these efforts closely with the UN²⁵.

In Burundi South Africa sought to strengthen the Arusha Process and Deputy President Jacob Zuma played a key facilitation role in backing the efforts of Julius Nyerere and Nelson Mandela²⁶. One of its key policies was to ensure the cease-fire of June 2004, and the referendum to usher in a new government in 2005. South Africa provided specific training to Burundi to provide an internal protection unit for members of the interim government, while soliciting support for the deployment of an international peacekeeping force.

Even in fellow giant Nigeria did South Africa opt for quiet diplomacy and negotiations as South Africa engaged the Abacha regime for the release of jailed leader, Olesegun Obasanjo (who has subsequently become president in July 1999), as well as the lives of Ogoni leader, Ken Saro-wiwa and nine others. Quiet diplomacy failed to yield results as Abacha defied Mandela and proceeded with the execution of Saro-Wiwa and nine other Ogoni leaders. The Nigeria case showed that South Africa is vulnerable to both charges of insensitivity by fellow Africans, but also of not being tough enough by western powers.

One of the most important peace and security contributions of the Mandela government has been its diplomatic negotiation and conflict resolution role in the Lockerbie stand-off between the west and the Quaddafi government²⁷. The Mandela government did not only help to broker a deal between the two sides, but it also help to bring an effective end to Libya's isolation and polecat status in the west²⁸.

The Zimbabwe question forced itself onto the agenda before 1999 and the Mbeki government has consistently opted for a strategy of “quiet diplomacy” vis-à-vis Harare²⁹. Mbeki also tapped into his strategic relationship with Nigeria’s Olesegun Obasanjo to try and cajole Robert Mugabe in the direction of a negotiated end to the Zimbabwe crisis. Pretoria encouraged peaceful, free and fair democratic elections in March 2002 through participation of election observers under the auspices of the SADC Parliamentary Forum and the multi-sectoral South Africa Observer Mission (SAOM). South Africa also assisted both a political rapprochement between the MDC and ZANU-PF in order to ensure peace and stability, as well as an economic recovery in Zimbabwe; the rapprochement did not yield much in terms of building trust amongst the protagonists. As SADC-appointed mediator in 2007, President Mbeki played a pivotal role in helping the government and opposition to reach an agreement on the rules that would guide the 2008 elections.

Foreign affairs officials stressed the importance of realising the Horn of Africa UN Settlement Plan for Western Sahara and South Africa again supported multilateralism by defending the IGAD-led peace process to try and bring an end to the 18-year old Sudan civil war. As the chair of the AU, Mbeki participated in negotiations to end the civil war in Liberia, which resulted in the departure into exile of former President Charles Taylor in August 2003.

In the Ivory Coast, president Mbeki’s greatest success was to break the impasse around the ethnic and political cleavages created by the notion of “Ivoirite”, the “anti-foreigner” notion of “true” or “pure” Ivoirians, which held that a presidential candidate must be an “indigenous” Ivoirian. It determined that the mother and the father of a candidate had to be born in Ivory Coast. President Mbeki was mandated by the AU and ECOWAS to engage the protagonists in a peace process³⁰. In November 2004, president Mbeki announced a Four Point Plan, which included attempts to revive the peace process, specific legislative changes, and rebel groups embarking on disarmament. Probably the most important breakthrough by president Mbeki was the amendments to Article 35 of the Constitution which changed the provisions on “Ivoirite”³¹. The president strongly

emphasized reconciliation. The President engaged all sides of the divide, including the former prime minister, Alliance Ouattara, leader of the RDR party, and Lambert Kouassi Konan, vice president of the Ivorian Democratic Party, and the main rebel leader, Gillaume Soro³².

South Africa has adopted a clear position with regard to the dispute over the Western Sahara (Saharan Arab Democratic Republic – SADR)³³. Government took its cue from the AU and UN Security Council resolutions. South Africa has accorded the SADR diplomatic recognition. In line with the AU's position, South Africa's own stand was that "the issue of the SADR is a question of decolonization", which should be concluded on the basis of "the exercise by the people of SADR of their inalienable right to self-determination and independence"³⁴. South Africa has been concerned about the seeming reluctance of the UN Security Council to take a firm position aimed at compelling Morocco to comply with Council resolutions, such as 1429, and the recommendations of the Baker Plan II. South Africa has been particularly concerned about the positions of Spain, France and the US in support of Morocco's colonization of the SADR³⁵.

