

**JOINT STATEMENT OF THE 27TH EU-SOUTH AFRICA INTER-  
PARLIAMENTARY MEETING  
(Strasbourg, 18/19 October 2023)**

The 27th South Africa - European Union Inter-Parliamentary Meeting (IPM) between Members of the South African Parliament and Members of the European Parliament took place at the European Parliament in Strasbourg on 18-19 October 2023.

Both sides recognize the importance of the IPM and are committed to further encouraging the formalisation of their bilateral relations considering the role that Parliaments play in law-making, oversight, facilitation of public participation, and enhancing international relations and parliamentary diplomacy.

After a period of no direct contact due to restrictive sanitary provisions during the COVID-19 pandemic, Members recognize that it is now high time for fostering this decades-long value-based partnership founded on trust and commitment with renewed ambition.

The discussions focused on the Strategic Partnership between the European Union (EU) and South Africa (SA), as well as on issues of mutual interest such as Peace and Security, Trade Relations and Supply Chains, Climate Change, Education and Women Empowerment and the upcoming Elections in both SA and EU Parliament in 2024.

### **SA-EU Strategic Partnership**

1. Both Delegations welcomed the strong and multi-dimensional relations between SA and the EU. They reiterated their recognition that IPMs have played and will play in the future an important role in strengthening SA-EU relations, fostering the implementation of the Strategic Partnership. In times of global challenges, major geopolitical shifts and uncertainty, parliamentary diplomacy has a significant role to play and opens avenues where other actors need or choose to be more timid or even fail.
2. Both Delegations appreciated the value of the Strategic Partnership and its future potential given the shared and common values including strong commitment to rule of law and multilateralism.
3. Both Delegations highlighted the importance of the current Multiannual Indicative Programme to support South Africa in reshaping its socio-economic landscape towards a more sustainable and resilient growth, whilst addressing the needs of the most disadvantaged sectors of the society, recognising that the EU - South Africa partnership is broader than the MIP.
4. Both Delegations emphasised the important role played by the Infrastructure Investment Programme for South Africa to enhance sustainable economic growth and the delivery of key services affecting the development in South Africa.
5. Both Delegations emphasised the role played by Parliaments in deepening democracy. The EU Delegation expressed its satisfaction in the manner in which the Legislative Sector has implemented the Legislature Oversight Programme and committed to continue to support the South African Legislative Sector to entrench democracy by

enhancing law-making processes, oversight and accountability, facilitation of public participation and deepening international relations and parliamentary diplomacy as cornerstones of a just society

### **Multilateralism, Peace and Security**

6. The South African delegation noted that the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine adversely impacts all African and European countries and refers to national positions as expressed in the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly. Both delegations expressed their continued commitment to uphold the UN Charter and principles of international law, and reiterated that all governments must act in a manner consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter in its entirety. All states therefore must refrain from the threat or use of force to seek territorial acquisition against the territorial integrity and sovereignty or political independence of any state.
7. The EP delegation reiterated its strong condemnation of the illegal, unjustified, and unprovoked war of aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which is causing immense human suffering and demands the complete unconditional withdrawal of all Russian forces from the territory of Ukraine. The EP delegation noted that the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine adversely impacts all African and European countries and refer to national positions as expressed in the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly.
8. Both Delegations agreed on the need to prioritize a process of peaceful resolution through dialogue and called for an end to human suffering and people dying. Equally, both Delegations further call for the United Nations Security Council to pursue its objective of maintaining international peace amongst the nations of the world. To this end, there is an urgent need for substantive negotiations to commence towards achieving sustainable and lasting peace and security in the region.
9. Both Delegations expressed concern about the continued escalation of violence and its regional and international socio-economic implications. They further highlighted the human suffering and negative consequences of the war with regards to global food and energy security, supply chains, macro-financial stability, inflation and growth.
10. In calling for peace between Ukraine and Russia, the South African delegation emphasized the need to recognise that there are many other acts of aggression in many parts of the world such as Afghanistan, Palestine, Syria and Western Sahara where the global community has observed continued loss of lives, yet these have not received the global attention that has been given to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The South African delegation therefore calls for consistency in the consideration, resolution and emphases placed on all global conflicts and reiterated the need for consistency in resolving global conflicts through neutrality, peaceful negotiation and consensus building.
11. Both delegations emphasised the important regional peacekeeping role of South Africa as a leading SADC member in regional conflict areas on the African continent, as well as its leading role in the stabilisation of the continent.

12. Both Delegations unequivocally condemned all forms of violence and its use to obtain political goals, as well as recognised the need for closer cooperation in the fight against terrorism. They encouraged greater exchange of information and called for measures tackling the threat of radicalism.
13. The Delegations deplored the loss of innocent lives since 7 October in Israel and Palestine and the thousands of wounded, as well as called for an immediate and unconditional release of all hostages taken since then. Both expressed fear that escalation will inevitably cause more suffering to civilians, both Israelis and Palestinians and risks bringing grave instability to a region already plagued by tensions and war.
14. The EP Delegation highlighted the EP resolution on “despicable terrorist attacks of Hamas against Israel, Israel's right to defend itself in line with humanitarian and international law and the humanitarian situation in Gaza” adopted on 19 October 2023;
15. Having said that, both delegations reiterated the view that the root causes of the conflict between Israel and Palestine also need to be taken into account, as efforts are undertaken to broker peace and restore stability in the region.
16. The South African delegation pointed to the detainees in Israel since 7 October who have not been on trial and recalls the need to address this issue.
17. The IPM recognised and highlighted the role that both SA and EU can play in the comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.
18. Both Delegations stressed the need to further advance on the joint commitment to promote effective multilateralism, as well as to work towards more converging positions in the multilateral fora. Both sides agreed to continue working closely in support of the on-going UN system reform efforts, including of the UN Security Council, in order to make it more effective, representative, democratic and inclusive. In this context, both sides encouraged close coordination between the African members (A3) and the EU members in the UN Security Council.
19. Both sides welcomed the inclusion of the AU into the G20 as a permanent member as a result of the G20 Summit in New Delhi in September 2023. The AU's membership of the G20, which was strongly supported by the EU, illustrates the new dimension of the EU-AU partnership to formalise a dialogue on global issues.
20. Members emphasised that illicit financial flows, tax avoidance, money laundering and terrorist financing are common concerns for the EU as well as for S A as they are weakening the authority of the state and hinder economic and political stability.