South Africa policy emphasised efforts to stem out trafficking of light weapons, anti-personnel landmines, child soldiers and human security. This issue of human security is an interesting one: in its foreign policy, and through the AU and NEPAD, South Africa's policy-makers emphasised the need for African actors to move away from strict notions of militarily defined state security to a greater emphasis on human security and social justice.

South Africa has long asserted the importance of multilateral solutions in African and global affairs. In this vein it has played an important role since 1994 in trying to negotiate a peace and security architecture for southern Africa. It has particularly been actively involved in the formulation of the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (OPDSC), and in the end it preferred option of a rotating presidency for the SADC heads-of-state and government summit, as well as for the OPDSC was accepted as the governance model for managing regional security³⁶.

The Mandela government has also contributed to the development of a legal regime for international co-operation to combat crime domestically, regionally and internationally in the SADC region. In this respect, the Southern African Police Chiefs Co-operation Organisation (SARPCO) play a key role in combating cross-border crime; South Africa and SARPCO was instrumental in developing a Protocol on Firearms. The challenge lay in the actual implementation of the protocol³⁷.

South Africa played a pivotal role in establishing the SADC Brigade, which will form part of the AU's Standby Force, capable of being deployed anywhere in the continent. The Brigade will also address humanitarian crises, and threats to security emerging from natural disasters and unconstitutional changes of government.

4.1 Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD)

It is important to appreciate the government's stress on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD), or more specifically State-building. No other state in the continent has played such a pivotal role in post-conflict peace-building and development as did South Africa over the past six years in particular. South Africa's strategy has advanced the proposition that "there can be no successful peace-building without socio-economic development and political and economic stability, and conversely there can be no sustainable development and political stability without a successful comprehensive peace-building initiative"³⁸. In its post-conflict strategy, South Africa has placed particular emphasis on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan, Burundi and the Comoros³⁹.

South Africa continues to play a key role in the UN Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Peacekeeping Mission (MONUC). In August 2004, for example, a 3-year MoU was signed between SA and the DRC to support the strengthening of democracy and the creation of a more effective civil service in both countries. It has also provided electoral assistance in the DRC through bi-lateral relations between the IEC of both countries. The

MoU details the founding (already achieved) of (1) a diplomacy and language Academy to assist civil servants from the two countries in efficient, people-centred service delivery; (2) Eliminating corruption (booklets and fliers on correct conduct for officials are available), and assistance in peace-keeping; establishing sustainable ICT infrastructure⁴⁰.

Transforming and building the DRC Public Service is one of the key priorities of South African policy. In 2003 the DRC Government adopted a priority action plan for reform. The partners agreed that South Africa would provide both technical and financial support regarding the implementation of the projects on areas of support. Following work sessions between South Africa and the DRC, the two Ministers signed an MOU in August 2004 in the field of Public Administration. The MOU which was meant to be effective for three years commenced from August 2004 to July 2007 which means that there is a need to review the MOU and propose a new one.

South Africa has been supporting the census project in the DRC since 2005. The initial scope covered the manual and biometric enrollment for the Kinshasa city-state only. The scope was extended to cover the manual census of the 10 remaining DRC provinces, efforts are now geared towards instituting biometric roll-out to these provinces⁴¹. The Department of Defence is playing a vital role in the upgrading of military training centres, the training of military personnel, and the provision of medical assistance. The majority of the operations were done in partnership with MONUC, the Netherlands, and the DRC Defence Force.

In Burundi, South Africa has provided assistance with regard to the development and functionality of state organs and democratic institutions. It has particularly worked with the Human Rights Commission, Gender Commission, Youth Commission, and Truth and Reconciliation Commission. For South Africa, civil service reform and state building will be important to ensure that the state has a governance capacity beyond just the outskirts of Bujumbura.

It is South Africa's policy that external actors need to collaborate closely with the national authorities, BINUB/UNDP and other partners in the implementation of the United Nations Action Plan for Burundi, and should aim to rebuild governance and civil service administration and to restore confidence in government at the national, provincial and local levels⁴².

In support of the Security Sector Reform, resources should be mobilized for programmes aimed at reinstating ex-combatants into society - through training in various trades and access to micro-credit. This could also include the monitoring of their integration. While more than 20,000 military personnel have been demobilized to date, many lack economic opportunities and could pose a potential security threat.⁴³

BINUB has been mandated with establishing a human rights commission and promotion of the protection of human rights, particularly the rights of women and children. BINUB is also assisting in establishing transitional justice mechanisms and ensuring the independence and capacity of the judiciary. There is need to support ongoing discussions for the swift establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Tribunal.

In Comoros, a Donor Conference was convened in Mauritius in December 2005. This meeting was chaired by President Mbeki. Donor countries pledged US\$200 million that was earmarked for reconstruction and development. South Africa pledged \$10 million and offered further assistance in the areas of state building and democratization. This effectively bolstered South Africa's reputation as an emerging donor country in Africa.

In considering the South African initiative to assist with peace consolidation efforts in the Sudan, the South African government has prioritized capacity building and development in the Southern Sudan. The first programme on capacity development was on international relations. The Sudanese were keen to exchange and learn from South Africa's Anti-Corruption progress, challenges and achievements. The Sudanese's

interest was more on Financial Disclosures and the Code of Conduct. In addition, fundamental to the fight against corruption is the involvement of all stakeholders⁴⁴.

Following government's commitment to the peace process in Sudan, more specifically Southern Sudan, DFA as the international relations co-ordinating department initiated activities that will drive towards capacity building and development in the Southern Sudan. Foreign Affairs department called upon partner institution the University of South Africa (UNISA) to assist in this endeavour⁴⁵.

The first programme on capacity development was on international relations and diplomacy, held in South Africa in July – August 2005. The follow-up programme was on governance and public administration, held in South Africa in February – March 2006. The former project called upon relevant government departments and partners to assist the Southern Sudanese on capacity building and development governance and public administration/service delivery. It is hoped that this initiative will contribute in ensuring that peace is attractive and sustainable in Southern Sudan.

The National Department of Housing engagement with the delegation focused variety of housing policies, implementation procedures, project initialization processes, funding, subsidy allocation thresholds, criteria used to accommodate low income groups, different types of settlements, namely social housing, transitional housing (RDP dwellings included), the importance of Public Private Partnerships in housing and human settlements as it exists and implemented in the South African environment.

The Department of Provincial and Local Government presented the delegation with the governance of the three spheres of government and the decentralization of powers between the spheres. Whilst SAMDI looked at Public Management training as the delegation was comprised of public service managers, and the last partner, SITA, focused on state information technology use and management. How SITA links up with all government entities in a centralized manner. The Batho Pele Gateway, E-government programme, procurements services and infrastructure services were amongst critical areas

covered by SITA. Though the delegation indicated the situation in this regard, they engaged SITA.

At the South African Department of Public Service and Administration components like Corporate Services: Finance, Anti Corruption, E-government, Monitoring and Evaluation, People Management and Service Delivery Improvement all engaged the delegation on their functions.

The Sudanese were keen to exchange and learn from South Africa's Anti-Corruption progress, challenges and achievements. The Sudanese's interest was more on Financial Disclosures and the Code of Conduct. In addition, fundamental to the fight against corruption is the involvement of all stakeholders.

4.2 Challenges of Peace and Security and PCR D

In terms of challenges, one of the major implementation challenges South Africa faced in the Great Lakes region in particular was that opposition forces in Burundi and the DRC have questioned the mediators' neutrality and even-handedness, and accused the South African government of having a government-centric bias. This charge was levelled against mediators Sydney Mufamadi and more recently Charles Nkaqula. Another challenge was how European countries with vested interests in the Great Lakes region, such as Belgium, often complained about what a difficult partner South Africa was to work with in practice⁴⁶.

South Africa faces two related challenges in the realm of post-conflict reconstruction and development. On the one hand there is poor co-ordination between and amongst the various national departments that are involved in PCR D. On the other hand, there is poor co-ordination amongst international donors and governments involved in PCR D.

In the region, the RISDP are being slowly and unsatisfactorily being implemented, and all the protocols related to the RISDP have not been ratified. RISDP commits SADC

member states to good political governance and democratization, participation of civil society in governance and policy processes, and commitments to transparency and the rule of law. Progress on this score continues to be uneven.

The Strategic Indicative Programme of the OPDSC is even slower than the implementation of the RISDP, albeit that co-operation in combating small arms and technical co-operation has seen some progress. The same can not be said about observation of electoral reforms.

Continentially, there is little guarantee that the AU's Africa Standby Force will be fully operational by 2010, and this will throw up a challenge for South Africa's African Agenda during the next three years.

While South Africa has become the largest funder of African peace support operations, there is need for a more systematic approach to funding, and as such investments could be made in the African Renaissance Fund or other funding avenues.

5. The Economic Dimension

By the end of 2007, South Africa had become the largest foreign investor – outside the mining and energy sectors – in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, and the Republic's economic interactions straddled the fields of trade, science and technology, taxation, aviation, culture, tourism, telecommunications, construction, financial services and others.