## **Trade**

21. The two delegations agreed that the overall objective of the EU-SADC EPA is to contribute through trade, to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction in the Southern African countries. They noted that although trade has increased significantly between both sides, the two delegations agreed that the EU-SADC Economic

Partnership Agreement (EPA) needs to be modernised in order to adapt to dynamic developments like the African Continental Free Trade Area and to address more effectively pressing issues for the SADC region such as inequality, unemployment and climate change.

22. The IPM recognized that there are some trade impediments between the EU and SA that have to be solved through continuing constructive dialogue. Both delegations agreed to continue the dialogue and enhance collaboration to ensure minimal impact.
23. The South African delegation reiterated the importance of the IPM as a strategic conduit for facilitating parliamentary cooperation, consensus building, collaboration and finding lasting solutions to matters of common interest and common concern between SA and the EU. Both delegations therefore call for the facilitation of constructive dialogue towards the eradication of trade impediments, through the effective utilization of Parliament's core functions of law making, oversight and parliamentary diplomacy, to specifically address the following:
  - Both delegations call for a constructive dialogue on the review of the EU-SADC EPA as well as trade irritants on both sides of the strategic partnership.
  - Possible barriers to mutual and reciprocal market accessibility, which might exacerbate the proliferation of EU regulations that the South African side considers as either costly or cumbersome, possibly leading to a significant impact on job security, an adverse impact on the SA economy and the advancement of SA development objectives. The South African delegation mentioned issues pertaining to Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) regulations which are becoming trade barriers to SA key industries and the EU side also mentioned certain trade irritants on its side
24. Both delegations would welcome the establishment of dedicated bilateral meetings on raw material value chains and energy transition. They envisage a great potential for both sides for more collaboration in this field to strengthen cooperation on aspects related to value chains for raw materials for future clean energy, technologies and the energy transition aimed at increasing value addition in Africa.

## **Climate Change**

25. Members acknowledged the alarming global impact of climate change, and agreed that addressing global warming should be a joint sustainable development priority within the framework of the implementation of the Paris Agreement.
26. Members discussed the implementation of the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) aimed at decarbonising trade to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and agreed that it is crucial that its implementation is carefully executed and takes into account potential negative impacts on African economies and societies. A collaborative and multilateral approach is therefore desirable in ensuring that the CBAM does not result in unintended consequences that reinforce existing power imbalances in the global trading system. Both sides agreed to continue discussions on this issue.

27. Both delegations underlined that unlocking green growth on a scale that can contribute meaningfully to decarbonisation of the global economy will require a massive scaling up in funding, especially for the African continent.
28. The two delegations emphasized the outstanding importance of the “Just Energy Transition Partnership”, which is the first of its kind and ought to support South Africa’s move away from fossil energy sources and to accelerate its transition to a low emission, climate resilient economy.
29. The IPM welcomed the outcome of the first Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi and the European Union’s willingness to be Africa’s partner at the COP28 and in helping to finance and implement urgent climate action.

## **Education**

30. Both delegations acknowledged the importance of education, for promoting equality and opportunity, creating a robust and innovative economy, resourced by a vibrant private sector and anchored in a solid public commitment to sound governance and common good. Although progress has been made in SA and the EU in advancing gender equality and creating job opportunities for women, much more needs to be done (on both sides) in areas of access to education, finance, entrepreneurship, labour market and all parts of society.
31. Members stressed that Women’s empowerment and gender equality are a common priority for the work of both Parliaments. They underline that gender equality and gender-sensitive Parliaments are drivers of change for more resilient and fairer societies.
32. The South African side acknowledged and expressed its appreciation for financial support by the European Union in particular under the EU-Africa Global Gateway Investment Package to the education sector in South Africa.
33. The South African delegation expressed appreciation of initiatives launched by the EU, such as Erasmus+, to build capacity in the vocational education and training sector as this is an area that South Africa regards as a strategic focus as it is an enabler in re-igniting the economy.

## **Elections**

34. Both sides informed each other on the up-coming elections and expressed their aspiration to quickly re-engage afterwards in order to hold the 28<sup>th</sup> IPM in South Africa before the end of 2024. The two delegations highlighted the importance of democratic elections as the backbone of our democratic societies and values.
35. Members called for the next SA-EU Summit to take place as soon as possible and to take into considerations all viewpoints and demands mentioned in this statement.

36. The IPM mandated their Co-Chairs to forward this statement to the President and Members of the European Parliament, the President of the European Commission, President of the European Council, and the European External Action Service (EEAS), and the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, the President of the Republic of South Africa and the Executive.

(19.10.23)