Assessing the impact of South Africa's investments and economic performance in the continent is no easy task. The picture may be mixed. While the value of South African investment may be relatively small, the effects and impact are significant. South African companies have argued that their entry of the African market have challenged and broken up monopolies and bringing down prices. They claim that they transfer skills and technology to local workers, and even ensure reindustrialisation of many moribund

companies and state-owned enterprises. They have also contributed to revenue generation of African economies. Another benefit is that the presence of South African investors has helped to bolster investor confidence in the region and continent. Another impact of South Africa's investment role is that South Africa has helped to dislodge the economic stranglehold of many western powers on the continent.

Major South African multinationals have invested in shopping centres throughout the continent. Multinationals include Pep Stores, Engen, Kwikserve, Woolworths, Game, Shoprite Checkers, Truworths, Metro Cash and Carry, and Massmart⁴⁷.

In just one decade since the establishment of democracy, South Africa has become pivotal to the flow of capital, goods and people on the continent. According to a 2005 study by the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), only 8 of the top 100 companies listed on the Johannesburg Securities Exchange (JSE) did not have a presence in the rest of the continent in 2005⁴⁸. South African Reserve Bank figures show that the country's investment in the continent grew threefold, from R8 billion in 1996, to R26 billion in 2001⁴⁹. The 2004 World Investment Report estimated that South Africa's investment in the continent grew to 7% of all of the total FDI abroad in 2002. Trade with the rest of the continent jumped 328% between 1993 and 2003. The total trade with the rest of the continent in 2001, excluding SACU states, amounted to \$856 million in imports \$3, 7 billion in exports⁵⁰.

In southern Africa, South Africa have been an active investor in all the 13 other SADC countries, and it has been easier for South Africans to invest in the immediate neighbourhood given the advantage of geographical proximity and close trading ties. In 2003, Mozambique replaced Zimbabwe as the Republic's largest trading partner in the region, and trade between the two countries increased a whopping 860% between 1992 and 2002⁵¹. During 1997 and 2002, South Africa accounted for 49% of all investment in Mozambique, replacing Britain who accounted for 30% of the total, and Portugal who accounted for 11%⁵².

South Africa has demonstrated its commitment to expand its economic relations with the continent by exporting goods to West Africa to the value of R1, 8 in 1999, while imports totaled R1 billion, thereby giving the country a positive trade balance. By 2003, South African exports had grown to R2, 8 billion, while imports had grown to R1, 7 billion. Nigeria has been the most significant partner for both imports and exports. West Africa has presented South Africa with new opportunities in the areas of infrastructure development, communications and transport, and the energy sector.

South Africa has struggled to penetrate the markets of Francophone West Africa because of the dominance of France and Belgium in those countries. Part of the difficulties has also been language, cultural and legal barriers.

In North Africa, South Africa has focused on transport, trade, minerals and energy, science and technology, and defence. But economic opportunities with North Africa had not reached the expected levels which South Africa had hoped for.

Economic relations with East Africa has strengthened especially after South Africa opened missions in Bujumbura (Burundi), Moroni (Comoros), Antananarivo (Madagascar), and Asmara (Eritrea). Bilateral trade with Kenya, Mauritius and Uganda has shown growth in trade flows as well as FDI by South African companies.

South is very influential country and boasts the largest economy in Africa, dwarfing the economies of its neighbours, and accounting for close to 40% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Sub Saharan Africa and 25% of GDP of the whole continent. The South African government preferred a strategy of encouraging investment in the continent through the phased liberalization of capital⁵³. South Africa has also driven and provided technical input to establish a framework for macro-economic convergence in the region.⁵⁴

The Mbeki government has been in favour of, and pushing for negotiating Free Trade agreements between SADC and MERCOSUR – Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay;

and SACU is expected to continue with negotiations with the USA. South Africa also promised to begin preparations for negotiating a SACU-China Free Trade Area.

5.1 Economic Challenges

Indeed, there has been tensions between South Africa's political and economic roles in the continent, and the positions and postures that South African capital have come to assume have brought these tensions into sharp relief.

In terms of the private sector, the advent of democracy has seen the restrictions on South African businesses been lifted, and as South African business confidence in the continent has burgeoned, many companies set out to "conquer" the continent's markets. Soon after 1994, South Africa became a capital exporter into the rest of the continent as domestic companies started to investigate into the continent, the sub-region in particular⁵⁵.

Government faces the challenge of ensuring that its private sector pursues its business in a manner that is consistent with its African Agenda goals, as well as with South Africa's national interests. The South African private sector should thus be sensitised to play developmental roles nationally, regionally and continentally. South Africa's private sector can therefore not simply relate to the continent in the same way as other multinationals from the North do.

Government's key challenge here is how to encourage this expansion, necessary to achieve the growth and prosperity of its own economy, while ensuring that South African business does not become, or be perceived to be, the new neo-colonial power in these contexts. This dilemma is a reality over which the government in Tshwane has less control than it probably would like: its carefully constructed and nuanced diplomatic position of "quiet leadership" and "gentle persuasion" is being increasingly threatened

and undermined by the aggressive dominance starting to be achieved by South African companies in other parts of the Continent, and it cannot easily if at all exercise any direct influence or control over this. The challenge is twofold: how to ensure first that the country's economic roles are aligned with political foreign policy; and related in the second instance that South African business – which remains primarily in the hands of the white population in South Africa – does not undermine the policy position and diplomatic practices of the continentalism project that the government has so assiduously and sensitively cultivated over the years. One of the challenges is whether the economic model that South Africa is promoting is appropriate for Africa.

So while South Africa has encouraged free trade and development agreements between SADC and other regional blocs, a major challenge for the “African agenda” is the regional trade balance in favour of South Africa; it is often said that this economic and trade dominance undermines South Africa's position in the region. Some have even said that South Africa has played the role of an economic imperialist power in the region. It is vital that South Africa strives for a trade regime and trade balance that addresses this inequity and disequilibrium.

6. Concluding Remarks

South Africa's African Agenda has supported the idea that there can be no peace without development, and no development without peace. So there is a clear policy thrust running through South Africa's African Agenda. Policy has correctly emphasized the building of strong continental and regional institutions, and South Africa has negotiated norms and rules, while striving to get African states to live by such rules and norms, promote a modernist development model for the continent, and seeking a strategic partnership between Africa and the industrialised states on the basis of mutual accountability and mutual responsibility. However, while policy has been clearly defined, especially since 1999, there remain some serious policy loopholes that South Africa would need to fill in order to operationalise policy more effectively in practice.

South Africa has been sensitive about a perception that it is a domineering, hegemonic power in Africa. However, South Africa's economic roles in the continent remain highly contentious, and have reinforced notions of economic hegemony.

In advancing and consolidating the African agenda, for example, the country should go beyond relying on infusing strategic direction into policy processes, and backing it up with financial resources, as well as developing a strong cohort of professional diplomats that could go into African multilateral institutions, and professional serve both the Republic and the continent's interests. During the next five years of the ANC's transition to new leadership, and finessing policy, the Department of Foreign Affairs will have to continue the task of giving direction to foreign policy goals, and implementing policies. Specific attention will have to be given to building institutional capacity and to achieving the necessary flexibility to adapt to the dynamic demands of the domestic and global environment.

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³ Department of Foreign Affairs, Policy Research and Analysis Unit (PRAU), Overview of South Africa's Foreign Policy, June 2007, p. 5.

⁴ Presentation by Enver Saloojee at the Opening of the SAAPS Conference on African Geo-politics, September 2007.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ These perspectives are contained in confidential communiqués in preparation for the July 2007 AU Summit in Accra, Ghana, Department of Foreign Affairs, May 2007.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Chris Landsberg and Shaun Mackay, 'Is the AU the OAU without the O?', in South African Labour Bulletin, vol. 27, number 4, August 2003.

⁹ Landsberg Chris, Mackay Shaun. 'The African Union: Political will and commitment needed for new doctrine.' Centre for Policy Studies. Synopsis. Vol. 7, No 1.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Chris Landsberg and Shaun Mackay, 'Is the AU the OAU without the O?', in South African Labour Bulletin, vol. 27, number 4, August 2003.

¹² Department of Foreign Affairs, South African Foreign Policy Discussion Document, September 1996, p. 10.

¹³ Landsberg Chris. 'Building a regional society in southern Africa: The institutional governance dimension.' Policy: Issues and Actors. Centre for Policy Studies, Vol. 15, No 1.

¹⁴ Bekoe Dorina A. 'Peacemaking in Southern Africa: The Role and Potential of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Task Force Meeting, International Peace Academy and the Centre for Africa's International Relations. Johannesburg, October 2002.

¹⁵ South African Department of Foreign Affairs Heads of Mission Conference, Cape Town, 17-21 February 2005, p. 6.

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- ⁴³ Nhlapo, "Peace-building in Burundi", p.3
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs, Policy Research and Analysis Unit, An Overview of South Africa's Foreign Policy", op. cit.
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⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ The Presidency, Policy Co-ordination and Advisory Services, Towards a Ten-Year Review, Discussion Document, p. 66.

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⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 65.